

Ethical encounters in adult language education: A creative nonfiction approach

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Author's declaration

I confirm that the work submitted is my own, except where work which has formed part of jointly authored publications has been included. My contribution to the joint publication has been indicated below. I confirm that appropriate credit has been given within the thesis where reference has been made to the work of others.

Work from each chapter of the thesis will appear in the following publication:

"The affective dimension in language teaching in higher education"

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The data-related section is directly attributable to me. All other sections were jointly authored with my supervisor, Professor Maggie Kubanyiova.

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Abstract

This study is set in the context of migrant adults attending English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes at an adult education institute in the UK where I was a language educator. ESOL is a field of education which is fraught with complexities and contradictions in policy and practice at both national and institutional levels. On the one hand, political discourse emphasises the desire to include and integrate migrants so they might participate fully in a rich social life in their new home. On the other hand, this same discourse suggests that integration can only be achieved through learning English (Simpson, 2015). There is also the implication that meaningful participation in society equates to contributing economically. Thus, until migrants have a command of English and some form of employment, they are positioned as two distinct identities: deficit speakers of the dominant language and learners of skills for employability. In a bid to reverse these deficit identities, ESOL curricula are structured around employability goals and like other contemporary fields of education, they are rooted in ideas of empowerment.

Set against this ideological backdrop, my project concerns an exploration into the nature of social encounters in the ESOL classroom environment. It is a phenomenological account which traces my emerging relationship with one particular student, Henry (pseudonym), a highly qualified professional from Iran whose future ambition departs from the default identity options for ESOL learners: Henry's primary aspiration is to become a doctoral researcher in aerospace engineering at a higher education institution in the UK. I approach these social interactions through the philosophical lens of ethical encounters which I define as moments of mutual welcoming between self and other in embodied inter-human spaces where one sensing body opens itself to another. Drawing on the relational ethics of Levinas (1998), I foreground the listening subject (myself) as a vulnerable, susceptible individual who remains open to the alterity of the Other (Henry) and responds to their call.

Drawing on a large dataset of observations, interactions and narratives, this study captures moments of ethical encountering as I tune in to Henry's calls but also become aware of my own aesthetic responses. These are made visible through the use of sociolinguistic analytical tools. I adopt a Creative Nonfiction approach (CNF) to bring these ethical encounters to life in *The Novel* which has 3 episodes: *The Lorry*, *The Story*, *The Pandemic*. I critically reflect on the value of such encounters in these settings and propose first steps for thinking about a pedagogy of encounter in ESOL and education more generally.

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Glossary of terms and abbreviations

ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
E2 or E3	Entry level 2/3, indicates level of proficiency in ESOL
FE	Further Education
BOC	Birmingham Opera Company
RAS	Refugees and Asylum Seekers
JSA	Job Seekers Allowance
ESA	Employment and Support Allowance
APPG	All Parliamentary Party Group
NATECLA	National Association for Teaching English and other Community Languages to Adults
ELT	English Language Teaching
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
TBLT	Task Based Language Teaching
EDI	Equality Diversity and Inclusion
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
IS	Interactional Sociolinguistics
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
PosPsy	Positive Psychology
SLL	Second Language Learning
ABR	Arts Based Research
CNF	Creative Nonfiction
TESOL	Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages
TEFL	Teaching of English Language
IT	Information Technology
ICT	Information and Communication Technology

Preface: An introductory vignette

October 2018, an Adult Education Institute

Jenny, a Chinese lady living in a refuge after escaping an abusive relationship, chats to me, her English teacher, about being lonely. Paradoxically, but understandably, she is too insecure to venture alone into the community to find company. She also tells me she feels she doesn't really belong anywhere; she explains she is a refugee and 'ESOL Entry 2' but she doesn't fit the usual profile. In dealings with authorities, it seems she is guided towards work-related goals with little attention paid to social life. She is a well-qualified business graduate with 20 years' work experience in China but has been sent to a low-level ESOL for Work course. She is a competent IT user and has many essential work skills, but she has failed to find employment; she says she has lost all confidence. She does not have family or indeed any kind of support network around her. By her own admittance she comes to college to 'find some friend'.

November 2018, the same Adult Education Institute

As part of ESOL learners' enrichment programme, Birmingham Opera Company (BOC) are visiting the Adult Education Institute to deliver a voice workshop. There is already an historical connection between the two organisations as BOC have been offering workshops for over 15 years with the main objective of recruiting volunteers for their annual, professional opera. This is an organisation that is proud to be changing the face of opera by reflecting the city they work in. Their outreach programmes aim to connect with all members of the community, inviting them to join the chorus, regardless of (in)experience. They remove all barriers to participation by providing necessary training, costumes, and travel allowance. This year, to celebrate their 50th anniversary they will be staging a landmark production of Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk by Shostakovich. Jenny enjoys the workshop and decides to join the volunteer chorus; she is still hoping to 'find some friend'.

I first met Jenny when she entered my ESOL for Work Entry 2 class in October 2018. She was a capable, conscientious student and she made rapid progress with her language learning. Attendance and punctuality were outstanding as were her assessment results. As far as the institute was concerned, Jenny was a success story. On a social level, Jenny connected with her peers, and she appeared to be a popular member of the group. She brought her digital collage to our first tutorial. The pictures were of things that were important to her somehow. We discussed each area of her creative composition, and I learnt she wanted to become a make-up artist. Despite her experience in office work, it was not what she wanted to do long term.



I was delighted when Jenny volunteered for the BOC production; I wondered whether her participation in community opera would give her that sense of belonging and friendship she so craved. Would it allow her to imagine herself in roles not currently available to her? And so, the initial motivation for my PhD study was born. As a second step, I decided to join the company as a volunteer performer with the aim of carrying out a pilot study.

Jenny and I committed to a rigorous rehearsal schedule. We sang in different sections; she was an Alto while I found myself in the Sopranos. For this reason, we often rehearsed separately so we hardly saw each other. When we did rehearse together as a full company, I was in awe of the world-class professional opera singers, the unbelievably talented conductor not to mention the presence of the Symphony Orchestra. I was lost in the power and passion of it all; note-taking was the last thing on my mind. I also had to concentrate on what I was doing and with almost 150 volunteers milling around it soon became impossible to document what was happening with Jenny. But we would often share experiences back in the classroom and I would help her with the harmonies. When it came to the performance, I noticed she situated herself at the back whenever she could and went through the motions without throwing herself into it, but in the green room she chatted and joked confidently with her fellow cast members, took an abundance of photos, and spent rather too long hogging the make-up station.

The production received rave reviews. Jenny was 'promoted' to Entry 3 the following term. By the beginning of the new academic year, her progression knew no bounds and she was going into Level 1. I was no longer her teacher, but she often popped in for a chat and all seemed rosy.

October 2nd, 2019: My PhD Transfer

My Transfer document claims my doctoral study will examine a pedagogy that endeavours to broker meaningful relationships with the wider communities and existing cultural spaces for public participation. It will also 'ask whether such a pedagogy can afford opportunities for people to begin to re-imagine their future in a city they are learning to call home. To this end, I will explore the pedagogic practices of BOC as a participant observer to understand what promises they might hold for creating more engaging, relevant practices not just for ESOL learners but for all branches of

second language teaching and learning worldwide. My study seeks to understand ways in which such a pedagogy might recognise and build on learners' past and emerging stories, ambitions and dreams while taking them beyond the severely restricted range of identity options offered by the labels of 'ESOL learner', 'migrant' or 'refugee'.

Ten days later, on Saturday 12th October, Jenny took her own life.

I was in turmoil. I thought I knew Jenny. I thought I would have known if she was struggling. Why hadn't she told me ...asked for help? I could have done more – there must have been signs. Why didn't I notice these signs?

The study, work, BOC - all now seemed futile.

The impact was so profound that in the days and weeks that followed, I replayed every encounter in my head to see what I could have done differently. I hunted through past conversations for clues I had missed. I blamed myself. I blamed the institute. I blamed society. I questioned my understanding of our relationship. I questioned everything I thought I knew about teaching. I was confronted with the realisation that a skill I name as one of my strengths – knowing my students – was a myth. In fact, what did I know about people? I began scrutinising every relationship. I was vigilant with students, over-compensating for past mistakes by checking their wellbeing at any opportunity. I learnt nothing more than I usually would. I needed to ask different questions. Questions about human relationships, questions about questions.

My research for this project led me to those questions.

Chapter 1

Introduction

"If one could possess, grasp, and know the other, it would not be other."

Emmanuel Levinas

I Introduction

1.1 Motivation, rationale and research aims

This project is motivated by my response to Jenny's story. It is set in the context of an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classroom at an adult education institute where I was an educator. It is an exploration of my lived experience in an ESOL classroom where micro-level social encounters constantly interact with broader macro-level structures. The majority of students attending this institute were migrants and refugees who were negotiating the sociopolitical landscape in their new host city, bringing snapshots of their challenging encounters into our learning space. In the study, these student voices can be heard, and their bodies can be imagined and felt, but since this is a phenomenological account, they are heard through my ears and perceived through my eyes. I focus on the emerging relationship with one particular student, Henry, a highly qualified professional from Iran with aspirations of attending university to complete a PhD in aerospace engineering. As a result of this lived experience, I am challenged to think differently about the nature of pedagogical relationships.

The original intention of the study had been to investigate the potential of BOC's outreach programme to offer meaningful engagement with a local community. I was interested to see whether participation in a 3-month rehearsal process would afford the students a wider range of identity options than *migrant* and *learner*. I was also curious to discover what other benefits students might gain in terms of social interaction and language development. However, following the incident which concludes the introductory vignette, my focus was drawn back to the classroom to interrogate my own practice. My experience in educational institutes in a range of sectors had always pointed me towards building supportive relationships, establishing rapport and generally 'getting to know' my students. This has always been advocated as key to meeting their needs, setting language targets, and determining life goals. However, as the vignette shows, I had not known Jenny at all. I felt I lacked the kind of knowledge that would have allowed me to perceive Jenny's circumstances differently, and perhaps changed the course of action.

ESOL students face a myriad of challenges in addition to learning a new language, which can prove overwhelming if they lack adequate support. Newcomer refugees have to navigate the hurdles of the resettlement process as well as coping with accommodation worries, acculturation stress and loss of everything familiar and valued. In the current climate of mass migration with refugees and asylum seekers fleeing war and persecution, ESOL classrooms have a higher proportion of trauma-impacted students than just a decade earlier. Language teachers increasingly find themselves 'on the front line

of coping with the outcomes of displacement' (Capstick, 2018, p. 60) yet are poorly trained to do so. A wealth of research points to ESOL tutors lacking awareness of the kind of mental health and trauma-related issues that many migrant students are living with (Dunn, 2023; Palanac, et al., 2023; Vee, 2021). When such issues are brought into the classroom, teachers are at loss to know how best to respond. Trauma rewires the brain to become hypervigilant which means learners are constantly assessing their surroundings for potential threats. Triggers are personal to the individual so cannot be anticipated (Perry, 2006). It is little wonder that ESOL practitioners are calling for more targeted training so they can know how to support migrant students in the classroom.

However, in recent years, scholarship in philosophy of education has been turning towards a reimagining of pedagogical relationships that is not based solely on knowing the Other (Biesta, 2021). For example, Hoveid and Finne (2014, p. 254) observe that in current pedagogical practice 'many actions are gauged against the register of what we can know or the register of moral obligation'. They argue that language about educational relationships needs to be broadened and they suggest *ethics of care* and *love* should be part of the conversation. They investigate keeping 'an open door' and 'giving of yourself' as notions that open up space between self and other for a mutual welcoming where differences can flourish. As they note, such studies are rare. Consequently, they call for an exploration of relationships in pedagogical practices that might expand notions of human interaction. To my knowledge no such studies have been conducted in the field of ESOL despite this being a sector where human interaction is the very essence of migrants' concerns. This also coincides with my desire to understand more about my practice with ESOL learners as well as looking into the role that identity plays in forging relationships and how this interacts with the process of language learning.

Thus, this study began with an overarching purpose rather than concrete questions. I aimed to explore the nature and range of encounters that make up the ESOL classroom experience. As the project progressed, the exploration led to related research questions which tend to overlap:

- How are micro-level interactions affected by macro-level influences?
- How is identity enacted through interaction in the ESOL classroom?
- How do social actors in the ESOL classroom encounter one another ethically?
- What does responsibility for the Other look like in practice?
- What might a pedagogy of encounter look like?

This chapter now introduces the study context to explain how ESOL is inextricably bound to immigration and integration, and how identities are ascribed in relation to these ties. I then briefly introduce my conceptual framework. This will allow me to explore encounters holistically by merging

identity, languaging and relational ethics. Subsequently, I provide an overview of the research design and outline the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Immigration, integration and the ESOL context

According to UNHER (2022), forcible displacement statistics reached a dramatic milestone in 2022, with 108.4 million people displaced worldwide. This equates to approximately 1 in 74 of the world's population being forced to flee their home due to a range of impossible living conditions including: persecution, on-going conflict, human rights violations, violence and food poverty. It is estimated that 83% of this number are hosted by low and middle-income countries while the UK hosts just 1% (Refugee Council, 2023). Many of this 1% risk their lives crossing the English Channel in small, inflatable boats that are not fit to withstand the tempestuous conditions. It is estimated that 46,000 migrants were detected crossing the channel in 2022. Between 2018 – 2023, 71% of those crossing hailed from five nations: Iran, Albania, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria (The Migration Observatory, 2023).

Cooper et al. (2021, p. 196) report that globally, migrant groups have been 'attacked and demonised by political elites as a means to build their popularity and advance their political agenda'. The UK is no exception with inward migration being one of the most salient issues debated during throughout Brexit campaigns and still very much a major political concern. In the migration process, Block argues, (2007, p. 5), 'one's identity and sense of self are put on the line, not least because most factors that are familiar to the individual . . . have disappeared and been replaced by new ones'. This is further exacerbated by political rhetoric which frames migrants arriving in the UK as a homogenous group. Identity options are severely limited as are the opportunities associated with having a wider range of subjectivities.

A powerful ideology of monolingualism permeates political and media discourse in the UK. It is believed that national unity can be maintained through language. A 'recurrent trope' in such discourse is the insistence that migrants have an obligation to learn English to fulfil their civic duties, join the workforce and contribute to the economy (Simpson, 2021, p. 5). Views that foreground migrant individuals' language improvement as a solution to what are far more complex social issues of marginalisation have been persistently challenged by research in language education and sociolinguistics (Kerfoot & Bello-Nonjengele, 2022; Motha, 2006). The data in this study similarly amplify these larger societal issues.

Willingness to learn and use the English language is taken as an indication of migrants' desire to participate meaningfully in UK social and economic life. However, successive governments (specifically

1997 – present) have persistently highlighted the notion that migrants are reluctant to learn English and therefore unwilling to integrate socially or join the economic workforce. The English language is then co-opted into debates about social integration, inclusion and cohesion as well as national identity and unity (Blackledge, 2009). This is then translated into policy directives which directly affect the ESOL sector. The purpose of ESOL is therefore to offer targeted provision for those whose English is thought to hinder their ability to integrate and thus limit their opportunities to participate fully in community life (Foster & Bolton, 2018).

However, there is a paradox which troubles the field of ESOL. Despite Labour, Coalition and Conservative governments' preoccupation with achieving a monolingual, integrated nation, there has been a lack of commitment to achieving this in practice. It is estimated that from 2009 to 2018 funding was reduced significantly by approximately 60% (Foster & Bolton, 2018; Refugee Action, 2019). Despite political emphasis on the learning of English for employability, in 2011 funding for English instruction in the workplace was withdrawn by the Coalition government (2010 -2015), and access to classes in educational institutions was limited to those in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). In 2013 the requirements placed on claimants of JSA were increased and those whose poor spoken English was a barrier to work were mandated to attend English language courses and faced sanctions if they refused. Yet, surprisingly, after allocating £45 million for ESOL Plus Mandation in 2015/16, all funding was controversially removed at short notice impacting both learners and providers for that academic year (Foster & Bolton, 2017). It is a picture of contradiction; if competence in the dominant language encourages integration, and integration is essential to national unity, then it is difficult to comprehend how this political ideal might be achieved by slashing funding. Similarly, if funding is contingent on demand, then it is also incongruent that some areas of the country continue to have long waiting lists (APPG, 2017; NATECLA, 2016; Refugee Action, 2023). This has led Court (2022, p.17) to argue that announcements and strategies relevant to migrant language education 'appear to be forwarding an anti-immigration agenda rather than facilitating the learning of English'.

Notably absent from any kind of top-down policymaking, public narratives or media discourse are the voices of the very people who are the subject of the discussion, not to mention the absence of educator perspectives. This is despite ongoing research efforts in ESOL settings that seek to make migrant learners' voices heard as 'an antidote to inaccurate and discriminatory top-down discourses and policies about minority communities' (Bryers et al., 2014, p. 21). These studies have investigated such topics as refugees' future aspirations (Cooke, 2008) motivation (Sidaway, 2021) identity positions (Baynham & Simpson, 2010; Menard-Warwick, 2004) emotional wellbeing (Salvo & de C Williams, 2017) integration and belonging (Strang & Ager, 2010; Court, 2017) and barriers in accessing ESOL

classes (Phillimore, 2011). What this range emphasises, is the diverse experiences that these newcomers are negotiating. It also highlights the fact that ESOL learners are not one homogenous group as they have been positioned.

ESOL students are a heterogeneous group with diverse learner profiles ranging from highly educated professionals tackling a new language, to individuals with limited experience of literacy or schooling in their first language (Simpson, 2016, 2019; Roberts et al., 2007). The majority are migrants and refugees who have often struggled to escape the trauma of war, conflict or persecution and faced a host of tough challenges on their journey to these shores, only to be greeted with further obstacles. Not only do they need to navigate bureaucratic barriers on their way to achieving refugee status, but they also face barriers to social inclusion and limited job opportunities. Perhaps more distressing is coming to terms with loss or fracture of cherished identities as well as other major losses: home, family, wealth, status (Stevenson, 2019). These experiences are invariably brought into classroom communities where they are shared and compared.

Yet, ESOL policy persists in separating language education and communal life. Rather than seeing ESOL as an arena for developing social relations, it is viewed as instructional space to prepare for the 'real world' outside. The kind of language instruction advocated to achieve this is that which can be measured, tracked and monitored. Language is therefore treated as an abstract system with codes that can be taught, learnt and transported into social situations where they will be reproduced to navigate workplace and other community ventures beyond the classroom (Swift, 2022). This devalues the wide range of tools migrant learners successfully employ to make meaning with others. Thus, dominant ideological narratives not only shape learner identities but also comment on their languaging practices in unhelpful ways.

1.3 Conceptual framework

To aide my exploration of ESOL classroom encounters, I draw from three interrelated literatures: identity, languaging and relational ethics. Each concept resists static definitions and rather focuses on movement, instability and unpredictability. In each case the emphasis is on its mobilisation in a specific place at a specific time.

The first of these conceptual lenses sheds light on the identification processes that are salient in spaces of encounters with difference and contexts of unequal power relations. As highlighted in Sections 1.1/1.2, migrants' identities are in flux as they struggle to negotiate the loss of familiar positionings

and ascription of new, often unwelcome, labels. Trilling (2019, n.p) argues that even the identity label *migrant* is drenched in negative connotation:

this one word appears shorn of context; without even an im- or an em- attached to it to indicate that the people it describes have histories or futures. Instead, it implies an endless present: they are migrants, they move, it's what they do. It's a form of description that, until 2015, I might have expected to see more often in nature documentaries, applied to animals rather than human beings.

Being categorised in specific (often deficit) ways not only affects how these people are treated by the wider community but also dictates the opportunities that are afforded them (or not) and restricts positions from which they are allowed to speak. In the classroom, these positionings affect ESOL students' language learning experiences in significant ways. Since this study presents a phenomenological account of our ESOL encounters from my perspective, my identity becomes a significant factor. I too am positioned by ideological discourse, which often collides with my own teacher identity projects.

The term *linguaging* signals a shift from conceptions of language as an abstract bounded entity, to linguaging as a verb, an embodied, sensory practice using a range of tools to make meaning with others, including semiotic resources (e.g. gesture, gaze, facial expression), materials and translanguaging (Blackledge & Creese, 2021). The linguaging lens is employed to make identity processes visible; for example, how teacher and students perform certain identities for others, and how they resist and negotiate identity impositions while attempting to claim more desired options. Linguaging practices also serve to illuminate relationships and entanglements with others as well as with our own histories and biographies. Views of linguaging as a dynamic and creative construct challenge dominant ideological views of language as a static code which can be learnt and reproduced at will. This raises questions for the way language is understood and taught in adult language education (Lytra et al., 2022). A linguaging lens gives options for a wider range of subjectivities, thereby linking language to identity on several levels.

The third strand of this theoretical framework draws on Levinas' (1998) relational ethics. This relates to identity in that it challenges traditional notions of the Other and otherness. It therefore offers an alternative way of talking about relationships, pedagogical or otherwise. In traditional Western thought, otherness is viewed as a temporary state which is eliminated or severely reduced once it is absorbed by sameness; it is believed this is what creates harmony and unity in the world (Davis, 2007). This kind of thinking is what powers ideologies of integration and monolingualism which refugees and migrants are confronting in the UK and beyond.

For Levinas, however, the relationship with the Other is not an idyllic and harmonious union where we are able to put ourselves in the place of the Other in empathy or to minimise difference by focusing on similarity. Rather, this relationship is potentially disruptive and always a mystery. The Other is not another self to be subsumed under the Same; it is a unique entity, constituted by irreducible alterity which means it cannot be absorbed, categorised, overcome, or even momentarily understood. Through a Levinasian lens, to deny otherness through symbolic classification of differences is to violate the Other's identity by imposing an unjust sovereignty over it (Rapport, 2019). Therefore, any attempt to explain or understand difference or to impose identity categories on the Other during an encounter is seen as a move to erase the Other's uniqueness, resulting in ethical failure (Kubanyiova & Creese, 2023). Rather, privileging the Other and their unique otherness while decentring the Self is a necessary condition for ethical interaction (Kelz, 2016). In so doing, the Self, as a listening subject is placed in a position of inescapable responsibility *for* the Other and has no choice but to respond to their call.

This inescapable responsibility for the Other allows pedagogy to be framed differently. Kallio-Tavin (2013) argues that an ethical relationship to the Other is crucial for teaching and researching in educational contexts. For example, when students make demands in the classroom which could be construed as disturbance or interruption, a teacher's response is often to control the interruption from a position of authority. A face-to-face encounter, after Levinas, would see the teacher keeping a disposition of openness towards students and welcoming, if not inviting, that interruption into the interactional space. This is a radical proposition considering how ESOL education is rooted in neoliberal ideals and definite ideas of what effective teaching looks like in practice. Nevertheless, it is worth exploring if it allows ESOL students to visit one place where they might be approached as human beings rather than categories.

In summary, the findings of this study portray the ESOL classroom context as a social and affective arena in which actors, the teachers and the students, already participate in "life-in-the-making with others" (Erasmus, 2018), using whatever linguistic and non-linguistic resources for meaning making are available to them (Jørgensen, 2008). By making these languaging practices visible, I demonstrate openings for classroom members (the teacher as well as the students) to become attuned to the affective and, I argue, ethical demands of building meaningful relationships. I argue that it is through these relationships that the students' broader identities and future aspirations, such as university education ambitions, can be identified and attended to.

1.4 Research approach

My research approach merges three methodological perspectives to capture and present the ethical nature of encountering the Other in practice: Phenomenology, Ethnography and Arts-based research (ABR).

First, I adopt a broad phenomenological approach to allow for subjective renderings of encounters in and around the ESOL classroom. The phenomenological attitude sits well with Levinas' (1998) thinking on ethical encounters with the Other. Both foreground the situated, relational and embodied nature of the encounter as well as an openness to the experience and an attentive turning to the world. Both pursue a deeper understanding of human relationships and approach others as human beings rather than social categories to be labelled and understood. They both foreground the aesthetic: salient episodes in encounters are marked by an aesthetic stimulus and a reciprocal sensorial response. This aesthetic response is expected to have a disorienting, sometimes disruptive effect on the subject, forcing them to look afresh at what stands before them. Therefore, central tenets of phenomenology work in synergy with Levinas' ideas in a way that ethnography does not.

It is not the worldview and overarching purpose that I borrow from ethnography, but the vast array of tools and methods that fieldwork offers: observation, fieldnotes, interviews, memos, recordings, transcriptions. These are necessary to capture the languaging, the rich semiotic assemblages, the identity work at play. However, the way these tools are employed and the data that they yield are different to those used in ethnographic studies, as outlined with the two approaches to interview (6.1.3).

Phenomenological accounts seek to foreground the subject's meaningful and affective lived experience. To bring such an experience to life requires an arts-based mode of data presentation. In this study, Creative Nonfiction (CNF) offers scope for illuminating aesthetic moments as well as transmitting embodied experience. This genre of writing departs from academic conventions, so the unnumbered chapter between 6 and 7, entitled 'The Novel' is the presentation of the collaborative data analysis in the form of a three-part narrative.

1.5 Thesis structure and introduction to chapters

This introductory chapter has outlined the motivation behind the project and set the scene for the research context. It has introduced the theoretical and methodological frameworks and presented a rationale for exploring the nature of ESOL classroom encounters.

Chapter 2 expands on the ideological context in which adult ESOL is positioned. It interrogates the association which has been bolstered between integration, social cohesion and adult language education and the effects this has on subject positions the students are allowed to claim or to speak from. This section goes on to examine the relationship between models of integration and how they shape models of language education. It discusses how ESOL education has been influenced by an assimilation model of integration in that it prepares students for citizenship tests and employability. It has also been influenced by constructivist notions of empowerment which encourage students to reach their potential by learning how to navigate existing power structures.

The following three chapters review the key interrelated literatures which draw broadly from sociolinguistically-informed research.

Chapter 3 discusses social identity in social and educational encounters across a range of theoretical perspectives. A broad and deep understanding is important because it sheds light on the identification processes that are salient in spaces of encounters with difference and contexts of unequal power relations. I consider how social categorisation leads to the kind of stereotyping and stigma that trouble migrant identities and limit opportunities for participation in the community and in the workplace. I also consider how positionings ascribed through societal power structures can be challenged and reset provided agency is legitimised. This section concludes with examples of research in language education which highlight the identity processes at work in language learning.

Chapter 4 explores languaging as a sociolinguistic construct which is crucial for making visible the communication practices through which encounters are enacted. I trace the emergence of the sociolinguistic field from the 1960s to its current point where languaging is now conceived as a complex construct that covers the range of semiotic repertoires people draw on for meaning making in interaction with others. I outline some of Erving Goffman's dramaturgical metaphors that are useful for analysing how individuals present themselves and recognise or align with others in face-to-face interaction. I conclude this section with a discussion into how the field of language education (particularly ESOL) has responded to sociolinguistic notions of languaging.

Chapter 5 synthesises languaging, affect and the notion of ethical responsibility to provide a theoretical framework for researching social encounters. I first consider how affect has been conceived in language education from a psychological perspective and how shifting to a sociolinguistic lens offers a broader, situated perspective and a means of tying together languaging and identity and ideology. Affect and aesthetics are then proposed as the basis for ethical relationships. To make this argument I introduce the philosophical work of Emmanuel Levinas, paying particular attention to notions of face, the Other and responsibility.

Chapter 6 begins with a rationale for merging three methodological strands to create my research approach. I give an overview of ethnography and the principles of phenomenology, and I contrast their affordances for this project seen through the prism of encounter. I explain how a phenomenological lens allows for my first-person perspective and I outline the ethnographic tools that allow me to capture the data. I introduce arts-based research as a means of creating affective and accessible scholarship and I describe my chosen genre for presenting data: Creative Nonfiction. Moving onto the research design, I outline the data handling processes and introduce *collaborative attending* as an analytical framework, following Levinas' concept of the listening subject being responsible for the Other. The ethical review subjects to scrutiny the decisions I have made, especially with regard to telling others' stories.

In the following chapter, I depart from the numbered conventions of traditional academic format to present the results of data analysis through Creative Non-Fiction in a chapter entitled *The Novel*. This comprises 3 mini chapters: The Lorry, The Story, The Pandemic. Each is loosely structured around a revelation made by Henry, but they also have a separate narrative focus related to their title.

Chapter 7 provides a discussion of the key ideas that emerge from the Novel. It is structured into 3 sections: the consequences of ideological identity impositions and how they are resisted/negotiated in the classroom and beyond; ethical moments in classroom life; ESOL pedagogy and the potential of an ethically informed research practice.

In the final chapter I provide a conclusion which highlights the potential of ESOL as a space for affective and ethical communal relations. I emphasise the implications of 'knowing' as the basis for relationships and for education more broadly and suggest what living ethically alongside others entails.

Chapter 2

Adult ESOL in the UK sociopolitical
landscape:

Integration, identity and language

2 Adult ESOL in the UK sociopolitical landscape: integration, identity and language

UK governments over the past 25 years have foregrounded the ability to communicate in English as a prerequisite for meaningful engagement in British society. ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) is the language education sector that organises provision for those whose English is thought to hinder their ability to integrate and thus limit their opportunities to participate in three significant ways: to mix with people from diverse backgrounds, to contribute to community life and to gain employment (Foster & Bolton, 2018). ESOL provision takes place in a range of settings: adult education centres, further education colleges, voluntary organisations and community programmes. Generally speaking, long term residents and those with refugee status are eligible for funded classes while asylum seekers are forced to rely on the voluntary sector. ESOL is therefore bound up with political discourse related to immigration, identity and language. I now expand on the problematic nature of this intertwining for the ESOL sector, its students and their teachers.

2.1 Integration and ESOL identities

Depending on their route of entry to the UK, newcomers are identified by their immigration status in one of three ways: people seeking asylum, refugees or migrants. According to the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a *refugee* is defined as:

A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (Cited in Refugee Council, 2023, n.d).

In the UK, a *person seeking asylum* is granted refugee status when the Home Office determines that they meet this definition. Only then are they eligible for government-funded language instruction and given the right to work. The label *migrant* describes an individual who has moved to another country for other reasons such as finding work or joining family (Refugee Council, 2023). More specifically an *economic migrant* is someone who has legally immigrated. However, in the UK *migrant* is often used as a generalised term which includes those seeking asylum and refugees. Regardless of how these

terms are defined for legal purposes, people will inevitably bring their own interpretations largely influenced by widely circulating discourse.

In the UK, these assigned identity labels are important for a number of reasons. Firstly, they dictate how newcomers will be processed, the welfare benefits they will receive, whether they have the right to seek employment or to move from where they are being housed, and whether they can gain access to language instruction. Secondly, and more indirectly, these labels can often affect how people are perceived and treated in significant ways as they progress through stages of resettlement. Constant highlighting of anti-immigration agendas in political discourse and in the media, especially in relation to channel crossings, has led to blatant discrimination against those who are making asylum applications, those who are subsequently granted refugee status and more generally against migrant and minority communities whose first language is not English (Cooke & Peutrell, 2019). This has been exacerbated by Brexit, but also the Covid-19 pandemic which caused a spike in anti-Asian racism worldwide (Ngo & Espinoza, 2023). Such social prejudice contributes to linguistic xenophobia (Simpson, 2019) as well as processes of othering and exclusion at both national and local levels.

Migration in the UK is persistently viewed through the lens of national rhetoric which, Baynham (2011, p. 413) suggests, creates 'atmospheres of social panic in which immigrants and refugees are seen as threatening the stable borders of national identities.' The multilingual and multicultural landscapes that characterise contemporary super-diverse cities (Vertovec, 2007) are seen as the root of that threat and consequently, the rich linguistic diversity that migrant populations bring to the UK is presented as a problem that needs to be managed. This has been compounded by repeated vilification in the media and political discourse over some ethnic minorities choosing to self-segregate, thus causing a lack of cohesion in communities (Simpson, 2015). Implicit in this accusation is the idea that such local community identities are detrimental to national unity and therefore unwelcome.

In order to manage this so-called threat to national identity, successive UK governments have conflated language, British identity and integration in neoliberal and monolingualist policies that are anchored in the 'one language, one nation' ideology (Blackledge, 2009; Simpson & Hunter, 2023; Simpson & Whiteside, 2015). These policies are designed to counter religious and political extremism on one hand, and to ensure social cohesion and economic integration on the other. As a result, the learning of the national dominant language is framed as the key to full participation in our society and economy. However, underpinning this political rhetoric is the presumption that migrants are purposefully refusing to learn English when in fact most are entirely aware of the necessity and regard it as 'an advantageous resource' (Simpson, 2015, p. 3). Regardless of political persuasion, a string of leading politicians has directed inflammatory speeches towards minority communities, speaking

about rather than *to* them. Referring to migrants in the third person signals their difference and confirms their exclusion from the 'us' of the nation. Not only are 'they' seen as being apart from the norm, but it also seems 'they' are not expected to be able to access nor understand these words broadcast on national media channels (my emphasis):

*"People who come into this country, who are part of **our** community should **play by the rules** ... I would insist on large numbers of people who have **refused** to learn **our** language that they **must** do so."* Gordon Brown (BBC News, 2006)

*"If they want to play by the rules, pay their taxes, speak English, that is a smart, **fair** effective way of dealing with immigration".*

Nick Clegg, 2010 (in Simpson, 2015, p. 3).

"People arriving in a neighbourhood...not really wanting or even willing to integrate...that has created a kind of discomfort and disjointedness in some neighbourhoods" David Cameron's speech (BBC, 2011).

*"**Forcing** all migrants to learn English ... will show we're serious about creating One Nation"* (Cameron, 2015).

*"I want everybody who comes here and makes their lives here to be and to feel British, that is the most important thing. And to learn English. Too often there are parts of our country...where **English is not spoken** by some people **as their first language**. And that needs to be changed."* Boris Johnson's speech (Halliday & Brookes, 2019).

While the language of vilification has been somewhat tempered more recently, the sentiments remain unchanged and largely unchallenged by current discourses. This kind of public rhetoric identifies migrants and refugees as particular kinds of people, outsiders, who need to move 'inside' for the benefit of 'the nation'. This kind of othering limits severely the range of identity options open to them on arriving in the 'host' nation.

It is unsurprising, therefore, that this political narrowing of identities through which people with migration histories are portrayed, pushes to the background an array of knowledge, experience and social identities that migrants to the UK bring and whose range extends to geographical backgrounds, ethnicities, familial relations, education and employment histories, linguistic practices, or faith. To the contrary, pushed to the foreground is migrants' limited command of the national language. Similarly, the assumption that learning the dominant language and joining the labour market is the answer to

meaningful participation in UK life not only ignores the complex reality of the displaced migrant, but also creates identities of deficit for migrants and refugees (Casey, 2016; Court, 2017). Not only do these deficit positions devalue and erase past linguistic attachments, cherished identities or professional triumphs, but they also imply a future trajectory that does not allow for choice (Baker et al., 2019). In this context, professional development in a field of expertise or further study beyond ESOL seem out of reach.

This narrowing of identities and restricting of options persists despite the ‘inconsistent and paradoxical’ (Simpson, 2019, p. 26) stated ambition of local government policies in many cities. Such policies cite a commitment to achieving a fair, inclusive and resilient cohesive community which values diversity, fosters a sense of belonging, encourages full participation for all citizens in all areas of society and promises to respond to the ‘wide ranging and kaleidoscope of identities, rather than simply focusing on a white majority and small number of ethnic minority identities’ (Birmingham City Council, 2023, p. 53). These promising commitments at the local level seem to collide with nationwide political agendas informed by monolingualist ideologies and immigration concerns. Brown (2021, p. 865) argues this is because integration ‘appears to mean different things to different people, creating ambiguities in the discourse’.


The following section explores how specific models of integration have been instrumental in shaping the ESOL policy and curriculum design at the institutional level, as well as influencing its implementation in the classroom.

2.2 Integration and ESOL education

How integration is defined and interpreted by different people is closely linked to their view on where responsibility lies for facilitating resettlement. While the national policy veers towards an assimilationist model, this is not necessarily the understanding informing ESOL practice in UK institutions. Using Brown’s (2021) Emancipation Continuum (Table 2.1) as a starting point, I analyse ESOL education in relation to three conceptions of integration. In the chapter conclusion I consider the limitations of viewing ESOL through this political lens and suggest what might be missing.

Table 2.1: The Emancipation Continuum (Brown, 2021, p. 875)

<i>Concept</i>	Indoctrination	Empowerment	Emancipation
<i>Immigration Model</i>	Assimilation	Integration Through Social Capital	Inclusion
<i>Educational Approach</i>	Prescriptive Curriculum: Content selected to develop learners' capacities to meet the needs of dominant forces in society.	Needs-based Curriculum: Content aims to develop knowledge and skills that allows learners to reach their potential within existing power structures.	Co-created Curriculum: Learners identify/select content that allows them to critically engage with existing societal structures, and develop skills to effect change.
<i>Features</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pre-determined content and outcomes -Tasks socialise learners into subordinate positions -Existing structures/values presented as positive -Teacher dispenses knowledge as dictated by syllabus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Content selected to develop skills for life, work and further study -Tasks relate to real-world situations and address learners' practical needs -Little/no critical engagement with social justice issues -Teacher dispenses knowledge according to perceived learner needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Content negotiated between learners and teacher -Tasks develop critical thinking skills -Learners encouraged to identify and challenge social injustices -Learning is multidirectional, between students and teacher and also among students



2.2.1 Assimilation: Language education as 'Indoctrination'

The 'one language, one nation' ideology places the onus of responsibility for integration solely in the hands of migrants themselves as everything hinges on their ability to learn English. This will enable their integration into all aspects of British life so that they might 'rebuild their lives and make full use of their talents and abilities' (All Party Parliamentary Group [APPG] on Refugees, 2017, p. 6). According to this assimilation model of integration, willingness to learn the language is seen as a desire to embrace 'British values', to participate fully in society and the economy, as well as a desire for meaningful engagement with the British people (Court 2017). From this perspective, it seems that resettlement requires migrants to adapt to the existing linguistic and cultural norms of their new environment without the need for society to make adjustments. This is problematic because it frames immigrants from all backgrounds as one homogenous identity who are facing the same challenges in the settlement process. It ignores the range of intersecting axes that govern an individual's access to various societal structures, and it seems to ask that pre-existing behaviour and cultural values, or *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977), should be eschewed. Language education that is aligned with an assimilationist model of integration is geared towards citizenship education. Educators are required to follow a prescriptive and instrumental curriculum which is chiefly concerned with developing skills

for employability and preparing learners for the citizenship test (Cooke, 2019). This severely restricts their educator identities as well as those of their students. Brown (2021, p. 870) argues that this system is akin to 'indoctrination' since there is little or no focus on self-expression and information is to be accepted uncritically. This has also been noted in English language education globally (Gray & Block, 2014) where neoliberal ideologies have often been prioritised over issues of social justice or community values.

Not only is ESOL provision suffering a lack of funding to provide language education for those who need it, there are also structural barriers such as childcare (Refugee Action, 2019). ESOL is also a fragmented sector. The lack of a coherent strategy has prompted several reports which all stress the need to see beyond the person as a potential to support economic growth and consider the human and social capital they might bring to society. Casey's review (2016) into opportunity and integration questioned whether provision was reaching those most in need and suggested the skills of migrant workers currently in low paid work might be better utilised. Following incentives in Wales and Scotland, NATECLA (2016) proposed 'Towards an ESOL strategy for England' after consultation with the major stakeholders in the field. This was created to 'help to unlock migrant capabilities, save costs to public services in the long term and promote a more integrated and socially cohesive society' (Paget & Stevenson, 2014). Recognising that too much emphasis is placed on language for employability, the strategy advocates an approach to learning English that considers the full impact on quality of life. However, at the time of writing in 2023, the strategy remains at the proposal stage, keenly awaiting a government response.

2.2.2 Integration through social capital: Language education as empowerment

Critical of this assimilationist approach, Ager and Strang (2008) argue that it only serves to intensify the disadvantage and disempowerment that certain individuals face, especially those whose habitus is far removed from their immediate surroundings. Instead, and in alignment with principles in NATECLA's proposed ESOL strategy, they favour a model of integration through social capital which allows the newcomers the right to retain rather than reject their differences, with the proviso that these do not obstruct their engagement in civic duties. However, because this model does not necessitate a change in existing power structures, Cheong et al. (2007, p. 25) maintain that this is also a problematic approach to settlement since 'the concept of social capital is dynamic and itself value-based'. This means that those in power can continue to exploit their position by determining which values are the right kind, and therefore worth retaining, to support the host society in its function. Added to this, is the implication that immigrants facing social integration do not have the right to challenge the status quo. This lack of agency is likely to perpetuate feelings of exclusion from social

transformation agendas in general, and from potential communities of practice more specifically. Language education from this perspective aims to empower ESOL students, with emphasis being placed on autonomy and developing skills for life, work and further study. It is believed that educating people to become self-reliant will lead to the betterment of society and give individuals the freedom to make their own choices. ESOL teachers become the facilitator meeting student needs. Much language education has been influenced by this constructivist line of thinking as evidenced in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) approaches which dominate ELT and ESOL classrooms.

2.2.3 Inclusion: Language education as emancipation

A third settlement model that recognises the vulnerability of newcomers while addressing the inequitable societal structures that may perpetuate their vulnerability, focuses on *inclusion* rather than integration (Brown, 2021). Miller and Katz (2002, p. 147) define inclusion as experiencing a sense of belonging while at the same time 'feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best'. Valuing the potential of all migrants to contribute socially and economically means the host country tackling the structural inequalities that may be obstructing equitable participation. A model of inclusion therefore ensures that while migrants are inevitably shaped by their resettlement, their presence in the country is also shaping society in positive ways. Not only would this model result in a more just and tolerant society, but the cultural and linguistic enrichment would be seen as a benefit for all inhabitants, especially in superdiverse cities.

Integration as inclusion requires mutual involvement on the part of both the migrants and the host nation: migrants play their part by learning the language so they might reap the benefits of being integrated while the host nation is responsible for tackling discrimination, inequality, fostering a sense of belonging and providing language tuition through ESOL classes. As noted earlier in this section, UK society is far from being considered inclusive. Significant societal tensions are exacerbated by the media who take depictions of migrants and refugees generated through political discourse and explode these in sensational news headlines (Tilling, 2019). Highlighting deficit identity positions in such a way leads to further barriers to integration such as discrimination and social prejudice. In turn, discriminatory attitudes widen power inequalities which can affect access to employment as well as limiting opportunities for migrants to participate in the kind of social interaction that is likely to improve their communication skills (Casey 2016). This leads to adverse effects on the learners; rather than a sense of belonging, it is feelings of isolation, anxiety and frustration that dominate migrant communities as well as poor standards of health and wellbeing (Strang & Quinn, 2021).

Although *inclusion* is rarely heard in the context of immigration, this concept has certainly had an influence on education where notions of inclusion have shaped educational environments and pedagogical praxis over the past 20 years. Through a lens of inclusivity, education is seen as a vehicle for emancipation, which is at the root of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1996). As Biesta (2010, p. 43) notes, this is a social rather than an individualistic construct that needs to comprise ‘the analysis of oppressive structures, practices and theories’ as a means of challenging social injustice. Considering the backgrounds and life histories of those who populate ESOL classrooms this appears to be a promising direction with the development of critical thinking skills as a major push towards effecting a more just and equal society. However, ‘inclusion’ has become a contested term in recent years due to its indiscriminate adoption in educational spheres where it has become ‘a kind of performative tokenism that fails to actively value the contribution of minorities’ (Brown, 2021, p. 869). Biesta (2022) also notes that emancipation is being misunderstood in education and presented as path to freedom from structural constraints. He argues that this is not where freedom lies. I return to his argument in Section 5.2.1.

In conclusion, labelling people according to immigration status is a means of organising ever-increasing inward migration, but this process of social categorisation ignores the vast array of identities that these groups of people bring to their new setting, instead, imposing specific identities which are rarely favourable. Perhaps the most crucial of these impositions is the framing of migrants and refugees as deficit speakers of the dominant language. In political rhetoric, this means they are lacking the most essential skill needed for vocational and societal integration. Mandated Adult ESOL classes for those labelled *migrant or refugee* are framed as ‘fix’ for this deficit by providing a route of progression towards gainful employment and entry into local communities thus empowering individuals and offering freedom from the binds that restrict them. However, Swift (2022) claims that ESOL classes are neither liberating nor empowering. Rather, the author has shown that participation in these classes produces unintended consequences in the form of additional deficit labels which narrow options further: ESOL learner, Entry level, learner of skills for employability. Not only do these labels fail to account for the diverse sociohistoric backgrounds of migrant learners and the skills they bring, but they also encourage uncritical stereotyping.

This section has highlighted identity as being integral to the way integration is perceived, which affects the way migrant language learners are framed in discourse and what opportunities this affords. In what follows, I consider what processes are at work in social encounters to position language learners as particular types of people and how negative positions might be countered or resisted in the community as well as in language classrooms.

Chapter 3

Identities in social and educational encounters

3 Identities in social and educational encounters

This review presents an overview of the development in thought concerning the formation of identity and self-concept. It examines social identity across a range of theoretical perspectives. Although this section incorporates perspectives that were originally developed outside of the sociolinguistics remit (which informs the theoretical framework for his study), they still name important social processes salient to this context. Theories from various streams of psychology, social psychology, sociology and anthropology situate themselves along a continuum: at one end of the spectrum, identity is conceived as a stable entity belonging to an individual while at the opposing end, identity is seen as a fluid, dynamic construct shaped in social interaction as well as being influenced by group ideals. It is a vital construct in this study because it sheds light on the identification processes that are salient in spaces of encounters with difference and contexts of unequal power relations. The ESOL classroom is one such context where difference abounds and where an asymmetrical power distribution is in play, not just between teacher-student but among class members and within the institute as a whole.

3.1 Social categorisation, stereotypes and stigma

Identifying (or classifying and labelling) people is an innate human obsession which forms an integral part of everyday encounters and as such it is fundamental to the organisation of the human world (Jenkins, 2014). Resisting the 'categorical impulse,' Ellen (2006) claims, leads to a lack of order and understanding. It has been suggested that categories are tools for mastering or normalising whatever is at odds with our understanding of the world we recognise (Turner & Edgley, 1980). The apparent need to categorise or assign identities in an age of globalisation seems even more prevalent given the current levels of population diversity in superdiverse cities in the UK. Carter and Sealy (2001) outline two kinds of social category: *social aggregates* which are constituted by involuntary characteristics (eg. age, race, immigration status, employment status) and *social collectives* whose members recognise and commit to group rules and rituals thereby indicating that membership involves some degree of agency. In the context of the ESOL classroom where labels are abundant, both kinds of category become salient in the identification of teachers and students.

Social categorisation, a key element of Social Identity Theory, is the process of classifying self and others according to perceived social information (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). As such, it is concerned with how we understand similarities and differences amongst human beings. On the one hand, this categorisation process can be considered productive as it provides a means of organising and

stratifying society, which in turn offers individuals a way to define themselves within different social contexts. Social categories have the potential, therefore, to create a sense of place and belonging for those who are keen to identify with a certain group and all it embodies. Hogg (2000) argues that ingroup identification satisfies a basic human need for subjective certainty in that individuals recognise and align with ways of being in that specific group: ways to think, feel, value and behave. On the contrary, a sustained lack of belonging may lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation which can have devastating consequences for wellbeing (Yu et al., 2023). While for most people loneliness is a transient emotion, Fromm (1994, cited in Cawood, 2019) argues that a human being suffering extreme feelings of isolation and a fear of rootlessness will yearn for a community with which to identify as they have a fundamental need for belonging to something greater than the self. This does not necessarily mean 'belonging' in the physical sense; an individual could be alone in a physical sense but 'may be related to ideas, values or at least social patterns that give them a feeling of communion and belonging' (p.34). In contrast, they might feel utter isolation living among a group with whom they share no values or beliefs; this is what Fromm calls 'moral aloneness' and he insists it is as unbearable as 'physical aloneness'. Social categories therefore have the potential to offer a sense of belonging which is not only key to social connectedness, but it also serves as a buffer against chronic loneliness and alienation (Yu et al. 2023).

On the other hand, it follows that the accentuation of similarities among objects within the ingroup highlights and possibly exaggerates differences in attributes of the out-group, which is potentially damaging for intergroup relations. Tendencies to see the social world in terms of dichotomous categories gives rise to harmful biases between groups leading to social prejudice, xenophobia, racism and an inevitable pervasion of discriminatory behaviour throughout society (Kramer et al. 2021). Such tendencies are fuelled by unhelpful stereotyping whose roots are embedded in essentialist notions of identity, explained by Bucholtz (2003, p. 400) as follows:

Essentialism is the position that the attributes and behaviour of socially defined groups can be determined and explained by reference to cultural and /or biological characteristics believed to be inherent in the group. As an ideology, essentialism rests on 2 assumptions: (1) that groups can be clearly delimited; and (2) that group members are more or less alike.

Due to the potential for conflict generated by social categorisation and stereotyping, considerable research has sought to investigate ways of reducing intergroup bias in interactional settings through various processes of decategorisation which include: models of contact (Pettigrew, 1998), recategorization to form a common ingroup identity (Gaertner et al., 2000; Yu et al., 2023) blurring boundaries to reduce stereotype threat (Rosenthal & Crisp, 2006) and crossed categorization (Crisp et

al., 2002). Such models focus on the reduction of difference by drawing attention to overlapping characteristics between groups. The aim is to ‘transform members’ perceptions of group boundaries from “us” and “them” to a more inclusive “we”’ (Gaertner et al., 1993, p. 1). However, this blurring of group differences in search of shared group attributes has come in for criticism for failing to value ever-increasing diversity in local communities and society as a whole. This has led to pervasive national discourse on the acknowledgement and value of difference and the internet is awash with ideas for ‘celebrating diversity’ in all walks of life. This is nowhere more evident than in the field of education where, following the Equality Act in 2010, *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion* (EDI) has continued to drive national and institutional policy change in all educational sectors, resulting in mission statements outlining how EDI is embedded in all institution activities, how differences are celebrated, how stereotypes are challenged and how an ethos of inclusivity prevails.

In a society deeply impacted by globalisation, Akkari and Maleq (2020, p. 207) suggest that ‘schools are increasingly called upon to foster active and engaged global citizens’. In language education, this has prompted a move towards teaching intercultural competence (Ros i sole, 2003; Simpson & Cooke, 2018), which Kramsch and Hua (2016, p. 42) define as ‘the ability to put yourself into others’ shoes, see the world the way they see it, and give it the meaning they give it based on shared human experience’. To this end, inclusive curricula and materials are designed to represent the world whilst remaining sensitive to ‘*misrepresentation and/or erasure of specific categories of people*’ (Gray, 2016, p. 97, emphasis in the original). As Bland (2016, p. 43) notes, ‘The misrepresented or Othered in texts – the marginalising of individuals, their cultures and sub-cultures – but equally the hidden or apparently absent ideology of materials used in classrooms, must receive critical attention and be made visible – whether the materials were specifically published for language teaching or not’. Nevertheless, however well-intentioned these moves may be, they still encourage a view of diversity as a social category. Therefore, although the classroom and other public arenas might offer a shared space with opportunities to encounter diversity, there is no guarantee that this will lead to meaningful engagement with difference.

One research network that seeks to explore what genuine engagement with difference looks like in practice and how it can be enabled is ETHER (Ethics and Aesthetics of Encountering the Other). Guided by the overarching question: *How do people of conflicting worldviews, memories and future visions encounter each other?*, ETHER shifts the theoretical focus from diversity as a social category, to difference as a quality that defines every human being. In so doing, they replace an emphasis on sameness with ‘an ethical commitment to preserving difference while making a genuine contact’ (ETHER, 2022). Bringing together international artists, linguists, philosophers, cultural organisations and educators in network activity has afforded insights into how people encounter the other across a

range of social contexts. One such insight has revealed that approaching an encounter with the Other from the position of one who is encountering a member of a preconceived category is not conducive to genuine interaction. What may be productive however, is the recognition of traditional markers of specific categories. Such markers open doors into engagement with an unfamiliar 'type' thereby giving access to range of different perspectives, a chance to discuss topics which are not always explored in mainstream discourse and ultimately, a more complex and nuanced picture of the person embracing the label (Shetty & Kubanyiova, 2022).

As we have seen, social categorisation may have advantages in terms of simplifying our social world and thereby reducing the amount of processing we need to do. Perceived membership in desired social groups can offer a sense of belonging, a source of pride, and a boost to the self-concept. Another positive of clearly defined socio-cultural groups is that their traditional markers may serve as invitations to engage with new people and ideas which is beneficial for intergroup relations. On the other hand, unwelcome category labels, imposed on individuals and communities, can be a source of distress as they are often inextricably bound to negative stereotypes and social stigma, a construct which encourages *othering*. Goffman (1963, p. 3) defines stigma as an 'attribute that is deeply discrediting'. It underscores a particular difference as undesirable and in need of rejection if a person is to fit the 'norm'. Stigma leads to an individual's identity being reduced 'from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one' (ibid). For example, Karrebæk's (2013) research into the language socialisation of two migrant school beginners in Denmark found that having a minority-language background becomes a social stigma that 'spoils' the social identity (Goffman, 1963) of the child and ultimately has a negative influence on learning outcomes. For the children, minority language affiliation became a stigma that resulted in their being both othered and excluded.

However, the contingent and fluid nature of stigma means that it can potentially be negotiated, managed and challenged. Cohen and Garcia (2005, p. 579) suggest that belonging to a negatively stereotyped or stigmatised group promotes an "I am us" mindset in that a person is defined in part by how their group is defined. This leads to group members adopting two distinct social identity management strategies: either they distance themselves from the perceived threatening stereotypical images or they affirm solidarity in a bid to challenge the harmful perceptions. Stigma has been employed as a conceptual tool to examine the negotiation of exclusion of a wide range of social groups labelled as *other* and treated as tainted. For example, Adeeko and Treanor (2022) argue that marginalised groups from migrant or refugee communities are subject to a highly stigmatised identity which they strive to resist. Their study shows how female refugees use their agency to refute dual identity ascriptions by reconfiguring themselves as entrepreneurial actors. Distancing themselves from

the damaging labels (refugee/woman) that taint routine life experiences and availability of opportunities, the women engage in entrepreneurial activity as a positive identity project, reinforcing the notion that they are 'something other than passive victims of subordination and disadvantage' (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022, p. 27). However, despite a desire to shake the label, it is a fact that most refugees are not in a position to enter into entrepreneurial activity nor to reclaim past professional status due to any number of contributing factors: limited professional experience, low language proficiency, structural constraints, limited access to both financial support and language education *inter alia*. In this case, stereotypes and stigma persist for those seeking to make their host nation a home.

In the context of refugees adjusting to their new environment, Wehrle et al. (2018) discuss threatening and threatened identities. While threatening identities are those which are imposed and result in stigma experiences, threatened identities are those that are in danger of being eradicated altogether and this potential eradication of cherished versions of the self can be as harmful as stigmatised impositions. Lin (2008) notes that central to positive self-concept is a sense of continuity which is located in memories of who we are. And a sense of who we are is reliant on our competencies (skills, vocations, roles) communities (groups, beliefs, places) and commitments to personal relationships (Hoover & Eriksen, 2004). In addition to self-continuity, Wehrle et al. (2018) outline three further fundamental, psychological identity needs for those facing resettlement in a place far removed from their own culture and habitus: self-worth, self-distinctiveness and self-control. For refugees trying to re-establish full lives, participating meaningfully in work, study and a range of other social contexts, these needs are all challenged in significant ways. For example, in researching female refugees in the UK, Stevenson (2019, p. 135) found that both their previously realised selves and their ambitious future selves had been 'fundamentally fractured'. She also noted that even over time, they did not resign themselves to their loss of wealth, material possessions and status; they remained traumatised by the poverty, unemployment, and poor housing. In turn, this led to loss of several different kinds: loss of self-worth, loss of direction, loss of sound mental and physical health (Phillimore, 2011; Allsop et al., 2014). The ray of hope for regaining past selves should have been education but the women faced tangible structural barriers in trying to access appropriate courses leading to an 'unclear future self', a 'survival self' and a very real 'feared self'. Stevenson's study makes a strong case for the interweaving of psychological and sociological concerns to provide a wider angled lens with which to examine self-concept; a decontextualised notion of the construct cannot tell the whole story because individuals are not always at liberty to exercise their agency.

Holland et al. (1998, p. 270) maintain that the personal is inseparable from the social and reject a dichotomy between the psychological and sociological as they explain: 'forms of personhood and forms of society are historical products, intimate and public, that situate the interactivity of social practices'. In this non-dualist ontology, the individual and their social context are seen as one, and there is mutuality and reciprocity between the two. This also signals identity as a non-essentialist notion whereby individuals have scope for inhabiting multiple identities depending on the social context through which they are traversing. However, whether any one of these potential identities can be realised is contingent on power structures and agentic possibilities.

3.2 Power, participation and positioning

In contrast to social psychological views of identity, social constructivist and poststructuralist perspectives take account of power, positioning and agency in the doing of identity work, which makes this a highly politicised activity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2008). Not only do these perspectives outline possibilities for social actors to challenge stereotypes that may have been imposed by power structures, but they also allow these actors to claim and negotiate a range of identities available in the local context. This highlights the dynamic, spatial and temporal nature of identity work. In an oft-cited definition, Hall (1996) explains identity as being:

about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves (Hall, 1996, p. 4)

Rather than being a fixed unified entity, the subject is viewed as fragmented and often composed of several 'contradictory or unresolved identities' (Hall, 1996, p. 277). These dynamic multifaceted *subjectivities* are 'the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation in the world' (Weedon, 1987, p. 32). Subjectivities are constructed and negotiated across time and space through individual interactions at the micro social level which are heavily influenced by issues pertaining to macro/meso social structures such as national and institutional policy, power relations, cultural forces, and imagined communities (Holland et al., 1997). Discursive practices make specific subject positions available to certain participants while restricting others. Kramsch (2009, p. 20) defines 'subject position' as:

the way in which the subject presents and represents itself discursively, psychologically, socially and culturally through the use of symbolic systems. It comes from a view of the subject

as decentred, historically and socially contingent – a subject that defines itself and is defined in interaction with other contingent subjects.

This suggests while demographically determined categories such as age and gender are inevitably recognised as essentialised social categories, groups and roles, they too can be considered fluid and socially constructed since all aspects of subjectivity are continually being improvised in the flow of interaction and activity.

From a poststructuralist perspective, identity is then a process, a lifelong project in which individuals strive for 'ontological security' (Giddens 1991, p. 47) in an ever-changing world, endeavouring to make sense of whichever sociocultural environment they find themselves in and to figure their own position within it. Identity is negotiated in everyday face-to-face encounters at the intersection of past memories, present interactions and future imaginings, which means that it is often a site of conflict where people are 'caught in the tensions between past histories that have settled in them and the present discourses and images that attract them or somehow impinge upon them' (Holland et al. 1998, p. 4). For those who cross physical, cultural, and linguistic borders, the destabilisation of identity is likely to create psychological and social borders of difference which are a struggle to negotiate and synthesise. As Block (2007, p. 864) observes 'it is not a half-and-half proposition whereby the individual becomes half of what he or she was and half of what he or she has been exposed to'. Rather, this site of struggle occupies an emergent third place (Hall, 1996) that is characterised by feelings of *ambivalence* as individuals experience the discomfort of *being a part of* unfamiliar group practices while at the same time *feeling apart from* the group (Bauman 1991). But to what extent does an individual have any control over this negotiation of difference and resolution of ambivalence? And to what extent can individuals become active participants in the social practices of new communities therefore being granted access to new identities/subject positions?

The role of agency is privileged in poststructuralist conceptions of identity. Local community structures, the classroom being one example, may constrain the scope of agency that individuals have in assuming desired identities or resisting unwelcome others. In a welcoming community of practice where a newcomer is treated as a potential member, Lave and Wenger (1991) posit that access is gained in the first instance through legitimate peripheral participation which affords engagement with skills and behaviours of the group. In this sense, the newcomer is granted space to engage rather than having agency restricted. Peripheral engagement gradually increases in complexity as the newcomer learns the various repertoires of the community and therefore becomes a legitimate member assuming whatever subjectivities this offers. However, peripheral participation is not always

legitimised, and these potential subject positions become out of bounds. This could be due to power relations, positionings and the resistance of those.

Positioning is a multi-layered phenomenon which conceives identity as being emergent and constituted in social interaction. As such, this concept affords a flexible, dynamic alternative to 'role' which is largely regarded as a static construct (Bucholtz & Hall, 2010). People are not uniquely positioned in the encounter but are produced as 'a nexus of subjectivities' (Baxter, 2016, p. 39). In bringing their subjective being to the discursive context, an individual is speaking and acting as one who comes from a history of multiple subject positions. Davies and Harré (1990, p. 47) define positioning as 'the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines.' These story lines pre-exist the encounter but are also developed and re-constituted within the conversation during which two types of positioning occur: *reflexive* (positions assigned to the self) and *interactive* (positions ascribed by others).

When interactants bring contrasting story lines to an encounter, then positions of self and other become ambiguous and the refiguring which must necessarily occur is then co-accomplished within the interaction. In positioning the self, one unavoidably positions the other, whether intentionally or tacitly and Harre and van Langenhove (1999) argue that in all cases, there is an embedded moral aspect since positioning theory is 'based on the principle that not everyone in the social episode has equal access to rights and duties to perform particular kinds of meaningful actions at that moment with those people' (Harre, 2012, p. 4).

Storylines developing in micro-level conversations are always subject to broader ideological discourses. This means that analysing actual interaction rather than isolated, recalled events facilitates a more in-depth investigation into the flexibility and complexity of positions, shedding light on other dimensions and constructs such as negotiation of power, access (or lack of) to certain subject positions as well as desired or imagined futures (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Davies & Harre, 1990).

De Fina and King's (2011) study examines interviews conducted in Spanish with Latina immigrants to the United States. They conclude that not only the participants but also the interviewers position themselves in their narratives in ways that reaffirm and contest dominant language ideologies and discourses about migration. For example, one narrator describes the use of/being Spanish as divisive in her workplace and frames the learning of English as an individual responsibility. Her account reinforces these familiar language ideologies about immigrants to the United States, at the same time constructing the struggles that constitute migrant subjectivities.

Building on poststructuralist notions of subjectivities as discursively produced, agentic and subject to power structures, Holland et al. (1998) conceived *figured worlds* as specific sites where identity is developed, practised, positioned and co-produced through organised daily activity with others. They are social landscapes ‘within which social encounters have significance and people’s positions matter’ (Urrieta, 2007, p. 108). These culturally and historically defined settings are characterised by ‘typical’ narratives; power and hierarchical relations are an integral part of the recognised narratives. These worlds are populated by familiar social types from collective imaginings (for example, teacher-student), but these participant roles are not assigned in any fixed, static sense. They combine more durable aspects of identity – ‘history-in-person’ – which have formed over time, with emergent subjectivities. Because they are socially organised and reproduced, people learn to relate to one another in different ways as their behaviour is mediated.

People *figure* (use their agency to shape/re-shape) who they are through the activities and in relation to each other as their attitudes and outlooks are influenced. Consequently, new identities are formed as lives intersect with the processes within the figured world. Over time, a participant’s ability to sense the figured world becomes embodied as they grow ever more familiar with its happenings. In turn, this may lead them to author their own spaces (Bakhtin, 1981) and make those available to others. The figured world is thus produced and reproduced in the practices of its participants. These *figured worlds* are not products to be described but socially organised processes which develop, take shape within and give meaning to their co-produced practices, activities, discourses, artefacts and performances.

The concept of *figured worlds* has been used as a theoretical tool to study how people heuristically develop their self-concept and expand the range of subject positions available to them within constraints imposed and opportunities afforded by specific social-historical-spatial contexts. It is then a concept that offers the possibility of giving in-depth insights in educational contexts.

In empirical studies, *figured worlds* has been used to describe how language teachers and their students *figure* their worlds and develop subjectivities in multilingual, multiracial and multicultural spaces. They author, or make meaning, of themselves through multiple available artefacts and discourses, which may include that of the ‘good student’ or the ‘caring teacher’ for example. Studies in language education are wide in scope and examine identity formation of both teachers and students through the lens of a range of figured worlds, for example: teacher education (Rubin & Land, 2017; Varghese & Snyder, 2018); teaching abroad for pre-service teachers (Chao, et al., 2019); student agency and teacher contingency (Baynham, 2006), life history accounts of language learning (Coffey & Street, 2008) refugee and racial minorities’ perceived competence and achievement in figured

worlds of difference (Sabbah & Heyd-Metzuyanim, 2021; Caraballo, 2019; Rubin, 2007; Bal, 2014), multiracial figured worlds within a racial borderland (Chang, 2013) church-based ESL program (Chao & Kuntz, 2013), discipline of black female students (Hines-Datiri & Carter Andrews, 2020). Although these studies are wide in scope, they have common threads in that they show how various educational figured worlds recursively create and legitimise particular identities while contesting and delegitimising others. They also depict these worlds as fluid and overlapping, which means there is every danger that figured worlds will collide and some may be erased.

On this point, Rush and Fecho (2008) suggest that rather than trying to avoid the collision and erasure, educators should construct classrooms as contact zones (Pratt, 2012), inviting a range of figured worlds to enter the space, and allowing actors to improvise their way through this contact with difference. These classroom contact zones, Rush and Fecho (2008, p. 135) argue, should be positively framed as 'catalysts for the expansion of more inclusive and, consequently, more interesting worlds to be figured endlessly'. The way teachers and students make sense of their worlds through improvisation and negotiation signals figured worlds as sites of potential transformation; this also highlights the intrinsic role that language plays in the process of figuring of identities, of the positioning of self and other across shifting worlds.

Language is inextricably linked to identity work, and it operates on several levels. This is potentially problematic for migrants and refugees who are not only subject to the language of imposed social categories but also to the language used to impose positionings within daily social interaction. At the macro level, we have seen how people position themselves and others in relation to identity inscriptions or categories (Block 2010). Although a seemingly simple use of descriptors, these kinds of labels are loaded with significance since they are bound up with the language ideologies that created them. For example, interactively identifying language students with the inscriptions 'ESOL learner', 'migrant' and 'refugee' is problematic since it suggests that those belonging to these groups share homogenous, fixed identities and thus ignores the complex, diverse and fluid nature of their identity positions. In addition, these labels may have different connotations for the students themselves ranging from being hugely salient to the way they position themselves reflexively, to carrying no relevance or meaning at all.

At the micro level, in routine interactions where identity work is achieved, language ideologies become 'interactionally alive' (Bucholtz & Hall, 2008, p. 154). This is where language, as a vehicle for achieving identity work, conveys important social information about the speakers and makes the negotiation of identities possible. For migrants and refugees, therefore, this means the obstacles are twofold: firstly, most migrants have a limited command of the language so may lack the tools to

participate productively in the way that they want in interaction; secondly, opportunities to engage in such identity work in local contexts are not always easily accessible. Salvo and de C Williams (2017) claim that this is in fact a far more significant point, as the ability to claim desired subject positions in interactional contexts has been linked with positive wellbeing. Their study suggests that while migrants' poor language proficiency and negative positionings through discursive practices are frequently cited as the chief cause of emotional distress, the greatest post-migration stressor is that there is minimal chance of that interaction happening in the first place. Without access to contexts of communication (ESOL classes being the obvious example), where such interactive participation is available, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are forced to rely on interpreters to help them carry out a range of social transactions. In some cases, having to rely on others to speak for you can be experienced as embarrassment rather than an act of help. On the contrary, for the participants in Salvo and de C Williams' (2017, p. 742) study, being granted access to English classes resulted in feelings of achievement, independence, autonomy and self-respect as crystallised in one student's summing up of the issue: "If I speak English, what am I? I am full man me".

Bureaucratic red tape may restrict access to ESOL classes and other potential interaction contexts, therefore limiting opportunities for migrants to broaden subjectivities as well as having consequences for self-concept and wellbeing. Offering some kind of translation service (either formal or in moment-to-moment interaction as code switching, for example) is often framed as a positive strategy to ensure equal opportunity and inclusion for those lacking linguistic skills to carry out a particular social transaction or to follow a conversation. However, there is a veiled wielding of power with the provision of translation facilities which, although well-intentioned, may remove independence and voice for some migrants. At one and the same time, translation operates as a process of inclusion and potential exclusion, or at least marginalisation. For while translated voices are included in the communication, they are marked as linguistically limited. In this sense, translation is always imbued with hierarchical notes (Bucholtz & Hall, 2008). This is not just limited to official administrative contexts; it can also be seen in classrooms when students recognise the power that language holds.

Cashman's (2008) somewhat troubling study in a bilingual classroom with an English monolingual teacher, highlights how the teasing practices of students who were assigned as linguistic mediators for a Spanish monolingual newcomer, escalated into opportunities for repeated torment and bullying. Cashman (2008) points out that the teacher (along with an English monolingual assistant) had inadvertently set up the classroom as a community of practice which kept the vulnerable student marginalised on the periphery. Not only did he have limited linguistic tools to participate as his peers did, but he was even denied access to classroom artefacts such as the 'special scissors'. In collaboration, the 'mediators' repeatedly align with each other using their bilingualism to manage

their intersubjective in-group identities and in doing so position the boy as an outsider by attacking his 'face' (Goffman, 1967). The name-calling and mocking of his accent culminate with what appears to be the most affective insult of all: 'ni sabes inglés (you don't even know English)' (p. 156). This prompts the student to make an empty threat to report them to the teacher, who as his classmates realise, will not understand his complaint. Paradoxically, this results in the Spanish newcomer being positioned as a troublemaker rather than a target of abuse. Two things stand out from this example: firstly, that the bilingual children were aware of and seen to be enacting dominant language ideologies of English in the local context; secondly, that the language classroom is a complex site of engagement with the other where identities matter.

3.3 Identities in language education

An extended body of contemporary research literature into the relationship between identity and language learning has continued to gain traction over the past two decades and demonstrated how identity plays a significant role in language learning (Block, 2007, 2010; Darvin & Norton, 2015; Norton & De Costa, 2018; Menard Warwick, 2005; Morita, 2004; Norton 2000, 2013; Norton & Toohey, 2004, 2011). Studies in language education have highlighted how language is a crucial factor in the negotiation of power within unequal relationships with people being positioned in ways that they embrace or resist (eg. Morita, 2004; Norton, 2000). Since positioning allows or restricts individuals in what they can do and say this has major implications for encounters in the classroom.

In her investigation into the role of positioning in classroom participation, Kayi-Aydar (2013) shows how a vocal, dominant student positions himself and others in particular ways. This results in a positive impact in terms of creating his own opportunities for learning but severely limits those of his classmates, depriving them of alternative subjectivities in doing so. In a similar study, Kayi-Aydar (2014, p. 707) describes how 'two talkative students came to occupy polarized positions': while both dominated classroom conversation, one was accepted by the rest of the group after using humour as a strategy to build friendships but the other remained positioned as an outsider therefore restricting his opportunities to participate in classroom encounters, which in turn, narrowed the range of subjectivities available to him. The students in Kayi-Aydar's studies were able to make use of the opportunities to negotiate and claim subject positions within a supportive classroom environment, even if the range of subjectivities did remain narrow for one vocal student. However, being a strong or dominant speaker does not always go hand in hand with the ability to create opportunities for learning, nor does it grant these students opportunities to take up desired subject positions. It does not even guarantee motivation.

Considerable research has sought to explain why learners, despite articulating a strong need or desire to learn the language, do not or cannot always commit to their learning. One poststructuralist concept that emerged as an explanation of this contradictory and incongruous behaviour is that of *investment*, a construct which integrates identity and human agency and shows how social practices affect language learning (Norton Pierce, 1995; Norton 2000, 2001). With its focus on social processes, it provided a timely and ‘important critical counterpoint to mainstream research on L2 motivation’ (Ushioda, 2020, p. 28). Drawing on notions of subjectivity (Weedon, 1987) and power (Bourdieu, 1991), *investment* signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and the extent to which they are willing to engage with it. How learners are able to invest in that language is contingent on the negotiation of power within that specific context. This power negotiation refers to the asymmetrical relationship between teacher-student as well as a potential perceived unequal distribution of power between students themselves.

Norton’s (2001) foundational ethnographic research into the relationship between identity and language learning of five immigrant women in Canada occurred at a time when inward migration into North America was changing the sociopolitical landscape. Migration was then viewed as unidirectional with people moving from their home nation to the country of settlement and as such learning the official language was considered essential to integration and meaningful employment. In spite of this, Norton found that the participants’ level of motivation was not enough to determine a successful learning experience. She argued that conceiving the learner’s self as a coherent stable entity did not allow her to capture the social complexities involved. What her research did reveal was the pivotal role played by power relations in determining the women’s ability to access the second language. For example, one learner, Katerina, who identified herself as a respected member of the teaching community in her native country, dropped out of her course after a disagreement with her language teacher who had discouraged her from taking a course that would give her greater access to a group of ‘like-minded people’. She also felt the teacher used the term ‘immigrant’ as a derogatory identifier and made her feel ‘stupid’ (Norton, 2001, p. 164). This takes on added significance as Katerina felt slighted by a member of the imagined community of professionals, she affiliated herself to and longed to belong to in her new environment. Another student who identified herself as a ‘wealthy Peruvian’ withdrew from the course after the teacher failed to recognise her country as important to their discussion. Although these two women were actively engaged in classroom practices, their communities extended beyond the classroom and exerted a powerful influence on the nature of their investment and their ultimate decision to withdraw. These examples show acts of resistance and non-participation from a position of marginality and suggest that even a highly motivated learner may invest very little in classroom practices they perceive as biased, racist, or inaccessible in some other

way. Feelings of marginalisation or even exclusion may result in other behaviours in the classroom as learners exercise their agency in other ways. They might perform acts of resistance or non-participation by failing to complete homework, neglecting to bring necessary materials to class (Talmy, 2008) by discussing classroom matters in their mother-tongue (Canagarajah, 2004), or by remaining silent.

Looking at student identity through the lens of social encounters in an ESOL context, allows us to appreciate the complex social context of power relationships, categorisation, positioning and how this can shape or restrict the kinds of encounters that the students are able/allowed to participate in. Different theories have foregrounded different aspects of this social process. However, students are of course not the only players in this social arena. Language teachers are imbued with authority and therefore hold the symbolic power to restrict or enable a range of subjectivities. But they are also negotiating their own identity projects so may be struggling to claim or resist certain subjectivities themselves. What is more, while it follows that student agency needs a measure of teacher agency, teachers are also subject to institutional constraints. If teachers have a sense of being able to practise agency, they are more likely to imagine teaching as 'a meaningful profession rather than just a job' (Priestley, Biesta, & Robinson, 2015, p. 149). In contrast, the potential limitation of agentic moves may result in a range of negative emotions related to the classroom experience: frustration, disillusionment, conflict in beliefs. De Costa and Norton (2017, p. 6) note that 'emotional management is a key part of teacher identity development' and, considering the impact this may have on the classroom encounter, issues surrounding the development of teacher identity warrant further development in the following section.

Teachers' perceptions of their efficacy as professional educators have the potential to impact all areas of their performance and development such as classroom practices, pedagogical philosophy, collegial interactions, access to power and ownership of language (Kayi-Aydar, 2019). Teacher identities develop within a complex ecology determined by macro-meso-micro structures operating in the field of language education (Douglas Fir Group, 2016). It is at the intersection of societal, institutional and local classroom encounters that certain identities are legitimated while others are limited or even refused.

At the macro level, educator accountability is currently being foregrounded on a global scale, putting pressure on teachers to meet the results-driven agendas associated with forces of neoliberalism. Not only does this testing culture result in additional stress for teachers in terms of workload and maintaining the face of a 'good teacher', but for those who do not see their teacher identity as being that of a gatekeeping test administrator, the emotional labour involved in carrying out such dissonant

duties can have significant consequences for wellbeing as well as making serious dents in self-concept (De Costa & Norton, 2017). Also at the macro level, and despite recent progress in this area in the field of SLA, language teachers still find themselves subject to hegemonic language ideologies that value and validate the native speaker over the non-native speaker. Several studies have been occupied with the native/non-native dichotomy where non-native speakers resist dominant ideologies claiming their multilingualism as a resource and asserting their position as legitimate language teachers (eg. Golombek & Jordan, 2005; Motha 2006). De Costa and Norton (2017, p. 9) suggest that these kinds of ideologies 'percolate into the school (meso) level where discourses on what counts as good teaching are often contradictory and can also become entrenched amongst school administrators'.

Monolingualism is one such entrenched notion that often seeps into language classrooms emphasising the need to use the standardised version of the target language rather than 'other Englishes' (Swift, 2021). Collins (2013) argues that ESOL is a site that is called upon to maintain such standardisation through its practices; for example, underlying power relations are perpetuated through the teaching of language formality and appropriacy. But as Milroy and Milroy (1985, p. 19) observe, the notion of a standard language is 'an idea in the mind rather than a reality' and is in fact a manifestation of hegemonic power bound up with value judgements about who speaks well and who speaks badly (Van Lier, 1995). Since this concept conceives language as a bounded entity, being under pressure to align with dominant discourse on the favourability of a standardised language seriously constrains teacher agency in constructing multi/translingual, multicultural and multimodal spaces. For a teacher whose identity is rooted in conceptions of language as a fluid construct used to make connections between people and education as a field of equal opportunity, this restriction on being able to integrate a range of linguistic and cultural resources, and in turn develop the students' range of semiotic resources, often sits in conflict with their concept of self as a fair and inclusive educator.

Conclusions drawn from Kanno and Stuart's (2011) study of two novice language teachers would suggest that the development of teacher identity is of more importance to classroom encounters than subject knowledge. This may account for the large body of research which has studied language teacher identity in tandem with myriad salient constructs that signal the unobservable dimension of teaching (eg. motivation, investment, beliefs, moral values, life experiences) to investigate its impact on professional development, career trajectories and classroom practice (Feryok, 2012; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Kayi-Aydar, 2015, 2019; Kubanyiova, 2019; Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016; Varghese & Snyder, 2018).

While much of this research has its origins in sociocultural theories, notions of positionality and agency are intertwined, demonstrating that language teachers' subjectivities result as an accumulation of a

range of subject positions that have been made available (or not) in historic teaching and learning situations (Haddix, 2010). These subject positions interact with teacher beliefs which encompass efficacy beliefs, epistemological beliefs, pedagogical beliefs, beliefs about students' capabilities and attributes (Pajares, 1992) as well as social and political influences (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2014). Teacher beliefs draw together the spatial, temporal and narrative elements of life history. They are deeply rooted in affective episodes from the past, but they play out in the present, so they are an important consideration for encounters in the classroom and beyond. Because beliefs are formed in early life experiences as well as in early career practices, there is some dispute as to how mutable they are. This means there is potential for ingrained beliefs preventing teachers from acting with flexibility and agency (Priestly et al., 2015).

When beliefs and values collide with institutional policy and practice, this weighs heavily on educators. Cooke (2008, p. 25) describes how a teacher caught in a discussion about accent finds herself in a 'pedagogic bind'. The teacher's response is to 'bleach out' students' lived experience as subjects of colonialism 'with a "colour blind" discourse' thus removing race, class and imperialism as issues of importance. Cooke concludes that, paradoxically, in trying to smooth over such difficult terrain and keep the classroom 'safe', teachers are doing students a disservice by invalidating and limiting their complex identities. She suggests that while adhering to institutional policy, teachers should also find ways to engage their moral compass and re-imagine the classroom as an arena for social transformation. Kubanyiova and Crookes (2016, p. 119) see this aspect of teacher identity, i.e. that of a *moral agent*, as 'the core of the language teacher's role'. Language classrooms embody a dense moral landscape which reflects the strata of many urban, cosmopolitan locations. Therefore, sensitive issues concerning language and identity are likely to (and arguably should) find their way into classroom conversation.

A considerable amount of research, however, points to language teachers as being agentic professionals who *are* able to reconcile their beliefs and aspirations with structural policies and practices, enacting their identities in meaningful ways to enhance student outcomes (Haneda & Sherman, 2016; Karimpour et al., 2022; Kayi-Aydar, 2015). Research has also shown that teacher beliefs based on subjective experience can have a positive impact on teacher-student relationships. For instance, Kayi-Aydar (2018) analyses Hispanic pre-service teachers' narrative positionings and notes how, since childhood, the tensions and conflicts of trying to fit into White groups in learning contexts affects the way they align and stand in solidarity with students traversing similar life histories to their own.

To summarise, the perspectives discussed in this section see identity as the social positioning of self and other. Rather than being constituted solely in the individual psyche or situated in fixed social categories, identity is seen as a discursive construct that emerges and circulates in social interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2010). This is not to say that macro structures, ideologies and an individual's sense of self have no bearing; but it is in local interactional contexts that subjectivities are maintained, contested, performed or altered. This more nuanced and flexible kind of identity work becomes visible in moment-to-moment interaction. The next section then turns attention to how exactly these interactional positions become visible through communication, which grounds this study in the sociolinguistic paradigm. I argue that the concept of languaging is crucial because it makes visible the communication practices through which encounters are enacted.

Chapter 4

Social encounters and languaging

4 Social Encounters and Linguaging

In this section, I trace the beginnings of the sociolinguistic paradigm to the work of scholars who first challenged the notion that language could be abstracted away from its situational context. I then focus on the affordances of interactional sociolinguistics for shedding light on everyday encounters and I present some of Erving Goffman's conceptual metaphors that are helpful for highlighting how identity is performed in face-to-face interaction. I show how sociolinguistic repertoires were built on earlier foundations and how they recognise an array of semiotic resources that people draw on in making meaning with others. Finally, I consider the potential for a languaging perspective in adult language education.

4.1 Sociolinguistics: the beginning

In the 1960s and 1970s, sociolinguistics emerged from the work of prominent scholars who endorsed the view that language could not be adequately understood without paying attention to many layers of social context including social and cultural identifying categories like gender, ethnicity, age, geographical location and social class. This appreciation of language as being embedded in social contexts was in direct opposition to the prevalent innatist perspective of language as being a psychological competence, acquired by instinct (Chomsky 1965). Viewing language as a set of ideal universal principles produced by an idealised, homogeneous speech community, innatists abstracted language away from everyday contexts. Their data consisted of often hypothetical and isolated structures, contrived to test a model. This kind of abstraction was challenged by cognitive psychologists and sociolinguists alike.

The former argued that more emphasis should be placed on the developmental aspects of language acquisition as a result of participation in a supportive interactive environment (Vygotsky, 1978) while the latter, following Dell Hymes, objected to innatist principles of language acquisition because of the distinction drawn between 'linguistic competence' and 'language in use'. Innatists considered the latter to be unsystematic, just a performance, and therefore perceived it unworthy of scientific study (Chomsky, 1965). On the contrary, Hymes (1974, p. 75) was critical of Chomsky's failure to account for linguistic variation and insisted that by failing to pay attention to language and relations within that situated performance, an individual was in danger of becoming a 'social monster'. He proposed researching 'communication as a whole, both to understand what is being conveyed and to understand the specific place of language within the process' (Hymes, 1972, p. xxviii).

Hymes believed everyday interactions have their own systems and rules which are indeed worthy of investigation, and he suggested a shift in focus away from linguistic code, '*la langue*' to actual speech, '*la parole*'. As he frequently noted, ungrammatical utterances may be socially appropriate, just as grammatical utterances can be socially inappropriate (Hymes, 1972). Challenging Chomsky's (1965) theory of linguistic competence, he proposed that for an individual to be considered part of a speech community, they should have a 'communicative competence'. This view encompassed not only access to knowledge but also the ability to put that knowledge into practice, in other words to use language in a way that is appropriate to the given situation. Knowing what can be said, when, to whom and in whose presence is the essence of successful communication. To this end, Hymes (1974) advocated generating ethnographic accounts of distinctive 'ways of speaking' in different communities of practice. Hymes' insights paved the way for a range of discourse analytic methods, one of which is Interactional Sociolinguistics, a bottom-up approach to examining small scale encounters such as those which form the bulk of this study's data.

4.2 Interactional sociolinguistics: Gumperz and Goffman

Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) is a qualitative interpretative approach to the analysis of social interaction which seeks to understand what participants want to convey in everyday communicative practices. It looks at talk as it unfolds in interaction. Theories and methods of IS allow researchers to explore social processes through which relationships are built and maintained, as well as affording insights into how power is exercised, how communities are created and how identities are formed and negotiated. Although this approach to discourse analysis is grounded in Hymes' (1972) ethnography of communication, it is John Gumperz who is widely regarded as the founder of IS as well as being 'one of the foundationalist spirits in the broader field of sociolinguistics itself' (Levinson, 2003, p. 43). He has used IS to explore a range of topics including language diversity, bilingualism, interethnic communication and language and educational issues.

The emergence of the IS approach was motivated by Gumperz' (1982a, 1982b) desire to understand the linguistic and cultural diversity he was observing in his fieldwork. He believed that with better understanding of such diversity, intercultural communication and inter-group perceptions could be improved, particularly in increasingly diverse urban areas where he was encountering issues of social (in)justice and disharmony. This laid foundations for future research in IS whose studies are frequently grounded in a concern for social justice (Gordon, 2011; Gordon & Tannen, 2023). Gumperz (2015, p. 310) argues that 'all communication is intentional and grounded in inferences that depend upon the assumption of mutual good faith. Culturally specific presuppositions play a key role in inferring what is Intended'. With this in mind, Gumperz sought to devise methods of analysis that could capture what

participants intend to convey in everyday interaction. The methodology involves ethnographic methods: observation of speakers in naturally occurring conversation, careful linguistic transcription and detailed analysis of recorded interactions. The purpose is to investigate how speakers employ 'contextualisation cues' (Levinson, 2003) to index what they mean by their words and how listeners in turn recognise and interpret these cues through 'conversational inference'.

Contextualisation cues comprise a host of prosodic and paralinguistic features which the listener uses to interpret verbal messages in the context of his own experience and culturally-shaped background. What Gumperz (1982a) found through his ethnographic work, was that members of diverse cultural groups use and interpret these cues differently depending on their cultural 'contextualisation conventions' which can lead to misunderstandings and breakdowns in communication which he termed *crossstalk* (Rymes, 2014). In turn, these interactional miscues can contribute to wider social issues such as access to communities, access to information, access to learning or employment opportunities, discrimination in the interaction itself and ethnic stereotyping (Gordon, 2011). Gumperz believed that by uncovering mismatched 'contextualisation conventions' and educating participants in their *actual* meanings, misunderstandings could be reduced, and unintentional discriminatory behaviour may be avoided (Gordon, 2011). The previous section of the study has shown how prejudice and discrimination go beyond mismatched contextualisation cues and depend on power dynamics within interaction as well as ideological identity positioning. Nevertheless, Gumperz' analytical apparatus was unique in its ability to 'merge intellectual, social, and moral considerations' in order to make these conversational mishaps visible but also comprehensible (Duranti & Goodwin, 1992, pp. 229-30). Thus, his pioneering microanalytic approach afforded opportunities to understand meaning-making in action whilst linking the micro and macro of sociolinguistics in meaningful ways.

Gumperz' development of IS was largely influenced by the work of sociologist and cultural theorist Erving Goffman whose work focused on how people present themselves and make meaning in everyday face-to-face communication and social relationships. This involved studying the way people live by rules and rituals and how these impose moral behavioural obligations. Goffman was preoccupied with understanding how individuals are controlled by these external factors and how they work out how to behave in various social contexts. To render this behaviour visible, he paid attention to verbal and non-verbal cues in social interaction rather than relying on assumptive categories. He developed 'a way of looking at interaction that is as compelling and effective as it is messy and somewhat vague' (Wine, 2008, p. 1). Wine does not consider this lack of precision to be a limitation; on the contrary, she finds the richness of his notions to be 'sufficiently imprecise to capture the vagaries and ambivalences of the human condition'(ibid). Paying attention to such specific signs draws attention to sameness and difference 'unsettling the terrain of social identity' (Carrabine, 2019,

p. 681). In this case, Goffman's methods have potential for making identity work visible in social and educational encounters.

Although Goffman's intention was never to provide sociology with a coherent, systematic theory, he did develop a wide range of perspectives for examining social encounters. His multi-perspectivism affords theoretical, methodological and conceptual insights into everyday life and offers practical means by which aspects of social life can be investigated and interpreted. Goffman's work remains relevant for contemporary research as it continues to 'ignite, shape and sharpen the sociological imagination of every generation' (Jacobsen, 2010, p. 4). For this reason, his concepts and theoretical frameworks (1959, 1963, 1967, 1974) have been widely employed to research a diverse range of contexts and his micro-analyses are routinely referenced across the social sciences: media and communication (Winkin & Leeds-Hurwitz, 2013); The Arts (Whiteside & Kelly, 2016); linguistic anthropology (Agha, 2005; Goodwin & Goodwin, 2004; Wortham 2002); linguistic ethnography (Copland & Creese, 2015); sociology (Jacobsen, 2010; Jacobsen & Smith, 2022); sociolinguistics (Bauman, 2011; Hua, Otsuji & Pennycook, 2017); language education (Collins et al., 2009; Kohl, 2020; Preves & Stephenson, 2009). This is testament to the strength of Goffman's metaphors to capture what is often perceived to be elusive in social interaction as well as demonstrating the validity of his interests and observations which clearly remain relevant in contemporary society.

Although Goffman did not care for the label, he is often associated with symbolic interactionism, a theoretical framework that perceives the social world as the product of shared symbols, language being the most obvious of these (Jacobsen, 2010). Society is constructed and maintained through the subjective meanings that individuals attach to these symbols and these meanings are reproduced in communication. A central concept of symbolic interactionism is *the self* and since Goffman is widely acknowledged as the first scholar to study self-presentation systematically, this is one reason for his association with the movement. Goffman (1959) viewed the self not as an essential, static entity but as 'a highly social product which is the result of individually staged projections and responses taking place in social meetings as well as of situational and societal constraints' (Jacobsen & Kristiansen, 2015, p. 105). In this sense, the Goffmanian self is more a collection of socially situated roles which appear in interaction with others. Branaman (1997) argues that Goffman's works suggest two contrasting perceptions of the self, almost a split personality. On one hand, it is a social product devoid of internal workings, while on the other, the self is concerned with inner life, so manipulates its image to create favourable impressions. However, in reality, the self is not always able to control the impressions it makes which can have serious social consequences for individuals, especially those belonging to certain stigmatised groups, such as refugees.

Goffman's interaction order (1983) reflects the needs of the self to be recognised by the other which makes it a powerful social presence. The fact that the self depends on such social recognition to thrive signals a deeply ethical involvement as Manning (2010, p. 102) argues:

[The interaction order] is morally compelling and contains the most powerful moral obligations to self and others: responsiveness, availability, emotional involvement and investment. Meaning inheres in it...in some way an awareness of one's awareness and that of others is central to being,...the interactional figure becomes human only when together with others and is otherwise naked.

When a presentation of the self is not welcomed, recognised or validated by the other, this not only 'corrupts the one to whom it is attached...., [but] in the process, corrupts the normal who in the face of it loses their own moral generosity' (Lemert, 2010, p. 151). Both Manning and Lemert's ideas have connections with Emmanuel Levinas' notion of first ethics. Maintaining generosity, openness and responsibility for the other is Levinas' (1998) main concern as outlined in his relational ethics to which I return later (See section 5.2).

Paying attention to social encounters in the ESOL classroom through a Goffmanian lens will illuminate identity work being done by both teacher and students and how this affects the language learning process. This lens has the potential to show how people use agency to position themselves as particular kinds of people, how they perform, negotiate and claim identities as well as resisting others which are imposed by ideological discourse and institutional processes. It can also show how the self is recognised (or not) by others. Micro-sociological perspectives can shed light on how relationships are built and maintained during classroom interaction which introduces an emotional aspect. For example, in the context of an ESOL classroom, Nguygen (2007) identifies specific instances of humour, laughter/smiling and use of familiar artefacts to create emotional affinity, thus building rapport in ongoing flow of teacher-student interaction. The section below expands on the kind of behaviours people engage in when doing identity work and when forging interpersonal relationships. These conceptual metaphors have been valuable in informing aspects of my analysis.

4.3 Goffman's conceptual metaphors in contemporary sociolinguistics

Goffman's (1959, 1967) theories of social interaction are derived from his empirical work in different contexts of everyday life where he was a naturalistic observer of strangers. As he maintained, 'it is social situations that provide the natural theatre in which all bodily displays are enacted and in which all bodily displays are read' (Goffman, 1983, p. 4). He observed that by paying attention to the routine, seemingly trivial minutiae in face-to-face encounters, he was able to produce an array of constructs

to interpret social behaviour. His conceptualisation of identity construction in interpersonal interaction is achieved through the use of metaphors, many of which are borrowed from dramaturgy which Edgley (2013, p. 2) defines as 'the ways in which human beings, in concert with similarly situated others, create meaning in their lives'.

Goffman's dramaturgical analysis is concerned with how the self emerges as a dramatic effect from an encounter in which individuals recognise the other by *performing* or projecting a desirable image. In this sense, it is a mutually influencing performance where actors reciprocally form impressions of each other from both intentional and unconscious emission of signs. His dramaturgical model outlines six key elements: performances, teams, regions, discrepant roles, communication out of character and the art of impression management (Goffman, 1959). These elements are enacted in *frames* which function as stages for the performance:

Individuals experience life as a series of different sets or stages, organised formally or informally. While each individual may have different understandings of these settings, and of what's happening within them, the shared frame creates enough consistency and mutuality for interaction to proceed (Jenkins, 2008, p. 92)

Viewed through a dramaturgical lens, the educational arena is brimming with performances on various recognisable stages as social actors engage in daily rituals, managing impressions for their classroom/institution audiences as they aim to achieve social goals, identity construction being one of these. The four concepts outlined below are helpful for understanding how identity work unfolds in face-to-face interaction and they shed light on the complex behavioural choreography that is at play. I give a brief overview of each and consider them in relation to classroom-based research.

4.3.1 Presenting the self: Performance

Impression management routines underscore all everyday interaction and occur in various dramaturgical regions: *front stage*, *backstage* and *offstage* locations. Since this study is concerned with classroom interaction, there is no option to gain access to observable backstage behaviour, so it is the front stage mode which is of interest. This is the area where the *actor* is conscious of their *audience* and will observe ceremonies of interaction such as facework, demeanour and deference, to maintain social order. The dramaturgical metaphor extends to the use of *mask* as a means of disguising certain aspects of character, while illuminating others for the benefit of his audience. The issue with having no access to backstage behaviour means that there is no access to the whole story. For example, the teacher who invests in the identity of an animated, competent professional is unlikely

to reveal exhaustion due to emotional labour associated with the role in the classroom; this is reserved for backstage regions (Preves & Stephenson, 2009). Similarly, the student who is keen to shrug an assigned identity (refugee, ESOL learner) in favour of one that matches the ideal of a future self (PhD student) is likely to go to lengths to embody such a desired identity. To be taken seriously depends not only on the logic of their presentation but also 'presence and comportment' (Jacobsen & Kristiansen, 2015). However, there may be instances when maintaining the performance becomes unsustainable; the masks drop and there may be a glimpse into areas which have previously been guarded.

Staging a performance to show oneself in a specific light involves the act of putting on a *front*. Front is managed through *sign vehicles* as Goffman (1959, p. 40) clarifies: 'while in the presence of others, the individual typically infuses his activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent or obscure'. Continuing the dramaturgical metaphor, *front* encompasses three theatrical interconnected sign elements: *setting* (physical environment), *personal front* (appearance and manner) and *front* (the collective and situational expectation). The *setting* involves the furniture, physical layout and stage props and it is something that 'tends to stay put' (Goffman, 1959, p. 33) so the actors need to move into this space before they can begin their performance. *Personal front* is used to describe items of expressive equipment that follow the performer in and out of the setting. Goffman (1959) divides these personal front stimuli into *appearance* and *manner*; *appearance* stimuli give information about the performer's social statuses and temporary ritual work whereas *manner* stimuli give clues as to the interactional role the performer is expected to play.

Goffman's (1959) key concern was the way actors seek to control impressions being formed by their audience. He believed this was achieved most effectively through bodily enactment, or what he called *body idiom*, which comprises attire, comportment and props as well as all physical movement and gesture. The significance of non-verbal communication in any social encounter is that it is constant for while 'an individual can stop talking, he cannot stop communicating through body idiom; he must say either the right thing or the wrong thing. He cannot say nothing' (Goffman, 1963, p. 35). Goffman also distinguished between information that social actors 'give' consciously through impression management and those they 'give off' unwittingly which suggests that a person is never in complete control of the impression they are making.

Set in the context of a language class in the USA, Kubota's (2002) study draws attention to the kind of verbal resources and body idiom students employed to perform four identities: American identity,

Forged identity, Native-language identity, Conflicted identity. Throughout their conversations, those performing American identity incorporated linguistic markers (eg. 'oh my god', 'uh hum') reduced forms ('wanna', 'gonna') and vocab items ('you guys', 'buddy'). They used only Western names, adopted the accent, and thought it appropriate to get as close to being native as they could while in the USA. Those performing forged identity used similar linguistic markers, but these served as cues to frame the encounter as play; this was accompanied by exaggerated American style body language which made classmates laugh (eg. raised his shoulders with his hands palm up when he said, "I don't know."). This suggests mock intention to assume an American identity. Other students resisted appropriating American identity more assertively by performing native-language identity. One student believed that he could rely on his own intuition to decide what was appropriate in communication rather than using 'prefabricated expressions'; he felt these were only useful for engaging in superficial relationships which were of no interest to him (p.58). The fourth group were conflicted as they were motivated 'to be like native speaker' (p.59) but felt they could not invest in this identity with other Korean students in the room so saved the Americanisms for encounters beyond the classroom. Within one room Kubota (2002) highlights just one aspect of the complex nature of performed identities in the classroom.

4.3.2 Recognising the other: Facework

Goffman (1967, p. 5) analysed how individuals 'recognise the other' by *performing* or projecting a desirable image, a *face*, that will be accepted by their present audience. He defines this as 'the positive social value a persona effectively claims for himself [sic] by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact'. *Face* does not belong to an individual; rather, society is loaning it for as long as the individual behaves in 'a way that is worthy of it' (Goffman, 1967, p. 10). Maintaining face is the responsibility of both/all parties in the interaction. If a person's face is not supported then confidence, assurance and social worth will be lost, otherwise known as *losing face*. This signals a moral implication intrinsic to facework.

Philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1998) also foregrounds the ethical importance of *face* in his conception of human sociality, although his focus is not on the mutual maintenance of a desirable image. Rather, Levinas explains that in encountering the face of the other in social communication we are compelled to be of service to this face, with a fundamental urgency to attend, to be generous, and

without any expectation of reciprocity. I return to this notion in detail in Section 5.2, but highlight here the moral imperative inherent in both concepts.

Goffman felt that interaction is always on the edge of breakdown, so loss of face is a constant threat. For example, inopportune interruptions and inadvertent gestures, like yawning, can be sources of embarrassment, in which case both performers and audience must employ strategies for 'saving the show' and keeping masks in place. Such strategies include *poise* (i.e. controlling embarrassment by maintaining a calm outward exterior), *tact* (i.e. the ability to repair another's damaged face without drawing attention) and *footing* (more below).

In an ESOL classroom, losing face may have more deeply emotional consequences for some than others, depending on cultural backgrounds, personal disposition or identity investments. It is an environment where students are experimenting with a new language and adapting to sociocultural norms so there is much potential for error, misunderstanding or inappropriate behaviour. Teachers themselves may inadvertently find themselves source of face threatening acts in the way they organise pedagogical tasks, manage the classroom and their own discourse. For example, questions that check understanding of concepts are inherently potentially face-threatening since there is no guarantee the respondent will have an answer. Questions can also be misjudged. They may be too personal, too complex or culturally inappropriate (Dronia, 2013) in which case they are face-threatening whether answered or not. On the other hand, students might also be capable of face-threatening acts. Spencer-Oatey (2000) recounts how a Chinese language teacher lost face following a direct challenge from a student who disagreed with the teacher's practice of asking them to read aloud. This was a loss of face that remained unrepaired for the duration of the course, thus affecting classroom dynamics.

It has been suggested that people prefer to self-repair in social interaction (Lerner, 1996); however, in a classroom setting where certain instructional rituals are being observed or where limited language makes it difficult to brush off an embarrassing moment, participants may not be in a position to do more than avert their gaze as a means of managing face. Consequently, the teacher (consciously or otherwise) acts contingently to avert face-threatening activity or perform face-saving acts. Attuned to their students' face needs the teacher learns to recognise signs of embarrassment which have been well-documented in the literature e.g., blinking, sweating, stammering, fumbling, lowering or raising one's pitch while speaking, vocal cracking, and hesitation in speech (Goffman, 1959) unconscious touching of body parts or clothing and silly smiling (Lewis, 2016). In their investigation of a teacher's relational competence, Aspelin and Eklöf (2023, p. 69) describe how both student and teacher are highly sensitised to such verbal and non-verbal cues and how a teacher's 'micro-social artistry' allows

her to tactfully perform complex facework to promote respectful interaction rituals. Similarly, Choe (2018, p. 31) found that the teacher of an ESOL class managed student embarrassment in three ways: '(1) excusing the failure and inviting peer support; (2) excusing the failure and providing a factual account; and (3) attributing failure to creativity'. These techniques all involve improvised, affiliative moves and encourage students to respond to their peers' face needs. This is important as face loss may potentially affect investment in an L2 self as well as other desired identities.

4.3.3 Aligning self to other: Footing

One strategy interactants routinely practise to maintain *face* and keep up the appearance of *front* is that of *footing*, an essential characteristic of the interaction order. This construct is used to describe how people create alignments between each other and what is said. Issues of footing occur when a speaker's projected self or alignment with his co-participant(s) is somehow at issue and there is therefore a need to re-align in order to avoid embarrassment or loss of face in the interaction (Goffman, 1974, 1981). When this is signalled through the use of cues and markers (gesture, facial expression, code choice, gaze, volume shift etc.), participants will aim to achieve a 'vener of consensus' (Goffman, 1959, p. 9). Goffman's word choice reveals something of his suspicion of the authenticity of this consensus but whether sincere or tactical, the social order is maintained.

As a sociolinguistic process in which identities are constantly being (re)constructed against the backdrop of cultural and ideological landscapes, the learning of an additional language involves complex footing manoeuvres. For example, Nguyen and Kellog (2005) researched online discussions on the subject of gay rights and homosexuality in the context of a content-based ESOL course in Honolulu organised around the history and concepts of civil rights. They found that students could align with one set of values while maintaining an affiliation with a set of opposing values to maintain that 'vener of consensus'. On the other hand, Park's (2016) study in a Korean language classroom in the USA demonstrates how alignment is used as a positive rapport building strategy in teacher-student relationships, suggesting more sincerity in act. The teacher moves in and out of the instructional frame to initiate shifts in footing using four overlapping, and largely improvised strategies: by engaging in informal conversation, by injecting humour into the interaction, by showing empathy and by softening corrective feedback with praise. The students reciprocate with smiles and shared laughter which maintains affiliation. The author suggests that this kind of rapport building happens organically, signalling the classroom as a social space where participants are attuned to the face needs of others. In this sense, the moral imperative is clear as participants negotiate and coordinate shared lines of action to preserve social relations as well as their preserving their own identities as competent actors (Tavory & Fine, 2020).

Sociolinguists have built on Goffman's notion of *footing* to convey the complex nature of stance in ongoing interaction. For example, the *stance triangle* (Du Bois, 2007) is a framework used to examine the triadic relationship that is generated through *stancetaking*. A speaker targets and evaluates a stance object thereby indicating their epistemic and social position towards it. This evaluation then prompts an intersubjective response from the second speaker which leads to degrees of alignment/disalignment between participants (See Fig.1).

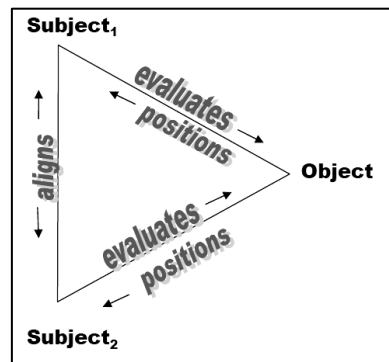


Fig. 1: The stance triangle (Du Bois, 2007, p. 163)

When interaction is situated in wider sociopolitical territory, stance mediates between linguistic structures produced in interaction and multiple ideological layers. Bucholtz and Hall (2008) suggest that when stancetaking relates to language ideologies it is particularly complex. For example, Williams' (2008, p. 37) study sheds light on the 'seemingly conflicting ambivalent stances' that Cantonese speakers in San Francisco were taking towards Mandarin, the increasingly dominant language in their local community. Rather than conveying a coherent and sustained view of Mandarin, the speakers take up complex affiliations (easy to learn, a useful asset) and disaffiliations (the language is annoying, and the people are 'rude, bad, sneaky, and cunning') (p.52). As a result, Mandarin is discursively positioned as both similar to and different from Cantonese and through iterative 'downplaying and highlighting of similarities and differences, the participants' interaction captures not only the dynamics of an individual's identity but also the larger ideological dynamics of an ethnic community'. This, argues Williams, can be attributed to the fluid nature of identity on the one hand, and the stereotypes embodied in 'brought-along' identities on the other. The positioning of and alignment to these languages will also depend on the context or *frame* in which the footing takes place.

4.3.4 Framing

Goffman views identity as an interactional performance that shapes and is shaped by specific *frames*. Goffman (1974, p. 21) defines frame or *primary framework* as ‘one that is seen as rendering what would otherwise be a meaningless aspect of the scene into something that is meaningful’. Therefore, when applied to ongoing interactive activity, frames make sense of situations. According to Wine (2008, p. 1), frames can be conceived in three ways: 1) as metaphorical containers, 2) as structures of expectation, 3) as opinion shapers. As metaphorical containers they hold information, but they also provide us with the structural and cognitive resources for making meaning with that information. This is because frames carry assumptions of who is likely to be involved, in what capacity and with what purpose and they also suggest what verbal, non-verbal and material resources might be available.

As they are interactively achieved, frames (in combination with footing and other self-presentation clues) have potential for unveiling entangled, dynamic relationships and social issues that become salient during an activity and this may be why this concept has found a place in contemporary sociolinguistic scholarship. Canagarajah (2021) suggests that researchers use *frames* as an analytical tool rather than context since the latter has notions of a static space. His broad definition demonstrates its potential inclusivity for empirical research:

Frames can range from discoursal, cultural, institutional, national, geopolitical, and ideological tropes to relevant scales of space and time. Within discourse interactions specifically, frames might include the following: the communicative activity’s task structure, participant frameworks, genre conventions, and language ideologies. (Canagarajah, 2021, p. 209)

Similarly, others in the field of sociolinguistics have analysed encounters taking place within *cooperative transformation zones* (Goodwin, 2013) or *semiotic fields* (Kusters et al., 2017), which also signal the unstable and fleeting nature of the encounter.

In language classrooms, frames might be understood as presentations, demonstrations, communicative tasks, comprehension checks, plenary and so on. Since different kinds of shared activity can be distinguished within the boundaries of a single educational encounter, it is important for these to be clearly signalled to the students. Frames are bracketed through beginnings and endings marked in a range of different modes of communication. In interaction, such boundary markers may be realised through shifts in tone of voice and bodily orientation (Goffman, 1981). Mehan (1980, p. 136) points out that in educational settings, both teachers and students ‘mark the boundaries of

interactional sequences, event phases and school events through shifts in kinesic, paralinguistic, and verbal behaviour.' This is evident in Hellerman's (2005) analysis of a classroom quiz game where prosodic cues clearly distinguished the stages of the quiz game format from normal question-and-answer review talk led by the teacher. This example also highlights a shift in footing as the teacher orientates to the role of 'animated quiz master' as opposed to 'evaluator' of student linguistic responses. This shows how footing and framing are intertwined.

Effective participation in classroom life relies on a recognition and acknowledgement of these boundary shifts in framing and footing. Students will grow to identify subtle changes in teacher behaviour signifying a transition to a specific activity and they will respond accordingly using various displays of orientation which are realised multimodally (Bezemer, 2008). Participants are expected to align their orientation to what is happening and to disattend to out-of-frame activities. Students' gaze, body posture and other modes suggest what it is in their environment that they pay attention to so disengagement may be noticed through micro-analysis of this paralinguistic behaviour. Indeed, people 'can give the appearance of respectful involvement in their declared concern when, in fact, their central attention is elsewhere' (Goffman, 1974, p. 201). When a student is clearly focused elsewhere then the teacher may need to respond to their out of frame activity as shown in Waring and Hruska's (2011) account of an ESOL teacher's footing and framing shifts to maintain a young learner's engagement. In a one-to-one session the teacher left the instructional frame to join the student's play frame. Waring concluded that bending toward frames that students create might be an effective practice to deal with challenging behaviour whilst also validating subjectivities and achieving pedagogical aims.

However, it is worth noting that although there is an expectation of shared understanding, frames might not be understood in the same way by all participants since frameworks are often based on past experiences of similar situations. For instance, Simpson (2006) shows how ESOL learners interpret language testing situations as two different frames: as a test-like interview or as a social conversation. The students' interpretation of the speaking test influences the way the encounter unfolds between the tester and the learner and the language it generates. This has major consequences for those tasked with evaluating the learner's language proficiency, especially for exams with high stakes. It also has major implications for teachers preparing students for oral interviews as well as carrying out habitual pedagogical activity where the class may move through a range of frames in a single lesson. If understandings are not aligned or reconciled then this will affect various aspects of classroom life, communication goals being but one aspect.

Although Goffman (1959) does not refer directly to the term 'framing' in his early work, the concept is implicit in his dramaturgical metaphors as well as in the way performers signal intentions through cues which may or may not be understood as he explains: 'the audience may misunderstand the meaning that a cue was designed to convey, or may read an embarrassing meaning into gestures or events that were accidental, inadvertent, or incidental and not meant by the performer to carry any meaning whatsoever' (p.51). If frames are contested or broken through inappropriate displays of orientation, then social order may be disrupted. *Misframing* occurs if participants lack shared resources for framing interaction. For newcomers to a class, these shifts in framing may not be recognised and this has potentially face threatening consequences.

Goffman's sociology explores the tensions between appearance and reality, and he maintained that the most revealing insights about social behaviour come from studying the surface appearances people create for one another rather than analysing people's inner motives. However, his sociology has been criticised for several reasons: it presumes that stage versions of reality correspond to real world happenings; it is 'superficially performative' (Denzin, 2002, p. 107), preoccupied with illusion and reality; it is also apolitical and ahistorical so abstracted from real world concerns such as social injustices. This has led to the call for a move away from *performance* as imitation and dramaturgical staging to a more sociopolitical view, highlighting the fluid nature of encounters and situating performativity within the forces of discourse (Conquergood, 1998). As Collins (1988, p. 61) notes, 'Goffman leads us to the brink of seeing the micro-reality upon which macro-structures are based though he shies away from the theoretical implication' (Collins, 1988, p. 61). Collins and Slembrouck (2009) argue for the continued relevance of Goffmanian analytic perspectives for contemporary sociolinguistic concerns. Their study into migration-associated social and linguistic practices is rooted in the here and now of face-to-face communication occurring in dynamic frames, but these are situated in broader spatial and historic settings, which they maintain, 'permeate the semiotic resources which are brought to multilingual encounters' (ibid, p. 22).

In the following section, I show how sociolinguistic repertoires have built on Goffmanian concepts to encompass broader spatio-temporal, historic and political dimensions. These are essential facets for understanding the complex situations the migrants face as learners of English. I briefly review the history of the repertoire perspective in interactional sociolinguistics and show how recent developments have led to the concept of *linguaging*.

4.4 Sociolinguistic Repertoires

The notion of *repertoire* has its roots in interactional sociolinguistics. Gumperz was influenced by Goffman's conceptual metaphors in his development of founding principles for IS, in particular, 'contextualisation cues'. The way he used the lens of misunderstood cross-cultural communication to shed light on 'processes that are unnoticed when communication proceeds smoothly' has clear echoes of Goffman's interests and concerns (Tannen, 2009, p. 301). However, rather than just pointing these out, Gumperz strove to use them for improving cross-cultural understanding (Gordon, 2011, p. 73). To this end, he developed contextualisation cues further and, together with Hymes, conceived the verbal repertoire as 'the totality of linguistic resources...available to members of particular communities' from which they draw in communicative encounters (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972, pp. 20-21). While hugely influential at the time, this concept saw little development until re-visited and advanced in the last decade (Rymes, 2010; Busch, 2012).

In seeking to foreground the significance of social situation and communicative goals, Rymes (2010, p. 528) introduced the *communicative repertoire* 'to refer to the collection of ways individuals use language and literacy and other means of communication (gestures, dress, posture, accessories) to function effectively in the multiple communities in which they participate'. This includes multiple languages, dialects and registers as well as cultural references such as dance moves and popular local phrases. In the context of language education for immigrants to the USA, Rymes (2014, p. 13) debates the role of English in their communicative repertoire concluding that relying on a standardised version of the English language may not be sufficient for 'real communicative needs brought on by mobility and media'. She suggests that people are always engaging in multilingual activity so 'everyone is multilingual' (p. 8); even minimal ability in another language contributes to 'an accumulation of archaeological layers' (p. 290) collected through life experience which are purposefully selected in the moment to achieve effective communication.

Sociolinguists and educational linguists have continued to build on Rymes' construct, incorporating a wider range of resources to show how meaning-making is not only a social event but also an embodied practice. Busch's (2012) *linguistic repertoire*, for example, adds an emotional dimension to the communicative repertoire. She defines her conception as 'a hypothetical structure, which evolves by experiencing language in interaction on a cognitive and on an emotional level and is inscribed into corporal memory' (p. 521). This has been further expanded by Kusters et al. (2017). Combining the multimodal and multilingual aspects of communication, the authors conceive *semiotic repertoires* as a conceptual lens through which to focus on holistic action. These repertoires evoke elements of Goffman's body idiom as they comprise spoken language, gesture, facial expression, gaze, laughter,

movement, posture, purposeful silence, the use of artefacts and signing. With reference to signing, the authors' initial motivation in developing this concept was to foreground the politics of deaf language studies. The need for such a focus is unsurprising when much of the hearing world is naïve to the meaning-making practices of the deaf. This is made painfully clear by Duggan and Holmström (2022, p. 161) who found that deaf migrants entering Swedish language classes were deemed as having 'no language' since their multimodal repertoires did not meet certain ideological perceptions of what qualifies as language. Failure to acknowledge or be inclusive of such resources as legitimate means of communication can have a detrimental effect on self-esteem and self-concept. This is wholly relevant to the ESOL language classroom where newcomers with lower levels of proficiency in the dominant language may also be described as having 'no language'.

Kusters et al.'s (2017) original conception looked at resources that individuals use agentively to achieve personal interactional goals. However, various scholars have stressed the need to move on from a view of semiotic repertoires as residing solely within the individual to an understanding of how they emerge in communication (Canagarajah, 2021; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015). These repertoires do not amass as a personal store following a linear route; rather, they expand and adapt according to situational needs and/or practices within each social encounter in a specific space. To capture the multifaceted and dynamic nature of these semiotic/spatial repertoires, Pennycook (2017) has conceived the *semiotic assemblage* which:

expands the semiotic inventory and relocates repertoires in the dynamic relations among objects, places and linguistic resources, an emergent property deriving from the interactions between people, artefacts and space. (Pennycook, 2017, pp. 11-12)

At this point it is worth noting how *objects* and *artefacts* have entered the assemblage as significant actors. Insights from quantum physics have illustrated that rather than lifeless matter used and manipulated by humans, material resources embody meaning on their own (e.g. Barad, 2007). Sociolinguists have been exploring the agentive role of material resources in communicative practices and this has led to Bucholtz and Hall's (2016, p. 174) call for 'an embodied sociolinguistics', one which would 'recognise and accommodate the distribution of agency beyond language to include human bodies as well as nonhuman entities' (ibid, p. 184).

In response to this call, Canagarajah and Minakova (2023) demonstrate how a door to a social space in a university science department participates in meaning-making processes. The door shares agency in transforming the space into a meeting room and shaping the communicative activity within. It provides contextualisation cues for the opening and closing. Once closed, it makes certain resources more salient and functional than others and it also signals the roles of the participants. The authors

suggest that important pedagogical implications emerge from such embodied sociolinguistic studies. In this case, entry requirements for international STEM scholars are based on language proficiency but this study highlights the need for more than a knowledge of normative grammar. Equally, if not more important, is the 'ability to engage in distributed practice with social networks and spatial ecologies for successful interactions' (ibid, p. 29). This then has implications for all language classrooms, including ESOL. According to Latour (2005, p. 71), 'Anything that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor'. If objects participate as actors in the emergence of social interaction in the classroom, then educators and researchers need to adopt a broader understanding of agency. There is an additional consideration; with people, space and objects all playing agentic roles then how is power distributed?

Spaces are configured, reconfigured or disassembled as new resources are brought in to interact with its current actors. Crucially, some resources will be favoured over others forming hierarchical constellations. This, argue Kusters et al. (2017), is of prime importance since these constellations index unequal power relations. In contexts of asymmetrical power distribution, some forms of semiosis may not be available to all, so it is not the case that these repertoires reside within the individual waiting to be retrieved. Rather, they emerge in distributed practice as accessible, constrained or negotiable during social interaction (Kusters, 2021) and in turn, this affects the participants' ability to take up certain identities. If resources are not available to all this has ethical implications. We are reminded of the young student in Cashman's (2008) study who was tormented by bilingual peers leading to his being denied access to the special scissors.

The extensions to the verbal repertoire outlined above mark a departure from the kind of logocentrism that views verbal communication as superior to other kinds of meaning-making tools (Canagarajah, 2021). They also mark a significant departure from the monolithic notion of language as a representative code and an abstract bounded entity. Rather, repertoires depend on a conceptualisation of language as a dynamic activity, a flexible materiality (Pennycook, 2010). Hence the morphing from the static *language* to the dynamic, flexible concept of *linguaging*, explained by Becker as:

a movement away from language as something accomplished, as something apart from time and history to language as something that is being done and reshaped constantly. (Becker, 1988, p. 25)

Moving away from language as a unified abstract system has led to further conceptual shifts in the sociolinguistic domain represented by linguaging terms suggesting multiplicity and movement, some of which overlap: from bilingualism to flexible bilingualism (Creese & Blackledge, 2010),

plurilingualism (Canagarajah, 2009), and polylinguaging (Jørgensen et al., 2015); from codeswitching to translanguaging (Garcia & Wei, 2014); from abstract codes to multimodal choices of expression (Jewitt, 2009). In addition, Pennycook and Otsuji (2015) coined the term *metrolinguism* to describe the dynamic engagement of linguistic interactions in urban spaces. What these sociolinguistic terms highlight is the need to re-imagine the way language is perceived and how languages are lived and performed.

The idea that we *language* using not only words but a range of other semiotic tools, brings an ontological as well as conceptual shift. Materialising objects, individuals and their communicative resources holistically in environmental ecologies means people are ‘entering another history of interactions and cultural practices and learning a new way of being in the world’ (Becker, 1995, p. 227). This insight is particularly pertinent for migrants and refugees who need to make sense of their new surroundings as well as make meaning in interaction to even begin to live a life. However, much policy and practice at both national and local levels continues to frame any kind of language messaging as name and code (Lytra et al., 2022).

Bringing the notion of semiotic assemblages to ESOL discussions can be of benefit for several reasons. First, ESOL learners (chiefly migrants, refugees and asylum seekers) are able to employ an array of appropriate semiotic resources to make meaning in encounters with others. This not only challenges the notion that migrants have ‘no language’ but, in validating such resources, could have positive consequences for self-concept. Second, understanding (and analysing) communication as a social, spatial and embodied practice highlights the way power dynamics and ideological assumptions from macro/meso structures affect identity work and relationship building in ESOL classrooms. In addition, valorising sociolinguistic repertoires brings pedagogic potential, providing ‘a point of entry to reimagining what language education might look like under conditions of heightened linguistic and cultural diversity and increased linguistic and social inequalities’ (Lytra et al., 2022, p. 1). Thus, more nuanced understandings of language through attending to semiotic assemblages might be a pathway towards more nuanced understandings of social encounters in the area of adult language education.

4.5 Linguaging in adult language education

As this section has highlighted thus far, sociolinguistic scholarship has challenged conceptions of language as an abstract, bounded system of particular linguistic features, instead, arguing for an understanding of language as a dynamic, social practice in which interactants employ a range of semiotic resources (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Educational linguists and scholars working in the field

of SLA have been informed by sociolinguistic insights, which has prompted the conceptualisation of further semiotic repertoires. For example, Hall (2018) proposes the *interactional repertoire* to refer to the range of semiotic resources or 'objects of L2 learning' that develop through learners' lifespans and are therefore affected by a range of social, historical and political factors. This notion recognises that these repertoires are not linear; rather, they expand rapidly at certain points in life and build gradually at others 'leading to fuller and more enduring L2 repertoires of meaning-making resources for some contexts and more temporary, fleeting repertoires for others' (Hall, 2018, p. 34). Similarly, Coffey (2015) builds on the *linguistic repertoire* (Busch, 2012) to conceive the *plurilingual repertoire*, an interconnected assemblage of language competences comprising emotional, embodied and cognitive aspects of language learning. What these L2 repertoires acknowledge is the relationship between micro levels of social interaction and macro levels of social structure, the emotional ties inherent in past and present language learning experiences and the fact that languaging is 'an activity of human beings in the world' (Becker, 1991, p. 34).

Yet, despite such theoretical advances, limited conceptions of language, and what constitutes L2 knowledge, still inform language curriculums and materials, as Lytra et al. (2022, p. 1) point out:

Dominant paradigms of language and language education worldwide continue to be based on static notions of language as code, as a rule-governed system, that is coterminous with stable communities and identities and on prescriptive pedagogical and language assessment models.'

These dominant paradigms are reflected in competence models of teaching, learning and assessment that pervade language education. Linguistic and communicative models of competence are based on rationalist and pragmatic understandings of language that focus on the effectiveness of classroom instruction (Ferrada et al., 2020; Lytra et al., 2022). For example, prevalent approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-based Language Teaching have focused on functional language needed to achieve communicative competence (Nazari, 2007). One function can have many linguistic forms and students should not only be able to reproduce these with a measure of accuracy but also develop skills for selecting the most appropriate form, depending on the social context (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). In the classroom, students are positioned as learners of the functions necessary to negotiate life in the world outside.

Treating language in this way creates an artificial division of spaces: 'real world' (outside) and 'practice for real world' (inside). The implication is that language classrooms are not considered legitimate social arenas where students can engage in meaningful communication with others; rather they are rehearsal rooms for real life. This is perhaps why many empirical studies have failed to describe CLT

classroom interaction as genuinely communicative (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Although peer communication is certainly foregrounded, and students are engaged in information gap and problem-solving style activities that have a clear communicative outcome, the communication is often contrived, and lacks authenticity. The encounter is only genuine in as much as it is a genuine, recognisable material resource that forms part of the semiotic assemblage in this learning space. In the ESOL context, Roberts and Cooke (2009) suggest this is a crucial concern since adult migrants need to develop an authentic voice in their new language for social and interpersonal encounters.

There are further implications for the students. As Kramsch (2006, p. 251) argues, 'Language learners are not just communicators and problem solvers, but whole persons with hearts, bodies and minds, with memories, fantasies, loyalties, identities'. She suggests that focusing only on linguistic and communicative competencies in research and praxes shines an unwelcome light on student inadequacies while ignoring the extensive range of linguistic and non-linguistic resources (Jørgensen, 2008) that these 'whole persons' draw on to successfully negotiate everyday encounters in a range of new social contexts. There is also the question of whether this kind of orchestrated interaction provides scope for inhabiting new subjectivities. However, despite this increasingly widespread critique of communicative approaches, they remain the foundation of contemporary ESOL classrooms.

4.5.1 Language and the ESOL classroom

In the UK, ESOL policy and practice are certainly influenced by the dominant paradigms outlined by Lytra et al. (2022), with all areas and stages of provision being based on limited conceptions of 'language'. ESOL pedagogy is rooted in principles of CLT so there is a strong focus on linguistic forms and functional language. The 2019 Department for Education research report into access and progression for ESOL learners concludes that target language for ESOL students is related to contexts of employment as well as everyday situations such as 'visiting the doctor, shopping, reporting crime, etc.' (Higton et al., 2019, p. 26). The juxtaposition of these apparently everyday situations speaks volumes about the expectations for migrant learners' life experiences, as does the 'Speak to communicate' progression strand for Entry 3 (See Fig. 4.1).

Figure. 4.1: Extract from the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum (2001).

Speak to communicate	
E3	<p>Sc/E3.1 speak clearly to be heard and understood using appropriate clarity, speed and phrasing</p> <p>Sc/E3.2 use formal language and register when appropriate</p> <p>Sc/E3.3 make requests and ask questions to obtain information in familiar and unfamiliar contexts</p> <p>Sc/E3.4 express clearly statements of fact and give short explanations, accounts and descriptions</p>

Although promised an update in 2008, the ESOL curriculum has seen little noticeable change since its creation in 2001. In addition to a curriculum ‘frozen in time’, Shepherd (2022, p. 29) notes that methods applied in English language teaching to migrants in the UK have witnessed ‘two decades of pedagogical stasis, where approaches laid out at the turn of the century remain current and unchallenged’. He believes this can be attributed to the fact that current syllabus content, pedagogy, teaching materials and assessment models can all be traced back to the Skills for Life programme and Adult ESOL Core Curriculum developed in the early 2000s, both of which display severely limited conceptions of ‘language’. In turn, this has conferred a dubious legacy on contemporary ESOL classrooms:

a dog-eared core curriculum, straining curriculum processes and aging resources...ESOL teachers in the role of beachcombers, searching amongst the driftwood for identity and clarity of approach (Shepherd, 2022, p. 27).

ESOL assessment is another area where the foregrounding of linguistic resources is most apparent. Despite the curriculum process being conceived as a *learning journey* (Further Education Trust for Leadership, 2021), evaluation and evidence of progress in the use of specific forms and functions is what supersedes learning and learners. This is partly due to inspection regimes that ‘will judge how well providers record and recognise learners’ progress and achievements to inform teaching and support programmes to help learners reach their goals.’ (Ofsted, 2023, section 224). This record begins with a diagnostic assessment to identify the student’s language needs (which translate into goals or SMART targets) in order that an individualised learning plan (ILP) can be agreed upon. However, it is difficult to see how a migrant’s range of learning needs might be captured through completion of a

short, generic test, most of which has a multiple-choice format. Bachman and Purpura (2008) question the reliability and validity of such testing when a change in any one of a number of circumstances might mean a different result. What is more, and returning to Kramersch's (2006) point above, this seemingly personalised act of needs analysis is itself based on a deficit framing of language since it aims to diagnose and identify gaps and flaws in linguistic and communicative competencies. In so doing, Shepherd (2022, p. 32) argues, it 'ignores the complexity of student interlanguage, dismisses the value of students' other languages, and implicitly reinforces the notion of English as a language of prestige above all others'.

Such hegemonic language ideologies are entrenched in ESOL pedagogy and practice. For example, the notion that students' use of L1 should be avoided persists, despite recent efforts to draw attention to the translanguaging practices that are in fact, an organic feature of the ESOL classroom (Calvert, 2021). As Simpson and Cooke (2017, p. 1) note 'ESOL practice is typically oriented to a monolingual norm, and ESOL classrooms are not spaces where the full range of students' multilingual communicative repertoires are valued'. This is not only an issue for students who find their resources and identities being limited; it is a similar story for ESOL teachers and language educators more generally.

4.5.2 Reconceptualising teacher identities for a languaging perspective

Communicative language teaching outlines specific roles for the teacher: create opportunities for authentic communication, provide input, advise, facilitate and provide timely feedback on language production (Larsen-Feeman & Anderson, 2013). Adult education institutions tend to favour these teacher roles as verified by the expectations laid out in the sector teaching qualification: Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (Education and Training Foundation, 2023). Thus, beyond providing linguistic models, the teacher does not participate in classroom communication. Criticism has been levelled at communicative approaches for this decentring of the teacher's spoken word and perceived narrowing of teacher identity to that of facilitator. Walsh (2006, p. 3) argues that in reality:

teachers play a much more central role than that advocated under both Communicative Language Teaching and Task based Language Learning. The centrality of teacher-talk in facilitating or hindering student participation, and thus engagement, has been found to be key for creating opportunities for language.

Walsh (2014) suggests that teachers enact a competence of their own, 'Classroom Interactional Competence', which involves continual, moment-to-moment decision-making in response to student utterances. If a teacher's contingent responses are aligned to pedagogical goals, this is when

opportunities for learning can be maximised (Sert, 2019). Much SLA research into classroom discourse has brought attention back to whole class teacher–student interaction, adopting conversation analytic approaches (Kasper & Wagner, 2011) to investigate how patterns of interaction and participation facilitate (or impede) language learning opportunities (Seedhouse, 2004; Walsh, 2002; 2006). Empirical studies have focused more specifically on such areas as Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) patterns (Fagan, 2017; Gourlay, 2005; Waring, 2008) validation of learner initiatives (Waring, 2011), and acknowledging language play (Waring 2013). These studies investigate the teachers’ responsive manoeuvres and how they engineer learning opportunities for students. However, while they undoubtedly acknowledge the importance of socially situated meaning-making practices and provide useful insights into opportunities for learning, they do not capture the full sense of what is happening during moment-to moment interaction. They do not take account of what is motivating these initiations and responses, nor do they give any indication of the identity work in play.

On the other hand, the languaging paradigm highlights a teacher role that expands the notions typically pursued in SLA literature, for teachers are also invested in languaging practices in the classroom. They too bring in their semiotic repertoires and their historical experience of language. They too are engaged in self-presentation in pursuing identity projects of their own. To illustrate the impact that a teacher’s identity and lifeworld experience has on classroom interaction, I draw attention to two studies in the domain of language teacher education. In the context of a teacher development course, Kubanyiova (2015) found that the teacher’s discursive practices were driven by ‘inner landscapes of action’, defined as ‘interpretive frameworks of inner resources that language teachers draw upon as they engage in and make sense of their interactions with students’ (Kubanyiova, 2015, p. 568). In this case, the teacher’s emergent sense making in action was inspired by identity-relevant images of her future teacher selves. These visions gave meaning, purpose and direction to classroom interaction and were found to be inextricably linked with broader values, thereby emphasising the inherently emotional and moral dimensions that are embedded within teacher-student interaction. In a similar vein, Coffey’s (2015) exploration of student teachers’ relationship with language and language learning shows how present dispositions link to past experience and future teaching identities. This was rendered visible through the metaphors embodied in their autobiographical language portraits. These portraits demonstrate languaging in action as affective and embodied plurilingual repertoires shed infinite light on knowledge and beliefs about language. Coffey’s (2015, p. 509) study offers a practical activity for student teachers to reflect on ingrained beliefs about what it means to know, use, and teach a language (including stereotypical attitudes). This reflexive activity also addresses ‘the risk that their personal, experiential, and sensory

delight in languages becomes compartmentalised, marginalised by the routinised formats of depersonalised, accountable knowledge’.

4.5.3 Towards a languaging perspective in language education

As we have seen, although the story so far paints a rather bleak picture in language education generally and ESOL more specifically, a growing body of interdisciplinary research in applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, and language education is demonstrating a commitment to changing the narrative around what it means to use (a) language and this is beginning to filter through to the world of ESOL. There is a consensus that practice needs to go beyond the learning of discrete language items and measurable competence skills to an appreciation of the way language is lived through languaging. Following Phipps (2007), Polo-Perez and Holmes (2022, p. 101) depict languaging as *dwelling* as they explain: ‘Moving beyond instrumental and utilitarian views of language learning, languaging embeds the efforts of being a person in another language and the cultural and material worlds around it.’ This expanded notion of language recognises the identity work implicit in dwelling. It also recognises the ‘messiness and unpredictability’ of making meaning when people are encountering others from potentially anywhere in the world and employing a range of cultural semiotic resources, including their multilingual repertoires (Lytra et al., 2022).

Top-down evidence for change in this direction can be seen in the Council of Europe’s (2022) newly conceived reference guide: ‘Literacy and Second Language Learning for the Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants’ (LASLLIAM), whose stated ‘main principle’ is the support and valuing of plurilingual repertoires. Regarding goal setting, the guide attempts to address the deficit framing of language for low-level learners in the following ways:

not by focusing on what they lack, but by building instruction on the knowledge and skills they already possess and by emphasising the plurality of language and literacy experience (P.21)

The guide also addresses wider societal concerns suggesting that learners need to become social agents who are critically aware of their positions in micro level encounters and how these fit into global discourses. To this end, it advises that attention should be paid to ‘the socially unbalanced power relations in society and particularly to the institutions which define the dominant, “legitimate” literacy practices as well as to the various forms of literacy, which include the multiple modes of human communication’ (LASLLIAM, 2022, p. 19). While these are certainly positive steps towards appreciating what languaging entails and how identity work is intrinsic product of this, in the detail, there is still a

strong focus on encoding, decoding, and production of linguistic forms rather than attention to other significant processes of social interaction such as the negotiation of subjectivities. This is evident in the following description of the sixth key sub-principle:

Create a plurilingual classroom: Even when students do not have the same first language, use their first languages or a common language where possible to explain principles, to provide examples, to foster linguistic awareness and to check for comprehension. Learners' first languages or another well-known language can also be used effectively to build syllabic and phonemic awareness and to teach the basics of letter-sound mapping (LASLLIAM, 2022, p. 35)

What is most noticeably absent from such macro level documents and the curriculums they inform, is the emotional and embodied nature of social encounters observed by Busch in her expanded notion of linguistic repertoires in 2012.

It is perhaps more heartening then, to see bottom-up research foregrounding experiences of teacher and student languaging in the classroom and beyond whilst challenging conceptions of language as a bounded entity (Bloome & Beauchemin, 2016; Polo-Pérez & Holmes, 2022; Tarsoly & Čalić, 2022). These draw on sociolinguistically informed educational research into the way a range of repertoires become salient in the living of languages. Goffman's (1963) notions of embodied interaction have been rejuvenated, with bodies and embodiment being placed centre stage in languaging processes (Blackledge & Creese, 2017; Bucholtz, 2016; Bucholtz & Hall, 2016; Busch, 2021) as have the materials they engage with in the semiotic landscape (Adami, 2020; Goodwin, 2013). Interwoven with these embodied social experiences in educational encounters are the intersubjective emotions that emerge during the co-construction of interaction (Ros i Solé, 2016).

The following section examines the role that these emotions have in shaping the teaching and learning landscape when conflated with a languaging perspective. I briefly outline the how affect has been conceptualised differently in the social sciences and then focus on the affordances of looking at affect through the prism of sociolinguistic understandings of language. I show how the affective dimension is an intrinsic element of the languaging practices that are instrumental in the building of ethical relationships. I then go on to introduce Emmanuel Levinas' notion of relational ethics and explore how this might inform ethical encounters in education.

Chapter 5

Languaging, affect and ethical responsibility

5 Linguaging, affect and ethical responsibility

In this study, I acknowledge and build on the sociolinguistic debates around identity, languaging and affect but also introduce an additional facet: aesthetics as the basis for ethical relationships. To aide my explanation and justification for incorporating this, I turn to the relational ethics of Emmanuel Levinas (1998) whose ethical stance departs from sociolinguistic understandings of relationships between self and other in significant ways. I now explain these departures and elaborate on the philosophical underpinnings in Levinas' thinking with specific reference to otherness, face and responsibility. I begin with an overview of affect as it has been conceived differently across domains of psychology and sociology. I consider what effect this has had on language education, and I suggest that seen through an Levinasian lens, affect has a particular role in signalling an ethical moment.

5.1 Affective encounters in language education

Affect is a complex and highly contentious construct which defies a single definition or conception. In the social sciences, affect has mostly been conceptualised according to one of two broad perspectives. The first dominant view, rooted in psychology, conceives affect as 'an elemental state' which is 'arrived at through automated biological processes' (Ott, 2017, p. 7). Elemental states are innate and universal so can be identified across cultures, and they are quickly captured so the conscious sensations are immediately felt. The second view, which hails from philosophy and the humanities, tends to view affect as 'an intensive force' that is exerted among bodies (Ott, 2017, p. 1).

Attention to the affective domain has long been a feature of language education research but the nature of this attention has changed in recent years. Dewaele and Li (2020, p. 3) sketch three 'slightly fuzzy chronological periods' of emotion research in the field of SLA. During the *Emotion Avoidance Phase* between 1960s and mid-1980s, inner somatic states were considered to have only a marginal effect in the acquisition of language so while they were not entirely ignored, they were certainly overshadowed by the 'more essential' cognitive factors. The *Anxiety Prevailing Phase*, which lasted until the early 2010s, increasingly acknowledged the intertwining of cognition and emotion (Krashen, 1992), but there was still an overriding focus on anxiety and the negative effect this could have on cognitive factors (Prior, 2019). This is unsurprising considering the potential disruption anxiety can cause in all areas of language learning: quality of teaching, learning and assessment (MacIntyre, 2016). Over the past decade and moving into the third phase, former preoccupation with anxiety-related influences has given way to the investigation of a range of diverse positive and negative affective

factors in a bid to determine causal links between these variables and L2 learner motivation, investment and desire in the language learning process (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; MacIntyre & Vincze, 2017; MacIntyre et al., 2019; Motha & Lin, 2014; Norton, 2000; Piller & Takahashi, 2006). Research in this phase has also recognised the influence teacher emotions can have on the learning experience, especially in relation to future imagined teacher identities (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Hamman et al., 2013).

Studies in the third phase have been influenced by the arrival of Positive Psychology (PosPsy), an area of social psychology that promotes eudemonic wellbeing and one that is characterised by a spirit of hope. MacIntyre (2016, p. 3) suggests that PosPsy 'fits like a glove' with SLA due to its focus on holistic development of individuals as well as its emphasis on language and successful communication. Its adoption has prompted theoretical development in SLA, affording a more robust exploration of emotion causation. For example, Pekrun's (2006) *control-value theory* focuses exclusively on academic achievement and provides a categorisation of emotions that are crucial to learning: *achievement emotions* (associated with success and failure eg. hope, shame), *epistemic emotions* (associated with cognitive challenges eg. curiosity, frustration) *topic emotions* (associated with learner interest and engagement) and *social emotions* (associated with teacher and peer interaction eg. pride and anxiety). A complementary theory, *broaden-and-build* (Frederickson, 2001) emphasises the potential role of positive emotions to counter the negative. Not only have these kinds of theoretical developments given further scope for research but they have also had an impact on pedagogy. Rather than highlighting symptoms of negative emotions and treating these with 'cures', a PosPsy informed pedagogy encourages a strengths-based approach to language education where potential weaknesses are acknowledged but 'courage provides a shield against waves of anxiety' (MacIntyre et al., 2015, n.p).

In addition to rejuvenating emotional focus in SLA and bolstering the 'affective turn', Prior (2019) argues that PosPsy has challenged the dominant binary assumption that positive emotions strengthen motivation while negative emotions are responsible for lack of motivation and poor outcomes. Overall, research from this perspective has led to a more holistic view of how emotions figure in the local language learning context. However, much of this research has taken place in monolingual classrooms and does not move far beyond the investigation of individual goals and concerns.

Studies in multilingualism have also expanded research in language education with an emphasis on affective repertoires (Pavlenko, 2012). These studies have examined how learners draw on certain languages and non-verbal means to perform specific social functions associated with affect, for example: distancing from traumatic experiences and discussing taboo subjects (Amati-Mehler et

al.,1993) and swearing with satisfaction (Dewaele, 2004). However, although these studies do acknowledge language-related affects as ‘social and relational phenomena, embedded within identity narratives and experienced from particular subject positions’ (Pavlenko, 2012, p. 458), they do not necessarily take into account the wider ideological landscape that unavoidably intrudes into institution politics and policy and, consequently, the lived life of a plurilingual language classroom community.

In contrast to the psychological, cognitivist perspectives, sociolinguistics has embraced affect as a construct that goes beyond the personal and that is firmly embedded in the broader social landscape of people’s meaning making. Manifestations of affect from this perspective are not fleeting moments of abstract emotional inner states, detached from social meaning. Rather, they are semiotic cues, ‘types of behavior or styles of conduct which...exist on this face or in those gestures, not hidden behind them’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 52).

Critical theorist, Sara Ahmed (2004, p. 119) is interested in the social life of affect and pays attention to the way ‘emotions involve subjects and objects, but without residing positively within them’. Her key argument is that affective value circulates through social relations in practice and discourse, creating affective economies. Rather than moving from within an individual outward towards others, Ahmed (2004) argues that emotions move among objects, subjects and signs in a kind of ‘ripple effect’. As it circulates, affect accumulates around certain signs or figures constituted by macro structures, *refugee* for example. Such objects then become ‘sticky surfaces’ where affects cluster. These objects are not inherently affective, but they invoke a certain orientation towards themselves and encourage a particular stance on the world. As affects continue to circulate, they intensify, entangling power relations and reifying circuits of social value by virtue of shared orientation towards these sticky surfaces (Wetherell, 2015). As such, their potential to align individuals and communities in social practice makes them a crucial facet of identity work.

Through a sociolinguistic lens, affect is conceived as emergent in social practices which means it is locally salient but at the same time these affective practices and its participants are inevitably affected by more enduring macro power structures and ideologies. Migrant language education is one such social practice that is particularly complex and emotionally charged since the experience of living a language while crossing physical and metaphorical boundaries is never a neutral possibility (Busch, 2017). For example, affect is interwoven with migrant learners’ ideological positioning within the classroom, the institute, and the wider sociocultural landscape. As social types, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers invoke certain feelings and attitudes and these affective qualities are constituted and enacted through semiotic assemblages, intentionally or otherwise (Pratt, 2023). As an integral part of

the social fabric of the classroom language teachers are also affective subjects/objects who are constructed as particular types with the ability to impress and be impressed upon, as are the material components of the classrooms themselves.

In a climate of unprecedented migration, where language education is constructed as a service in the wider neoliberal project of producing workers competent enough in the dominant language to join the national workforce, both teachers and students are co-opted in the act. In aiming to foster particular affective responses towards this process, institutions place conventions and expectations on both parties. These impositions result in tensions over the way these actors *actually* feel and how they believe they *should* feel; these tensions become palpable in interaction in classrooms which are imbued with affective properties. Both teachers and students need to manage their affects in relation to such local and ideological expectations which suggests that any kind of emotional response to circulating discourses and ideologies is bound up with agency. Ferrada et al. (2020, p. 80) see this relationship as *affective agency* which they define as ‘the production of social action informed by and involving embodied, emotional encounter with the world...a conceptual tool for calling attention to the inseparability of agency and affect’. In enacting agency, social actors are not simply responding to larger social structures and processes in their local context; they are also producing ‘micropolitical, quotidian bodily encounters that are constitutive of, rather than secondary to, structural or social agential formations’ (McManus, 2013, p. 137–138). Seen from this angle, affective agency facilitates a critical perspective which holds promises for social justice and change.

Affective agency is not always easy to enact but sociolinguistic accounts of language learning bring more subtle actions to light as Charalambous’ (2010) study illustrates. Set in the politically charged context of a Turkish-language classroom, Greek Cypriot students engage in ‘silly talk’ as they learn the language of the Other – the ‘perennial enemy’ (p. 347). Learning Turkish is a highly controversial practice in which teachers and learners are often seen as betraying Hellenic roots. This political silly-talk is directed at this seeming betrayal. The students’ playful whispering reflects the wider nationalist discourses and ideologies in which their classroom is embedded and positions the students and teacher in relation to these dominant Hellenocentric/Cypriocentric ideologies. Although characterised as ‘silly-talk’ it is transgressive since it takes on taboo topics, but it is quietly so. It is never brought front stage despite the author identifying opportunities for the construction of alternative representations of Turkey/Turkish in the front stage area of whole class communication. Ultimately, both teacher and students continue to collude in the repression of the political dimension in the classroom and Charalambous (2010, p. 334) suggests this is unlikely to change any time soon given the ‘long history of violent conflict’.

However, other contexts have demonstrated more promise. One study that aims to capture the ideological manifestation of affect and to look at sociopolitical processes from the ground up is Ferrada et al.'s (2020) investigation into the interactional enactment of affective agency in an educational community programme committed to sociolinguistic justice. Grounded in a pedagogy of discomfort (Boler, 1999; Zembylas, 2015) and using activities focusing on raciolinguistic ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015), the project encouraged students to reflect on 'highly personal, and at times traumatic, experiences regarding racial and linguistic discrimination' (Ferrada et al., 2020, p. 81). One of the resources was a recording of a politician who declared:

We should replace bilingual education with ... immersion in English, so people learn the common language of the country and so they learn the language of prosperity, not the language of living in a ghetto.

Unsurprisingly, this sparked intense affective responses and the project facilitators encouraged this embodiment of moral anger in the students (e.g. 'you want to slap them in the face' (p. 86)). The authors focus on Valeria, a student of Mexican heritage who remained silent, gaped in shock and was visibly moved to tears by this unapologetic declaration of linguistic racism. Tears shed during this emotional encounter served as a catalyst, prompting Valeria to enact her identity as an affective agent following further input in subsequent sessions. Through linguistic and embodied interaction, she mobilises her affect to convey her wider political goals as she then persistently challenges dominant discourses around the Spanish language. Her passionate poster for a bilingual social action campaign is a 'public political statement for sociolinguistics justice' (p. 87). In making this public statement alongside a photo of herself wearing a T-shirt with an American flag, she positions herself as an agent for social and political change.

The authors found that three components merged to mobilise the student's affective agency: '(a) the initial emotional encounter as a site of affective action, (b) the further mobilization of affect as agency through reflexivity and critique, and (c) the persistence of affect across time and space' (Ferrada et al., 2020, p. 81). They concluded that creating an educational space which invites emotional encounters and fosters affective agency, rather than silencing them, prepares younger students for hegemonic discourses that circulate while also providing an outlet and direction for their personal affective insights. This study shows that affect is not just about the way social actors re-live affective experiences in order that they develop new understandings around the sociopolitical structures that shape their existence; it is also about how affect prompts them to act for social change as Valeria did. They also note how engaging with others' experiences may be instrumental in fostering empathy for those facing structural inequalities and prompt action this way.

Despite the positive conclusion, Ferrada et al. (2020) did draw attention to the potential pitfalls of summoning trauma into a learning space. First, educators should be mindful of the risk of simply reproducing or creating distressing experiences for minoritized students, especially if these teachers are part of the dominant majority. Ferrada et al. (2020) recognise that a pedagogy of discomfort requires extensive groundwork to establish an environment of trust and openness so as to encourage disclosure of perhaps quite painful ordeals. Their study investigates a sensitively-designed language awareness campaign in an afterschool learning context, where the facilitators were trained in encouraging and managing affective responses. However, in a language classroom where participants may not be prepared to share or receive spontaneous revelations, it is not really clear what kind of affective experience ensues for those who are present to bear witness to narratives of discomfort. What do teachers and students' peers do with this kind of newly heard knowledge?

Barakos (2021) addresses the adult language teacher's predicament in dealing with affect in the classroom. She opens her article with a vignette from a teacher who claims his students would rather have 'a therapeutic relationship' than be taught how to write an email. She suggests that teachers working in this sector are facing a changed educational landscape due to the 'new economy'. With language learning assuming the status of a neoliberal commodity, students become clients whose satisfaction and wellbeing is paramount, not to mention their academic success. This means teachers are living through 'times of transformation, pressure, precarities, performance evaluations, anxieties, relationships and re-structuring, where language learning and teaching gets imbued with additional meanings and values – here therapy' (p.27). In everyday classroom encounters affect is evoked, performed and exploited and this often interferes with teachers' ability to claim certain subjectivities as well as to exercise agency in the face of institutional constraints. Teachers are not only tasked with managing students' affects 'in pedagogically and politically useful ways' (Ferrada, 2020, p. 80); they are also engaged in emotional labour to enact appropriate care and compassion as well as to regulate their own affective responses. In different ways, both Barakos (2021) and Ferrada et al.'s (2020) studies show how affect sits within larger structures in an affective economy (Ahmed 2004) while at the same time entangling itself in the day-to-day routines of language education spaces.

Understanding affect in adult migrant language education through a sociolinguistic lens enables a fuller picture of how layered, affective facets manifest in classrooms and how teachers and students experience, manage and perform in the shadows of the macro structures which govern them. Semiotic repertoires/assemblages are intrinsic to unveiling these manifestations and bringing them to the surface, demonstrating that languaging is indeed a social practice but also an affective and embodied one. It is through the intensification of feeling that bodies and worlds materialize and take shape. And

it is through attention to affective and aesthetic practices that ethical values become apparent in social encounters.

In what follows, I discuss what it means for people to encounter one another ethically. For theoretical clarity, I draw on the relational ethics of Emmanuel Levinas which foregrounds the listening subject's ethical responsibility to respond to the address of the Other in intimate social encounters. I articulate reasons why the concept of ethical encounter offers a helpful theoretical framework for exploring two interrelated areas that are the main focus of this study: teacher-student relationships as ethical encounter and research of these relationships as ethical encounter.

5.2 Ethical encounters as a theoretical framework

This framework draws together the conceptual lenses outlined in this study thus far but views them through the prism of Levinas' relational ethics. Levinas' philosophy runs counter to traditional Western ideas, where identity, language and responsibility are often conceived in neoliberal terms. For Levinas (1969), Western thought is based on the pursuit of a *totality*, which can be understood as an obsession with the classification of the Other (meaning people, places, and things). The purpose of this totalising impulse is to simplify complexities of the world by reducing them to a knowable sameness, thereby removing threats of the unknown. The process begins with the subject (the Same or Self) and results in the Other being contained within a theory, category or concept, which has concrete links to points raised in section 3.1. By contrast, Levinas advocates a non-essentializing humanism which begins with the Other. As a counter to totality, he proposes the *infinite* which contends that the Other is beyond the self, beyond familiarity, beyond comprehension. Levinas' main thesis is that ethics is first philosophy (protoethics) meaning that in encountering the Other, ethics comes before knowledge, the Other comes before the self. Therefore, responsibility for the Other is an a priori quality of the self.

5.2.1 Responsibility for the Other: An ethic of care

Levinas gives an account of alterity which neither reduces the Other to the Same nor conceives of them in opposition. To define one in terms of the other would be to establish their identities as belonging to the same totality. Therefore, the Other and the Same do not share the same being and are not together in terms of synthesis. They are separate, facing each other, with 'radically different existences' (Todd, 2003, p. 2). But it is in this face-to-face encounter that they find togetherness.

However, the Other cannot be assimilated into the world inhabited by the self, where that self is sovereign in their own home (Davis, 2007). The Other exists beyond this frame. What awakens the sovereign self from their comfort is the encounter with the Other.

Privileging the Other and their unique otherness while decentering the Self is a necessary condition for ethical interaction (Kelz, 2016). In so doing, the Self, as a listening subject is placed in a position of inescapable responsibility *for* the Other. In such a position they have, metaphorically speaking, 'something of the other human being's life in their hands' as they respond to 'a demand to take care of them' (Løgstrup, 2020, p. 21). Levinas (1999, p. 105) explains that in seeing the face of the other, the subject is compelled to be of service to this face marking 'a non-indifference for me in my relation to the Other in which I am never done with him...the infinite, an inexhaustible, concrete responsibility. The impossibility of saying no'.

This ethical relation of care takes place at the level of sensibility not consciousness. Tallon (2009, p. 47) posits that affectivity is the basis for human sociality and that 'ethics emerges from within the social as an amplification of affect'. In moments of ethical encountering, the listening subject senses the Other's call and responds, not with conscious intent and agency, but with susceptibility and openness to their Otherness. In this sense, the listening subject is bound and affected by humanity to respond to the call of the Other; it is an ethical demand that arises from an unspoken address rather than an articulated wish or desire from then Other (Løgstrup, 2020). An ethical encounter is above all an affective response to the Other.

In his book, *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno (2004) describes the power of works of art to have a shattering effect on the subject, what he calls an aesthetic *shudder*. Belmer (2019, p. 30) draws parallels with Levinas' (1998) relational ethics where the Other's difference has the same disarming effect on the listening subject as a work of art might. In her comparison of the two thinkers' ideas, she demonstrates 'the aesthetic experience of shudder as inherently defined by a moment of alterity that is also ethical in Levinas' terms' (p. 30). In both cases, the subject lets self-preservation fade away in an act of opening the self. For Levinas, the Other's demand destabilises and dislocates the self in the encounter while for Adorno, the self is disoriented, lost in the experience of the shudder.

On one hand, these encounters disturb or overwhelm the senses as they disrupt the subject's state of knowingness, leaving them in discomfort. Yet at the same time they are 'small moments of grace' (Todd, 2014, p. 70) which gesture selflessly toward the Other as another human being. This *sense* of responsibility is essential for neutralising power imbalance between Self and Other. However, somewhat paradoxically, it is still an asymmetrical relationship; the subject cannot make the Other respond, but is still responsible nonetheless, whatever the Other does (Levinas, 1998).

To summarise, relational ethics departs from sociolinguistic understandings of human subjectivity in the following ways. First, the subject cannot approach or explain the Other as a social category with all the assumptions this brings. As Løgstrup (2020, p. 13) puts it, 'the presence of the other leaves no space for my picture of them'. Secondly, if the Other is encountered as 'a picture' or perceived as 'category', this act eradicates their difference resulting in a breach in ethical behaviour between Self and Other. Human subjectivity cannot, therefore, be understood as a socially constructed event as this results in othering rather than an ethical encounter. Such a shift in thinking has implications for any setting where sociopolitical factors and ideological discourse have affected the listening subject's attitudes and practices. The language classroom is such a setting. One would therefore presume that by drawing on Levinas' thinking, theories for ethical educational relationships and a pedagogy of ethical encounter could be shaped. However, it is not that simple.

Levinas' ideas cannot be directly applied to education because his thinking questions the very foundations on which contemporary educational systems have been built (Biesta, 2003). It is therefore necessary to understand what exactly he questions in order to effect change of an ethical nature in education and in the classroom more specifically. This will be explored in the following section by addressing three areas of relevance for this study: preparing students for ethical encounters with the world they exist in; understanding what it means for a teacher to be implicated as the listening subject responsible for the Other (their student); understanding what it means for the researcher to be implicated as the listening subject engaging with and portraying the data.

5.2.2 Ethical encounters in education

In this section, I outline hallmarks of contemporary education and suggest where these collide with Levinas' thinking. I also tie this to previous sections as I explore how identity/subjectivities and languaging figure in affective educational relationships and what else needs to happen for an educational encounter to be considered ethical through the prism of Levinasian ethics. To aide this exploration, I find the work of Gert Biesta most enlightening. He has suggested how education and its student-teacher relationships, have to be reconceived in order to be applied to Levinas' ideas rather than trying to map Levinas' ideas on to current practice. Therefore, drawing on Biesta's notions of subjectification I sketch a landscape conducive to the emergence of ethical encounters in education.

Contemporary education, in conjunction with the neoliberal agenda, has emphasised learning as a political project, particularly in the adult education sector. In turn, this has encouraged the emergence of what Biesta (2022, p. 1) calls the 'global education measurement industry', an industry with the power to dictate what education is, what is it for, and how it should be done. Through this lens,

learning becomes a commodity with learners positioned as consumers and their teachers positioned as suppliers of whatever they demand. The industry sees the fixing of generalised educational problems as a matter of establishing control, and to this end it continues to produce a proliferation of research targeting the pursuit of solutions for a multitude of issues, all promising improved outcomes for *learners*. As this research feeds into ongoing policy directives, the result is that institutions and their teachers are being subjected to ever-changing, authoritative top-down policy interventions which continue to limit their agency, professional judgement and creativity.

It is then somewhat ironic that while teachers struggle to maintain a sense of control, exercise their judgement, make their own decisions and practise their educational artistry, it is the students who are increasingly being asked to take control of their learning, make their own choices and arm themselves with knowledge and skills they need for encounters beyond the classroom. Set against the backdrop of the 'global education measurement industry', one has to question how much control students are really allowed. There is also the question of how ethical the shift is.

The move away from *teaching* to a focus on *learning and development* is a hallmark of contemporary education in all sectors and once again, the impact has been felt in adult language education. The reason for this move is in part a reaction to rather uninspiring 'traditional, didactic or transmissive' teaching practices and in part a response to constructivist theories of learning (Biesta 2021, p. 17). The traditional process of transmission views teacher knowledge as a gift deposited in passive, uncritical minds, as represented by the 'banking' metaphor of education (Freire, 1993), whereas 'learnification', as Biesta (2020) calls it, represents the shift towards the language of learning which implies student responsibility. It has been praised as a positive and emancipatory paradigm shift, empowering students to take ownership of their learning rather than having their empty vessels filled by teachers who dictate how and with what they are filled. It has become a key feature of contemporary models for success in education which tend to value a person's right to map out their own learning trajectory. This was noted earlier in this study with reference to ESOL students setting SMART targets, co-creating their ILP and being responsible for attaining steps along their *learning journey* (Further Education for Leadership Trust, 2021).

Learnification has come to dominate educational discourse, policy and practice, informing student-centred curriculums in all sectors of the field, including language education, which is often named just that: Second Language Learning (SLL). Although it could be argued that this move to foreground the student experience is well-intentioned, it is questionable whether it can be called *education* for several reasons. Firstly, it is based on the premise that teachers get to know their students in order to understand them and meet the needs they articulate. However, following Levinas, if it is neither

possible nor ethical to claim that you can know or speak for the other then this does not seem a strong foundation for education. Secondly, education as *learning* is missing a key dimension – teaching – which has led to ‘a sense of loss and a kind of forgetfulness’ in the field as a whole (Biesta 2022, p. 2). Placing the learner centre stage in the leading role can only result in the teacher being pushed sideways into a mere walk-on part as facilitator, as mentioned with prevalent constructivist approaches. However, what is distinctive about education is the experience with teaching. As Biesta (2021, p. 8) states, ‘it only takes one to learn, but it takes two for education to happen’. Learning can happen anywhere, by chance, without the need for a teacher so this is not what education and the educational relationship between teacher-student is about. Thirdly, as Biesta (2022) argues, unless both *learning* and *development* are qualified with the specifics of what exactly is being learnt and developed, these terms are directionless and as such, have the potential to become meaningless.

This critique makes a clear case for teaching to be brought back to the conversation if language education is to be just that – education. It also signals the importance of the relationship between student-teacher and how this needs to be more than a relationship of emotionless transactions between people playing roles i.e. facilitator, communicator, problem-solver. In aiming for a meaningful, ethical relationship it would seem appropriate to look at Levinas’ relational ethics. But to return to the question above, what exactly is it about ‘learnification’ that makes the direct application of Levinas’ ideas impossible?

The answer, as Biesta (2022) insists, lies in the way the student is perceived. The move towards learning and development depicted above is based on ‘the humanist idea of a certain kind of subject who has an inherent potential to become self-motivated and selfdirecting’ (Usher & Edwards, 1994: 24). It is this centring of the subject that Levinas challenged as he found the inherent solipsism problematic. Following Levinas, Biesta (2022) argues that, rather than being blessed with an ethical, liberating freedom of choice, this kind of ownership of learning, forces an unethical demand on the student to self-objectify. Positioning students as objects of educational policy directives ignores the fact that they are subjects learning to exist in the world. And ignoring their way of existing, their *subject-ness* (Biesta, 2020; 2022), means that the essence of education is also being ignored because what should matter is not merely the monitoring and measuring of learning outcomes within an education system; the ultimate educational concern, argues Biesta (2022), should be what each individual actually does with this learning once they move beyond the system and are met with the challenge of facing real world encounters. To this end, he advocates for *world-centred* education, the crucial dimension of which is to ensure students are equipped with the tools to exist-as-subject both *in* and *with* the natural and social world.

Crucially, what an educator cannot do is to have a say or even predict how those tools are used when a student is called to a situation which demands their implementation; this is always beyond a teacher's control. The student is by no means obliged to reciprocate; this would return the relationship to a business transaction. As Levinas (1999, p. 101) states, 'the moment one is generous in hopes of reciprocity, that relation no longer involves generosity but the commercial relation, the exchange of good behavior'. The subject is responsible for the other in terms of opening themselves to the encounter, not in terms of controlling behaviour post-encounter.

Rather, the role of the educator is to safeguard the educational space where the student's *subject-ness* can become a possibility, enabling them to hear the world's call. In this sense, Biesta (2022) argues, education is not a dialogue but something of a triadic relationship: teacher – student – world. Teachers enable the hearing by pointing students' attention in a certain direction, but they do not stay to enforce or control this student attentiveness. On the contrary, they leave the scene, in the hope that students hear the world's call and respond. This is where the freedom in education lies; it is a freedom to pay attention or not, to respond with responsibility for the other or not. It is not the freedom to set their own targets and map trajectories. Through this pointing and directing of attention, the students become aware of how the other (the world) is addressing them and in hearing that call into existence, they enter the encounter to see what is being asked of them – this is where the ethical responsibility lies. As they encounter the world in this way, they encounter themselves in relation to it which is a disempowering and disarming experience and not something that is to be controlled.

What does this mean for the classroom? Instead of aiming for *learning* as an outcome, teachers should instead be concerned with raising awareness of the range of ways a human being can exist in the world. Teaching, Biesta (2022) argues, is about opening this range of existential subject positions rather than insisting on positioning the students as one possible option: *learner*. This is difficult to achieve with learner-as-object models of education that empower and arm students with skills and competencies. In arming students so, there is a subtle implication that learners are being prepared for potentially threatening encounters. The act of preparing to do battle in worldly encounters shuts down emotions in an anaesthetising, numbing process. In this case, students will not be open to the encounter, will not be able to improvise their way through it and cannot therefore be touched by it.

The notion of encounter is implicit in this view of education that focuses on the subject-ness of the student. It creates a complex relationship between the teacher and their students. On the one hand, the teacher is implicated as the listening subject who is always open to the students' address; this is not the same as being open and ready to meet pre-given needs. The teacher is also someone who *points*, preparing students for encounters where they can exist-as-subject in and with the natural and

social world. On the other hand, the teacher is a sentient subject in their own right, experiencing the social world of the classroom in daily encounters with other human beings in all their difference. By default, the teacher is placed in a position of power which means they must enact their agency to ensure ethical relations, and this is achieved through maintaining an irreducible responsibility for their student.

This is particularly challenging in any kind of work with migrants where the ‘savior and white-knight mentality’ (Hallewas, 2023, p. 182) prompts an urge to just do something, anything. The strong impetus to be of help might mean that ESOL teachers have specific outcomes in mind for their students. However, as Hallewas (2023, p. 177) concludes from her study with refugees in Greek camps, ethical practice is ‘allowing the heart and gut to guide important decisions in being ethical in the moment and to avoid the projection of one’s own needs or desires on marginalized participants’. Essentially, for all the emotional labour invested (Barakos, 2021), teachers should expect nothing in return. Yet, this intertwining of lives must result in something – an aesthetic return perhaps. Merleau-Ponty (1964, p. 143) captures this intertwining of sentient experience in his depiction of *chiasm*, ‘there is a circle of the touched and the touching’. Ultimately, ethical encounters from a teaching perspective are those that engage with complexity, irreducibility and indeterminacy of the student while acknowledging the impact of emotional labour on the teacher.

Drawing on Levinas’ relational ethics, this study attempts to show what it means to encounter ESOL students ethically, as human beings making embodied connections through sensory languaging practices (Bucholtz, 2016), rather than as social identity categories such as ‘refugee’. The next question is how to convey this experience to an audience, the reader, in such a way that they too are able to share and be touched by aesthetic classroom experiences. In what follows, I suggest that aesthetic modes of presentation and dissemination also hold promises for affective and ethical experiences in research practices.

Chapter 6

Researching ethical encounters

6 Researching ethical encounters

This thesis is set in the context of adult language education for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and concerns the role of encounter in a teacher-student relationship in an Adult Education institute in the UK. More specifically, this is an empirical, account of my emerging response to one particular Other, Henry, in our ESOL encounters. However, although he is a key figure, this research is not *about* Henry. It is about my lived experience alongside Henry and his classmates. The focus is on how our relationship comes into being and how my subjectivity is manifested in that relationship.

The study began with one overarching purpose: to understand the nature and range of encounters that make up the ESOL classroom life. This has led to several related research questions as the project has progressed:

- How are micro-level interactions affected by macro-level influences?
- How is identity enacted through interaction in the ESOL classroom?
- How do social actors in the ESOL classroom encounter one another ethically?
- What does responsibility for the Other look like in practice?
- What might a pedagogy of encounter look like?

The previous chapter concluded with a theoretical framework for exploring ethical encounters which is rooted in Levinas' (1998) relational ethics. In this chapter I outline a methodology that aligns with this framework and comprises three strands: Ethnography, Phenomenology and Arts-Based Research (ABR). I explain what each of these strands brings to an approach that is exploratory in nature with a purpose of learning more about the way people engage with each other ethically. I also consider the problematic implications of foregrounding myself as the teaching-researching listening subject and I draw on Ingold (2014) to link the fundamentals of participant observation with Levinas' notions of ethical encounters.

I begin by drawing comparisons between Ethnography and Phenomenology to locate fundamental similarities in these approaches as well as points of departure. I expand on elements from each approach that are relevant to exploring ESOL encounters in my project, and I justify their use for specific purposes. (See [Appendix 1](#) for my initial investigation into these approaches). I also consider the theoretical differences in approaching the interview from both ethnographic and phenomenological perspectives. I then move on to explain the need for including ABR and make a case for Creative Nonfiction (CNF) as a chosen means of presenting data. Following this, I outline the context in which the research is situated and sketch participant profiles before going on to detail my methods. I conclude the section with ethical considerations.

6.1 Research approach: exploring (ethical) encounters at the intersection of Ethnography, Phenomenology and Arts-Based Research

The principal aim in this research is to better understand the nature and range of encounters that make up the ESOL classroom life. I focus more specifically on encounters involving Henry, and I convey my lived experience as a listening subject. To approach the investigation of these social encounters I draw from three perspectives: Ethnography, Phenomenology and Arts-Based Research. In what follows, I outline the central tenets of each and identify threads that allow me to attune to events as they unfold in social interaction.

As methodological approaches located in the broader interpretive paradigm, Ethnography and Phenomenology have several fundamental commonalities at heart which suggests their compatibility for being blended in this project. Both aim to understand human behaviour and they seek people's own understanding of phenomena. They are exploratory in nature. Both have the potential to give insight into thoughts, beliefs and values that might otherwise not be discoverable. Both deal with unquantifiable social issues and they share a similar view of social reality in that they agree it cannot be observed objectively; rather, it is mediated by perception (Busch, 2017). This necessarily includes the perceptions of the researcher so in both approaches the unique relationship of researcher and participants is acknowledged, and researcher reflexivity is foregrounded. As Canagarajah (1996, p. 324) explains, the researcher cannot be 'absent from the report, looming behind the text as an omniscient, transcendental, all knowing figure'. On the contrary, the researcher uses data fragments that capture their attention, controlling which to include and which to omit (Prior, 2016). It is recognised that the researcher's own ideologies and values will shape the findings and in return the findings might reshape his sense of the world.

However, there are also fundamental differences in world view which means it is not a simple case of choosing one approach over the other. I now examine each methodology to explain which elements I have borrowed, and which are at odds with the epistemological, ontological and axiological perspectives underpinning this project.

6.1.1 Ethnography as encounter (or not)

Originating in cultural anthropology, ethnographic research aims to describe and analyse the values, beliefs and cultural practices of a community and is now used widely in a range of disciplines in the social sciences. Such widespread use has led to its diversification into more focused sub categories; for example, *Critical Ethnography* (Thomas, 1993), *Linguistic Ethnography* (Copland & Creese, 2015), *Visual Ethnography* (Pink, 2013), *Autoethnography* (Ellis, 2004). Historically, ethnographic reports have aimed to advance understanding as well as generating new theories; their purpose was not usually to prompt action. However, more recently there has been an appetite for findings from ethnographic research to instigate some kind of societal transformation or liberation. Critical ethnography for example, is concerned with eradicating oppression along with the power structures that maintain it, making life for some 'unnecessarily more nasty, brutish, and short' (Thomas, 1993, p. 33). Therefore, studies rooted in critical ethnography speak on behalf of their participants, giving voice to marginalised or silenced groups in the hope that this will spark a change in society. Linguistic ethnographers, on the other hand, are interested in how language practices are connected to social processes, and they investigate the construction and categorisation of social groups as well as the taken for granted assumptions about those social categories. To this end, they draw on sociolinguistic and behaviourist approaches to interpret the linguistic sign, which encompasses both verbal and non-verbal cues such as posture, gaze, gesture (Goffman, 1967). Both critical and linguistic ethnography have been used in contemporary education research to examine key social and political concerns as well as broadening understandings in pedagogy and classroom practice (Fitzpatrick & May, 2022; Lefstein & Israeli, 2015)

Despite the diversification of ethnography, subdivisions retain an essential epistemological focus: they are concerned with 'making sense of social life through the ways of knowing that are most meaningful and potentially most consequential to social actors themselves' (Harrison, 2014, p. 224). Ultimately, ethnographic studies aim to shed light on what it is that makes a specific culture or group distinctive. So, although ethnographers observe and speak to individuals, the goal is to encounter a range of perspectives so that assumptions can be made about the group. To this end, ethnographies concentrate on the articulated descriptions and rationalities people from the community give to their routine daily lives, thus enabling the ethnographer to explore a number of views at the same time and deepen understanding about the group's cultural knowledge embedded in its language, rituals, beliefs, artefacts and relationships.

To gather these insights, fieldwork remains a fundamental element in all ethnographic research. Methods employed in the field include observation, extensive notetaking, audio/video recordings,

memos, journals, informal interviews. Such an eclectic range of ethnographic methods offers the researcher a rich set of tools to generate 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) as well as 'multiple techniques for finding out, for cross checking, or for ferreting out varying perspectives on complex issues and events' (Wolcott, 1988, p. 192). This triangulation of data sources allows the ethnographer to interpret words and actions of actors from an emic perspective in a bid to 'make the familiar strange' (Erikson, 1990, p. 92). Transitioning from involvement in this lifeworld, to an etic standpoint in the world beyond, the ethnographer then aims to do justice to this new-found understanding by producing third person accounts of findings for an external audience. This is the first point at which my study needs to part company with Ethnography since my aim is not to write a third person account of Henry and classroom encounters but to write my first-person account. As Levinas insists, I cannot know the Other so while I can describe their behaviour from my perspective, I cannot make claims as to what they are thinking or feeling or suggest that they represent the views of a cultural group even if they have stated something explicitly; as Goffman (1959) has detailed, this could indeed be part of a performance.

The second point of departure concerns the framing of ethnography as encounter. The behaviour of the ethnographic researcher in the field is complex, having crucial impact on the way fieldwork is conducted and how data is both interpreted and reported. Ethnographers are interested in communities that are different from their own so to gain optimum exposure to a new cultural group, researchers negotiate entry into the setting with the relevant gatekeepers and immerse themselves in that culture for a prolonged period in order to observe daily practices and speak to members of the group. As a result, they will inevitably enter into encounters with many others from that cultural group.

This is wholly relevant for two reasons: first, the mere presence of the ethnographer in the group is likely to have a significant effect on the social practices taking place. This addition of a 'strange' body may affect structures of power, interpersonal relationships, as well as initiating shifts in identities. As a consequence, people being observed may well engage in practices or assume situational identities that are neither socially nor culturally normative (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Secondly, in encountering others and participating in their daily lives, the researcher makes daily decisions about what/who to observe, whether to follow up on these observations, how to document them. For this reason, the researcher's impressions and interpretations can never be considered objective or detached. In the sense that they are very much experienced in the present, at first-hand, that they involve human contact, and have a definite influence on the interaction and practices in the community, these encounters cannot themselves be considered ethnographic. This is why Ingold (2014) takes issue with the term 'ethnography' being conflated with all aspects of qualitative research.

‘Ethnographicness’ as Ingold (2014, p. 386) explains, is implicit in ‘judgment that is cast upon these encounters through a retrospective conversion of the learning, remembering and note-taking’ in the form of a written documentary. It is not implicit in the methods used to conduct the research nor to the knowledge it generates. For Ingold (2014, p. 385) it is quite simple: ethnography means ‘writing *about* the people’ (my emphasis). It is not a term that can be applied to human encounters, as he explains:

While a written monograph, in so far as it aims to chronicle the life and times of a people, may justifiably be called ethnographic, and while the same may even be said of a film that shares the same objectives, I do not believe the term can be applied to our encounters with people, to the fieldwork in which these encounters take place, to the methods by which we prosecute it, or to the knowledge that grows therefrom. Indeed, to characterize encounters, fieldwork, methods and knowledge as ethnographic is positively misleading. Autoethnography, when there are no people to describe but only the self, and museum ethnography, where there are only curated objects, are simply oxymoronic. (p.385)

Ingold’s (2014) main objection to this indiscriminate use of ‘ethnographic’ to describe encounters that occur when researching lives of others in their communities, lies in matters of temporality and ethics.

In effect, to cast encounters as ethnographic is to consign the incipient—the about to-happen in unfolding relationships—to the temporal past of the already over. It is as though, on meeting others face-to-face, one’s back was already turned to them. This is to leave behind those who, in the moment of encounter, stand before. (p. 386)

Therefore, the researcher who is always focused on producing a past documentary of a present moment, is never truly present and is therefore failing to fulfil their one essential function: to attend. Implicit in this notion of ‘attending’ is the researcher as an observing, listening, feeling, sentient being. Without this attention and disposition of openness there is potential for a “bad” encounter, one without care, attention or respect as Ingold explains:

I suppose a “bad” encounter would be one in which we see but do not observe, hear but do not listen, touch but do not feel. In such an encounter, we would pick up signals as data, but remain impervious to them. Our curiosity would be divorced from care. (Ingold in interview with MacDougall, 2016)

Ingold (2014) makes the point then that in encounters with people, it is in fact impossible to observe without participating so it is not ethnography that is happening but *participant observation*. Observing is not the same as objectifying, so covert gathering of information from cultural groups on the pretext

of wanting to learn from them is neither possible nor ethical. On the contrary, for Ingold, education will only be available to the participant researcher who is prepared to 'follow along where others go and to do their bidding, whatever this might entail' (ibid p. 389). To describe this 'forward movement of one's own perception and action with movements of others', Ingold adopts the term *correspondence*. Bound up in this concept is an attitude of living *attentively* with others in the present, while remaining cognisant of the past and moving towards the future, a move which is never achieved, but always 'in the making'.

There are evident parallels with Levinas' thinking. Practising participant observation is joining in correspondence with others, attending to the call of the Other in the embodied presence of an encounter and remaining open to their ineradicable difference. As a participant observer in the ESOL classroom, I can make use of ethnography's range of fieldwork tools to gather data, but I need an approach that will allow me to document my lived experience from a first-person perspective. For this reason, I turn to phenomenology.

6.1.2 Phenomenology as encounter

As this study has reiterated, the neoliberal framing of education as a commercial enterprise sits in tension with the positioning of social actors as human beings who are in a relationship with their immediate worlds. Morse and Blenkinsop (2021, p. 198) note that 'the abstract and the objective in education needs to be, at the very least, brought into balance with the subjective, relational and personal'. They advocate for phenomenological studies to bring experiences of relationality into the mix so that the teacher/researcher can better understand the unique student experience. While my project is not looking to understand or learn from the student experience (this would be unethical in Levinasian terms), it is most concerned with relationality and my first-person perspective. For this reason, I adopt a broad phenomenological attitude (van Manen, 2014) which will allow me to marry Levinas' thinking on first ethics.

The phenomenological project seeks to portray human experience but since Phenomenology is both a methodology and a philosophy it has been conceived in countless ways in research. Willis (2004) makes a broad distinction between 'intuiting' (classical) and 'empathetic' (new) forms as methodologies. The former concentrates on the appearance of the phenomena while the latter focuses on the aesthetic, subjective response to the experience and the meanings and significance which are then attributed to it. Since one shared event can result in radically different experiences, this kind of research that prioritises the subject's perspective is invaluable in areas like teaching where local experience is often 'overlooked or repressed by powerful interests...who wish to promote one 'official' reading of particular activities' (Willis 2004, p. 4). In this study, I am presenting just one

perspective, my own, as I cannot presume to know or even to ask how others experience our significant human events. I follow van Manen's (2017, p. 2), definition of phenomenology which allows for some overlap with Levinas' ideas: 'the study of the lifeworld – the world as we immediately experience it, pre-reflectively rather than as we conceptualise, categorise or reflect on it'. This emphasises the need to pay attention to spatial and temporal aspects as the subject takes time to tune in. The idea is to dwell in the moment rather than jumping to reflection and this is captured by the notion of *reduction* which means returning to the lived experience as van Manen (2014, p. 218) explains:

reduction is not a technical procedure, rule tactic, strategy or a determinate set of steps we should apply ...Rather, the reduction is an attentive turning to the world when in an open state of mind.

Phenomenological research, argues van Manen (2014), can be guided by questions related to five key existentials: lived body (corporeality); lived space (spatiality); lived time (temporality); lived things and technology (materiality); lived relation (relationality and community). For example, van Manen (2014, p. 304) suggests questions for relationality: 'How are people or things connected? What meaning of community? What ethics of being together?' Answers to these questions will afford a deeper insight into lived worlds of others but, as in this study, they will also provide a 'gift' to the researcher: a phenomenological attitude. They will encourage a posture of openness to the world/the Other while acknowledging that they are situated within that same world themselves. This attitude necessitates space to allow acts of spontaneity and wonder to appear (Kallio-Tavin, 2013). It is not, therefore, a space where events are programmed to the last detail but a space of mutual welcoming where one sensing body meets another in all their vulnerability. In such a space, the phenomena will appear, or, in the case of this study, the Other's call will be heard and felt. The subjective response to this phenomena/call is what is important. It is understood that this relational event cannot be replicated as it is bound to the listening subject, teacher, researcher. But what is it that draws attention to the call creating that sense of wonder and triggering thoughtfulness?

At this point I return to the theoretical discussion about aesthetics and its power to jolt the subject into paying attention and attuning. From a phenomenological standpoint, pre-reflective aesthetic experience is what gives us the ability to reflectively position ourselves in relation to the world and begin to see things differently post experience (Morse & Blenkinsop, 2021). As an example, this act of attunement is demonstrated by an excerpt from a trainee teacher asked to locate a natural spot conducive to nature-based experiential learning (Blenkinsop & Beeman, 2010). Although the teacher had been through the forest numerous times, he was aesthetically jolted to pay attention by the sound of crunching leaves underfoot. This led him to notice the fallen leaves on the ground in summer. Prior

to the sound, he had not perceived what was right in front of him and so the encounter prompted him to seek the reason: that the trees had been through several tough growing years. In effect, nature is pointing and therefore educating in the manner that Biesta (2022) has described.

The phenomenological project is then a series of aesthetic moments which need aesthetic treatment in writing if they are to represent a holistic picture of an encounter that can be experienced first with the senses. According to Willis (2004), phenomenological research-reporting often leans towards the abstract and analytical which in turn, leaves its resulting insights in danger of being 'lifeless and not often read' (p.6.) He suggests that in order to present a comprehensive human experience in which the reader can become involved and moved in some way, the researcher needs to breathe life into the writing and communicate a mood. Therefore, a broader genre of text should be sought. For this reason, I 'seek the living text' (Willis, 2004, p. 6) in the field of arts-based research. I return to this after first considering how conceptualisations of the interview correspond to Ethnography and Phenomenology.

6.1.3 Interview as encounter

The qualitative interview is a fundamental feature of research in the social sciences particularly in studies concerned with 'identities, experiences, beliefs and orientations' (Talmy, 2010, p. 111). As a site of social interaction, the interview is a co-construction between interviewer and interviewee which produces situated understandings (Talmy, 2011). Interviews demonstrate meaning-making in action as they unfold so even the most structured of interviews will be characterised by spontaneous and improvised conversational moves.

Both ethnographic and phenomenological interviews appear friendly and conversational in tone but consistent with their different worldviews, their aims are different. The purpose of ethnographic interviews is to explore the meanings that members of a cultural group assign to their own practices, spaces, activities, artefacts as well as to time, space and other people. The ethnographer aims to generate descriptions and explanations of these key cultural aspects in language used routinely by people belonging to that specific community. Ethnographic interviews can be scheduled at any point of the prolonged engagement in the field, but they are not sufficient as a sole source in studying sociocultural worlds (Walford, 2007). They generally follow some kind of analytical activity which has highlighted the need for further clarification in order to verify or refute an emerging hypothesis. Therefore, although the interview may appear to be highly unstructured in its conversational form, the interviewer will have specific questions that need answering (Roulston, 2010). This planned agenda also characterises the relationship between the interviewer/interviewee as asymmetrical and

in data analysis and presentation the ethnographer will seek to acknowledge and account for this imbalance.

On the other hand, the phenomenological interview explores the life stories of the participant with a view to generating in-depth accounts of a particular human experience. Brinkman and Kvale (2018, p. 578) define this kind of interview as a 'humane, intersubjective and responsive encounter'. Rather than focusing on meanings and explanations attached to cultural aspects of a particular community as an ethnographic interview does, the interviewer is interested in a 'direct description of a particular situation or event as it is lived through without offering causal explanations or interpretive generalizations' (Adams & van Manen, 2008, p. 618). It is a relatively unstructured conversation guided by key areas of interest, so the interviewer ensures a comfortable environment which is conducive to storytelling. Roulston (2011) suggests that the relationship between interviewer/interviewee could be described as a pedagogical one which sees the interviewer in the role of student, listening attentively to soak up the details of the story without overt interruption, evaluation or challenge. In this respect, the roles are not entirely subverted but they are certainly less asymmetrical. Mann (2016) observes that in phenomenological interviews, the interviewer's contributions to the co-construction are notably absent. He flags this as a potential drawback since the reader is denied the opportunity to hear the voice of the interviewer and see how exactly this power imbalance has affected the interaction patterns and outcome, not to mention the way the conversation was actually co-constructed. Interviews, however, will provide a lens through which researchers can gain an emic perspective, a view of people's lived experiences as *they* perceive them.

6.1.4 Arts-Based Research (ABR) as encounter

Arts-based research is a dynamic approach to carrying out qualitative studies. According to Lawrence (2015, p. 142), this approach offers the researcher 'a fuller palette' with which to collect, analyse and represent data in meaningful ways. It concerns artistic and aesthetic approaches to highlighting and addressing social issues. Creative arts (visual, sound, performance, digital or hybrid forms) are invaluable for conveying nuanced and expressive representations of data which deal with everyday human experience in social settings. Perhaps the most significant purpose of introducing aesthetic modes of data presentation in qualitative research is to make an emotional impact on the reader/audience so they can experience the familiar anew.

Barone and Eisner (2012, p. 8) define an arts-based research approach as a 'method designed to enlarge human understanding... [through] the utilisation of aesthetic judgement and the application

of aesthetic criteria in making judgements about what the character of the intended outcome is to be'. Expressive forms have the potential to create evocative and vibrant worlds which afford opportunities for audiences to participate actively in the compelling stories being told, to respond emotionally and empathically and to gain deeper understandings as a result. Barone and Eisner (2012, p. 3) maintain that the ability to feel empathy for others is in fact 'a necessary condition for deep forms of meaning in human life.' Through an evocative use of data, creative forms have the power to reveal webs of human entanglement and they communicate meanings which might otherwise be ineffable. Whether reading or viewing, audiences may be pulled into an unfamiliar world, granting them access to spaces that are often beyond their reach, to characters whose paths they never cross, and to complex issues of human existence they may never have faced. If the context is a familiar one, then new insights or perspectives will demand that this world is experienced afresh. Just as Rene Magritte's surrealist paintings shock the observer out of their complacent state of knowing to question their perceptions of reality, so the reading /viewing/listening audience feels a sense of unease, discomfort or disequilibrium, which forces them to reimagine this familiar world they inhabit, along with their role within it. This kind of active, aesthetic participation invites audiences to engage in critical reflection which in turn opens up the capacity for change with regard to issues of social justice.

Arts-based research highlights complex and sometimes subtle interactions. By selecting and employing devices specific to a particular artistic genre, attention can be drawn to those interactions, giving them prominence where they often go unnoticed. As Barone and Eisner, (2012, p. 2) note, 'In the arts, symbols adumbrate; they do not denote'. It is this adumbration that allows people to notice, to engage with the deeper meanings, to empathise, and be prompted to share the stories they are witnessing. There will be inevitable differences in what exactly is seen, felt and known since these 'vehicles of illumination' highlight meanings that are ambiguous and therefore open to interpretation. Far from being a disadvantage, Barone and Eisner (2012), see this intentional ambiguity as a positive because differences in understanding prompt challenge, challenge encourages debate, and debate not only leads to deeper insight but also serves to expand or redirect inquiry in a field of research.

Research presented through various means of artistic expression has the potential to reach wider non-academic audiences; it is not limited to a solely academic readership. As Orr et al. (2021, p. 887) point out, critique is increasingly falling on 'the linguistic imperialism of academic writing' which often dismisses Arts-Based Research for its lack of scientific rigour. Cole and Knowles (2008, p. 60) believe a crucial aim of Arts-Based Research is to 'shift the dominant paradigmatic view that keeps the community and the academy separate.' This goal to connect researcher-community-academy suggests that creation of knowledge can be a shared responsibility since each party engages on a

different level. Thus, Arts-Based Research has the potential to empower researcher, participants and audience in the collaborative task of knowledge making.

In the social sciences, there is increasing creativity in the way researchers are choosing to employ a range of expressive forms to present a more impactful account of their research in both ethnographic and phenomenological studies. Dramatic arts offer an effective medium through which to make embodied connections with their audience and researchers with some skill in this area have sought to present their findings through performance. For example, at the intersection of art and sociolinguistics, Blackledge and Creese (2022, p. 601) have sought artistic means to represent the 'energy, movement, noise, relationships, joy, tensions, frustrations, and contradictions of everyday social practice.' To this end they have created *ethnographic drama* to foreground the participants' voices and to recreate encounters in the contexts of a city volleyball team and a welfare advice hub in a Chinese community Centre.

However, performance is not the only means of representing such affective experiences. There are other deeply moving examples which convey traumatic subjective experience through poetry. Temen's (2010) *Now He's not Alive* was prompted by the suicide of one of his research participants. It is a particularly poignant example of how poetry can touch the soul in a way that literary discursive modes may not. Considering the harrowing subject matter, it is also a more ethical choice than trying to represent such emotion in a flat descriptive text. In the field of art education, Kallio-Tavin (2013) has used painting as a means to achieve meaningful social interaction with her autistic research partner; during the research process she discovers much about her own pedagogical assumptions and her own story is told through engaging vignettes. Bradley et al. (2018) have used collage to exemplify through visual means how communicative repertoires and linguistic landscapes have been produced in educational workshops. Hwang (2018) has studied the experiences and interactions of TESOL graduate students who were enrolled on a creative writing poetry course and preparing to return to their home countries to teach English. Their poetry became a way to explore identities and raise new questions about their being labelled as 'non-native speakers'. Subramanian (2018) represents research findings through what she terms 'activist ethnographic storytelling'. Her aim is to make the invisible visible by 'bringing to light lived experiences erased by mainstream forces of oppression' (P.92). *Dear Mrs. Naidu* is one such example, a nuanced counter-narrative to the dominant ideology that women/girls are submissive and suffering a failed public education system in India. These more embodied accounts allow the reader/audience to experience the essence of the research through the senses.

6.1.5 The arts-based researcher-practitioner

According to Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund (2018), *scholartists* should have a deep knowledge of their field of scholarship as well as the arts-practice they are employing, but this does not mean they should necessarily be arts specialists. What is essential is the way the researcher prepares. On this point, it has been suggested that techniques used to train actors have the potential to enhance all phases of qualitative inquiry, from data collection and analysis to representation (McGovern, 2018). Drawing parallels between the crafts of acting and educational research, Saldaña (2005) asserts that theatre practitioners do indeed possess the prerequisite skills for conducting research with people. These include:

The ability to analyse characters and dramatic texts, which transfers to analysing interview transcripts and field notes for participant actions and relationships; ...enhanced emotional sensibility, enabling empathic understanding of participants perspectives; ...scenographic literacy, which heightens the visual analysis of fieldwork settings; ...and an aptitude for storytelling, in its broadest sense, which transfers to the development and writing of engaging narratives' (p. 29)

McGovern (2018, p. 230) suggests that the methods outlined by Stanislavski (1936) in *An Actor Prepares* could be equally applicable to a volume for qualitative studies: *A Researcher Prepares*. The techniques proposed in Stanislavski's seminal text can be distilled into four recommendations for educational researchers working within any artistic discipline:

1. *Cultivate awareness of self and other*

Achieved through a development of 'inner equipment' which comprises sensory memory, creativity, imagination, observation, emotional experience, understanding of how inner worlds are enacted through our physicality and conveyed to/hidden from others. Also achieved by giving something of yourself in dialogue with others. This all leads to trustful relationships which in turn enables the researcher to make principled decisions regarding the epistemological, ontological, axiological and ethical issues/questions that are raised when attempting the representation of others.

2. *Cultivate powers of observation*

The principle here is to attend to non-verbal forms of communication with the same rigour as words which has clear links to both Goffman (1959) and sociolinguistic semiotic repertoires/assemblages (Kusters, 2021). Geertz (1973) suggests as much in advising researchers to aim for 'thick description'. And in the same way that an actor cannot create a character based on stereotypes of the same, so a researcher should

not enter the 'scene' with preconceptions of what to look for or ideas of how people will/should behave.

3. *Cultivate a facility with textual analysis*

The key lesson here is that text does not just mean words. Tools in the actor's repertoire include a breaking down of the *given circumstances* into units of meaning or *beats*, each with its own *objective or motivation*. Stanislavski's units (1936 p. 23) include 'point of view of the epoch, the time, the country, condition of life, background, literature, psychology, the soul, way of living, social position, external appearance...custom, manner, movement, voice, speech, intonations...without all this you will have no art'. This is relatable to a research context when we consider how in an interview for example, a participant may be 'motivated' by something absent in the dialogue. However, despite the extensive list, Stanislavski does warn against breaking the text into too many pieces too soon. Again, this could be related to the researcher focusing on emergent themes rather than risking becoming overwhelmed by the detail in copious pages of data.

4. *Cultivate the ability to develop 3D characters through character analysis*

During rehearsals, actors will be encouraged to build a believable, fully rounded character by selecting information they find significant in the text and by filling in the blanks. This is often done through probing questions, for example: what compelled the character to enter the scene? When is he in his element? What is he not telling us about his relationship with ____? What is he trying to conceal? In a research context, similar questioning in an interview might help the researcher attune to moments previously disregarded or unnoticed. Saldaña (2005) maintains that multidimensional characters are unlikely to be composed by paying attention to what participants tell you directly in interviews.

In a similar vein, Cahnmann-Taylor (2018) offers a set of interwoven principles to guide the potential arts-based researcher in their decision making and to encourage reflexive practice.

1. *The principle of subjectivity and public good*

While the arts wield great power when it comes to highlighting complex issues and disturbing equilibrium, the inquirer in education must remain mindful of the potential for producing art for arts' sake but also for pushing agendas. Public good can only be achieved when the researcher explores complex issues to expand perceptions and aims for a multifaceted understanding of the phenomena being experienced. The researcher should 'articulate the relevance of their subjectivity to the surrounding community in which the self lives ...[and

make] a commitment to exploring the unknown with complexity, humility, bravery and beauty' (p. 248-249).

2. *The principle of attribution and ethical good*

Fact/fiction are often blurred in ABR as imagination and creativity take hold of the data to make maximum impact in representation. Thus, the onus is increasingly on the inquirer to attend to the rigour implicit in the 'R' and make ethical decisions about the use of a participant's words to arrive at a representation of *truth* in the study.

3. *The principle of Impact and aesthetic good*

Although mastery of an art form is not required, the arts-based researcher should develop aesthetic competence in the chosen mode for representation. This involves spending time or collaborating with other artists working in the same genre, reading/ viewing high quality examples of this genre, daring to experiment and risk failure and having a clear sense of the 'so what?'.

4. *The principle of translation to scientific good*

As well as pursuing aesthetic good, to do justice to the R in ABR there should also be the intention to communicate the value of the research to a wide audience in the educational field and beyond. To this end, rigorous empirical project design should translate into a product that matters to educationalists.

6.1.6 Creative Nonfiction: An artistic mode to (re-)present data

Lee Gutkind (2012), founder and editor of the magazine *Creative Nonfiction*, defines the genre simply as 'true stories well told'. These stories can assume various forms including essay, journal article, poem or research paper. Within the fields of education and sociolinguistics scholars are increasingly drawn to narrative, both as a creative analytic practice and as a means of representing their ethnographic and phenomenological research findings, but few have used CNF specifically. Examples of those that have include Sparks' (2007) study of academic culture; Clayton's (2010) investigation into football masculinities in the classroom; Edge et al.'s (2020) exploration of diverse lived experience in a smart city; Smith's (2013) account of someone becoming disabled through sporting injury. This shows that affordances are wide in scope.

There is some controversy concerning the apparent conflict inherent in the contradiction in terms, but *Creative* refers to the form, to the craft of employing the techniques from the world of fiction in order to present artful nonfiction in a dramatic and compelling manner (Cheney, 2001). *Creative* has to do with how the researcher-author conceives ideas, brings characters and situations to life and shapes

the story they want to foreground into a deeply embodied narrative. CNF is a kind of creative analytic practice that offers flexibility and freedom whilst also respecting basic tenets of 'reliable' reporting. *Nonfiction* means there is no element of invention where the data are concerned; as Gutkind (2012, p. 7) stresses in the title of his book '*You can't make this stuff up*'.

It is necessary at this point to pause and contemplate both Gutkind's '*true stories well told*' and the *Nonfiction* label. I understand Gutkind to mean that these events actually happened; that is his *true*. However, the telling is from the point of view of an individual who has had a specific relationship with the event and the people involved and will choose which aspects to foreground and which to mute, whose voice to amplify and whose to silence. The salience of events is also signalled through the order in which information is fed to the audience in short scenes within the entire frame (story structure) (Gutkind, 2012). This diverges from Goffman's (1967) notion of *frames* as metaphorical spaces that social actors move in and out of. In this case it is the subject's truth and, as mentioned with phenomenological encounters, this version of the story maybe be told entirely differently by another who shared the very same experience. Therefore, CNF produces a story that is grounded in empirical data but how those data are portrayed is down to the creativity of the writer.

The writer of CNF draws on literary conventions and techniques. However, there is no prescribed recipe for its construction, despite my using the term 'conventions'. On the contrary, as Smith et al. (2015, p. 60) warn, adopting a kind of 'facsimile approach' would lead to 'formulaic, safe, straightforward, predictable and sterile research' which would, in turn, rinse the creativity out of the whole process. Rather than produce prescriptive formats for transforming data into a storyline, advocates of this genre tend to offer advice or points for consideration on how successful Creative Nonfiction might be crafted (Smith et al., 2015; Caulley, 2008; Cheney, 2001; Barone, 2008; Barone & Eisner, 2012). Linking to aspects of Phenomenology and Ethnography that I have outlined as pertinent to this study, I have drawn on the following advice from the authors listed:

1. *Seek truthfulness, not the Truth*: Caulley (2008, p. 426) states that 'creative nonfiction is deeply committed to the truth' but this means that the story should be as faithful as possible to the event as experienced by the researcher. It is not about finding generalisable truths or claiming truths as fact. By presenting a first-person account of my encounters with Henry and his classmates I present my lived experience of the encounters as they unfolded.
2. *Have a concrete purpose*: This should be clear to the reader and answer the 'so what?' question. To this end, the researcher should be wary of choosing episodes purely for personal interest or entertainment value; rather they should consider what points

their stories are making from all aspects: theoretical, moral, ethical etc. and who the intended audience is.

3. *Show rather than tell: Telling* is to offer the reader a summary of events. *Showing* is action driven. It employs dramatic, scenic or cinematic methods to bring past events into the present and conjure emotions in the reader, who should feel they are witnessing the action in the here and now. Moment-to-moment action adds movement and vitality to a scene, making it more immediate and memorable as Gutkind (1997, p. 33) explains:

scenes (vignettes, episodes, slices of reality, and so forth) are the building blocks of creative nonfiction—the primary factor that separates and defines literary and/or creative nonfiction from traditional journalism and ordinary lifeless prose.

4. *Write evocatively*: evoke the senses to highlight lived meanings and to engage the reader viscerally.
5. *Use dialogue*: Dialogue captures the spontaneity of an encounter. It represents people expressing themselves in their own way. Conversation typifies human relationships so helps to contribute to the realism of the story while animating the narrative to make it a compelling read.
6. *Select and develop characters*: They should not be presented as stereotyped cardboard cut-outs; the author should do justice to the complexity of human lives across time. Embodiment is crucial - bodies should be shown in expressive motion (or not) in relation to other characters and to the story itself. This is where I will draw on observations of semiotic assemblages.
7. *Consider scene-setting*: who moves in and out of certain frames and consider their backstage/frontstage behaviour.
8. *Edit with your whole body*: When redrafting, consider what feels right and make every word count. This brings attention back to the senses.

These principles inform my approach to crafting the Creative Nonfiction to ensure that, although not a traditional academic presentation of findings, it will still maintain the rigour of an academic piece.

6.2 Research Context

The research site for my project is an Adult Education Service in the Midlands which comprises a number of centres spread across the city. These centres give local inhabitants access to a range of courses and ESOL is a popular choice. However, at the centre where I conducted research in 2019-2020, the ESOL students were not necessarily there by choice. We offered specific *ESOL for Work* courses which meant that a referral from a job centre was essential to claim funding. Students taking these courses were sent by their case worker, so attendance was non-negotiable.

At the Entry levels (Pre-entry-Entry 3) there were no mandatory formal exams for ESOL for Work students. Instead, progress was measured through the completion of specific Milestones which assessed the four key language skills plus IT and Employability. In the second term of the research period, students were given the opportunity to take an ICT Award; this was a new initiative to improve employability prospects. The learner journey was recorded on eTrackr, an eLP comprising action plans with SMART targets, careers plans and tutorials. This was also used to monitor attendance, punctuality, and engagement. The traffic light system (Figure 6.1) gave a visual representation of attendance. Students displaying a red light were assigned a progress coach to improve attendance and engagement. Without marked improvement, students were withdrawn from the course.

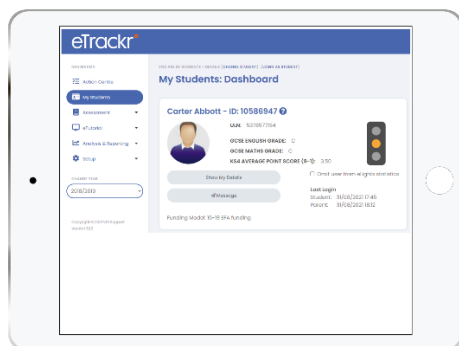


Figure 6.1: View of the Learner Dashboard (image taken from eTrackr VLE support, 2023)

I was a teacher and participant observer of two groups of learners (mostly with refugee status) who were enrolled on ESOL for Work courses at Entry levels 2 (E2) and 3 (E3), roughly corresponding to CEFR A2/B1. In October 2019, 21 participants were recruited from these two classes (See [Appendix 2: Participant Information](#)). In the first term, I taught the Entry 2 group for 9 hours per week (3x3) and once they moved to Entry 3 in Term 2, I saw them for 3 hours per week (1x3). When we moved online during the first lockdown, contact was via Zoom for one 3-hour session per week. All participants

across the 2 classes (Entry 2/Entry 3) agreed to interviews, class audio recordings, observations and photographs. This is expanded in Ethical Considerations 6.6.

All 21 students feature in the raw data, but certain names appear with more prominence than others. In this study, the following students make an appearance in the Novel: Henry, Jasmine, Marie, Fay, Joanne, Maisie, Tandy, Nigel, Ibo, Adam, Nancy, Flora, Nina, Emma, Abbie, Sherry, Dotty (all pseudonyms and in order of prominence). Any one of these learners could have become the focus of study but within 2 weeks of beginning the research, I was drawn to Henry as the focal participant for reasons outlined in his profile. I also outline key information which is relevant to this study in my own profile which follows Henry's.

6.2.1 Henry's profile: student, refugee, computer whizz

Henry is a highly educated Iranian refugee with a passion for aerospace engineering and an intention to pursue doctoral study in this field at a university in the UK. Although the classroom instruction for his MSc was in Persian, he completed the written components in English, so he also has some prior experience of academic writing. He is a published author and most of his papers have been published in journals using the English language, one of which I proofread with him. His IT skills far surpassed my own and I grew to rely on his expertise and talent for problem-solving as the course progressed. During the second semester, he designed a series of lessons to familiarise his classmates with Excel and I encouraged him to deliver these sessions himself; one of these lessons was observed during an inspection. Henry had been teaching Maths at an Iranian university before being forced to flee in fear of persecution due to his beliefs.

I found myself gravitating towards Henry in response to his initially puzzling behaviour. Despite his experience as an educator, he did not always play by the rules expected in a classroom environment. He claimed from the outset that his main aim was to improve his speaking and, unsurprisingly, given the focus in political rhetoric mentioned earlier, he pinpointed this as a major barrier to his progress in other areas of his life, including his preparation for a future in higher education. Yet, he did not make use of the many opportunities for speaking practice that were integrated into daily planning, often choosing to remove himself from group discussions and remaining silent. This was the cause of much frustration for me, but it also piqued my curiosity. On the other hand, Henry sought opportunities to engage with me one-to-one outside the time and space boundaries of the classroom and this continued into lockdown when he would stay connected for extended periods. There was a different quality to this one-to-one engagement that intrigued and touched me. Encounters with Henry have thus become central to this study.

6.2.2 My profile: teacher, researcher, lover of the arts

I came to this research as a language educator with over 30 years' teaching experience in a diverse range of educational settings, from Primary to Higher Education. During this time, I have been involved in curriculum design, assessment, teacher education and recruitment. Much of my career has been spent in Europe teaching Drama and English as an additional language and I have always sought to combine language teaching with the arts. I returned to the UK in 2015 to pursue an MA in TEFL and this is also when I first encountered the world of ESOL. Both the MA instruction and the ESOL education provoked a series of aesthetic experiences that jolted me out of a long-standing comfort zone to question all I thought I knew about what it means to teach. With this PhD I continue in my quest to understand more about the nature of ethical encounters in teaching people who have complex life histories.

Before becoming a teacher, I trained as an actor and worked in theatre in the UK. During my time in Spain, I was part owner of a successful Performing Arts Academy where we provided performance training. Associated with the academy, we also had a professional company which toured small-scale productions around Europe. I worked alongside industry professionals and creatives which gave me the opportunity to extend my knowledge and skill set in such areas as sound production, set design, lighting and directing. This honed an interest in understanding how salient moments in a story can be conveyed artistically making an impact that words alone may not. What this experience with theatre and literature has led to, is an unwavering belief that the arts and aesthetics have transformative potential whether they are experienced in formal arts settings or in local social encounters.

6.3 Research design: Making data

The process of making data (Richards, 2015) took place between October 2019 and July 2020. Data were created during face-to-face sessions in the first two semesters and online Zoom meetings during the lockdown which plagued semester 3. This generated an abundant data set comprising a) ethnographic classroom observations consisting of almost 75 hours of audio recordings, accompanying fieldnotes and transcripts of classroom interaction, b) 16 life-story interviews, and c) my journal memos, d) correspondence with my supervisor. In what follows I expand on the making of these data and my approach to analysis and presentation. A full catalogue detailing all data created

and processed can be seen in [Appendices 3-7: Data Catalogues](#). First, I detail the tools and methods used.

6.3.1 Fieldwork

To gain experiential insight into the evolving, and often affectively charged, relationship between myself, Henry and his peers, this project adopted participant observation (following Ingold, 2014) as central to data generation during fieldwork.

Field notes and memos

During each lesson, I observed the students participating in set tasks and made handwritten notes while they were occupied in group activities. These took the form of descriptions, diagrams or photos detailing exactly what I saw happening. I paid attention to semiotic assemblages and languaging practices and by drawing on Goffman's conceptual metaphors I could attune to changes in behaviour, mood, body language and interaction. I noted any overt mentions of identity as well as more subtle attempts to claim or negotiate subjectivities. My embodied experience as a participant in the classroom lead me towards emotionally charged moments that affected the atmosphere in the room. Following each session, I reviewed and digitised these notes, elaborating where necessary to facilitate future recall (see [Appendix 8](#) for an example). Alongside these descriptions I added my personal reflections as memos. Initially these were written in 'teacher role' and focused very much on myself and how I was performing, which I account for in the data analysis. But as time progressed and this became more of a routine activity, I was less occupied and troubled by my own performance and began looking and listening to the data as a researcher. Rather than commenting on poor task choices or missed opportunities for instance, my memos now tended to be expressed as 'wonderings'; for example, wondering why students behaved in certain ways on one day but not another and what I could do/could have done about it; wondering why a student had not disclosed important information about themselves sooner and what I could do/could have done about that etc. I took a very disciplined approach to making field notes as I had conducted a number of class action research projects in the past and learnt how essential it is to document as extensively as possible *in-the-moment*, (or at least shortly after) rather than relying on memory. To give access to accurate classroom interaction I recorded sessions.

This proved to be a project with ebbs and flows. For the most part, I felt confident in the validity of its purpose; however, my longer reflective memos give an indication of the disorienting nature of such a project. I include an example in [Appendix 9](#) when, coming out of the first lockdown, I lose touch with Henry. This kind of data does not appear in the Novel, but it contributes to the overall aesthetic.

Audio-recordings of classroom activities

The recording of classroom interaction had to be reconsidered due to the impracticality of turning on/off throughout a 3-hour session. Firstly, I felt pressure on myself to orchestrate a lesson while also trying to capture useful data, therefore giving a false impression of what our classroom life usually looked like. Secondly, I could not anticipate which stages of the lesson would generate useful data; this was an exploration into the nature of encounters, so I was interested in how students participated and communicated in all stages of the lesson. Thirdly, related to the previous point, I was not able to predict which data would actually prove useful in the long term. For these reasons, I made the decision to record all classroom sessions in their entirety. During group work, I also placed mini recorders on each table to capture student-led interaction.

Audio-recordings of impromptu chats

Informal impromptu chats took place after class as well as in corridors and the student seating area. Chats which occurred in the classroom were recorded. Copland and Creese (2015) warn that this could be an ethical concern in that the participant may not realise that the exchange is part of the research. To counter this concern, I made it clear that the recorder was still running, and I asked if they wanted it switched off. This happened just once, and I did not make reference to the content of this private conversation in the study. With chats occurring outside the classroom, I adopted a practice of recording meticulously what I recalled immediately after the event, including snippets of dialogue; these notes were added to the field notes for that particular day.

Images

I took photographs while students were occupied with group activities in the classroom as well as in enrichment workshops and on trips to the museum. These helped to recall group dynamics, mood and behaviours such as Henry's tendency to sit on the edge of his seat, to avoid eye-contact and to punctuate his discursive contributions with gestures led by a pen. Although I showed these photographs to the students, they were not used in interviews or subsequent class sessions; they added clarity to my memos. They were initially used to accompany the Novel (with faces obscured) but following a meeting with Henry, they were then removed (See Ethical Considerations, section 6.6.2).

6.3.2 Phenomenological interviews

In this project, phenomenological interviews are conceptualised as a discursive practice, a socially constructed speech event where both parties contribute to social interaction with the aim of sharing understanding, making human connections and developing relationships. Meaning making occurs in

the in action as it unfolds. As outlined above, I acknowledge that the research positions of the participants and researcher are not a priori and therefore in this study, the interview itself is conceived as a performative space where identities are constantly re-negotiated (Vacchelli, 2018) and where languaging practices are key to enriching understanding. With evidence of interaction and languaging practices being crucial to this study's data set, I recorded all interviews. All interviews were scheduled for between 45-60 minutes and all were audio-recorded. As can be seen in [Appendix 7](#), initial interviews took place in the half term break, and most of the Entry 2/Entry 3 learners attended. By this point, key participants (named above) were emerging so interviews with these students were transcribed in full to allow for repeated readings during the analysis phase. During the transcription process, I added memos in the same way as I did to the field notes. The remaining interviews were summarised.

The interviews conducted were very loosely structured around visual prompts (collages) prepared by the learners themselves. The reasons for this were manifold: firstly, to help build a rapport and a sense of trust by positioning myself an interested conversational partner and the interviewee as the one holding the experience (Agar, 2008); secondly, to allow me to pursue topics that arose in the course of the interaction and to probe for a deeper understanding of the participants' experience in the way *they* know and understand it (Copland & Creese, 2015); thirdly, to allow for a pace that allowed the students to answer flexibly, expanding where they showed an interest and limiting a response if it seemed they felt uncomfortable continuing. Below I expand on the visual prompts chosen and how it was constructed.

Collages and interview guides

In anticipation that lower-level language students' verbal explanations or responses might prove too narrow or neglect broader life experiences, I elicited discussions with students through visual tools. Following other researchers exploring sensitive issues with migrant communities in the qualitative paradigm (Esin, 2017; Vacchelli, 2018), I chose to do this because 'elicitation interviews connect core definitions of the self to society, culture and history' (Harper, 2002, p. 13) Pictorial elicitation links with reflexivity as it is a way to subvert the authority of the teacher/researcher over the learner/participant because they have control of the images they choose to represent their stories. In addition, Willis (2008) suggests research questioning that involves a portrayal of feelings should draw on the resources of aesthetics and imagination. With this in mind, I used collage-making as a tool (Butler-Kisber, 2010, 2011) and planned this activity into a session to ensure that all students would have a visual prompt to guide their interview (Examples are shown in the Novel). I also drew on a visual map of their future goals, which all students with the Adult Education Service are required to use as a basis for SMART targets and ILPs (Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2: Visual prompt for discussing goals



6.4 Research Design: Data analysis

6.4.1 Handling data

For the first few sessions I attempted to transcribe the full 3-hour recordings at the end of the day. However, I soon realised that this was not a sustainable option. Not only was it time-consuming but I was generating pages of similar day-to-day interactions. While this may have revealed patterns of behaviour, it was unlikely that I would need so many examples of such repetitive interaction. Instead, I ran the recordings at a faster speed and summarised the content. These summaries were supplemented with additional memos which included comments on interactions that had interested me for some reason. I also reviewed field notes on a daily basis, digitising them and storing securely with the recordings.

At the end of every week, I dedicated time to review all classroom data and returned to those that had been of particular interest (Reasons described in 6.4.2). These sections were then transcribed in

full. As time progressed and Henry emerged as a focal participant, it became easier to decide what needed transcribing as I was interested in building a fuller picture of his participatory behaviour in comparison to that of his peers. Table 1 provides a summary of fieldwork data. A full picture is given in Appendices 3-7.

From the 21 students who agreed to participate by consenting to classroom recordings, written observations and images, 16 agreed to recorded interviews. All 3 of Henry's interviews are transcribed in full. There are 4 other full transcriptions of students who could possibly have been the focus of this study at the time of the first interview. All other recordings were summarised as seen in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Summary of classroom data

Classroom recordings, with accompanying field notes and journal reflections				
Group	Term	Number of sessions recorded	Hours of recording which proved of interest (rounded)	Interactions
E2	1	30	37 hours	12 sessions transcribed; others summarised
E3	1	10	15 hours	2 sessions transcribed; others summarised
E2	2	7	5 hours	Summarised
E3	2	8	9 hours	3 sessions transcribed; others summarised
E2	3	2	2 hours	Summarised
E3	3	4	3 hours	Summarised
Chats before and after class				
Henry (Iran)	1-3	11	5 hours	Mixture of transcription and summary
Jasmine (Afghanistan)	1,2	5	70 mins	2 transcribed 3 summarised
Maisie (Iran)	1-3	4	1 hour	Transcribed
Marie (Brazil)	1,2	4	50 mins	Summarised
Nina (Bangladesh)	1	4	45 mins	Summarised
Joanne (Hong Kong)	1-3	4	40 mins	Summarised
Fay (Somalia)	1-3	5	35 mins	Summarised
Tandy (Sudan)	1, 2	2	15 mins	Summarised

6.4.2 Collaborative attending as an analytical practice

The complex nature of researching a wide range of human social experiences means that an equally wide repertoire of perspectives and analytical practices have been employed to address specific research questions in qualitative research. While there are no specific conventions as in quantitative data analysis (Punch, 2014), there is a consensus that these analytical practices share ‘a central concern with transforming and interpreting qualitative data – in a rigorous and scholarly way - in order to capture the complexities of the social worlds we seek to explain’ (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 3). To an extent, the idea of explaining data in a ‘scholarly way’ is somewhat challenged in this thesis. It remains rigorous since it adheres to the ethical underpinnings of the framework and methodology. In what follows, I describe the process of analysis that I began; my supervisor then joined in listening to the data alongside me.

In this study, *attending* to data aligns with a commitment to relational ethics in that it allows for the foregrounding of my perceptions and feelings as teacher/participant observer adjusting to the role of listening subject in ethical encounters with her student/co-participant, the Other. The first task is to *see* the Other. Phenomenological *seeing* involves a shift in attention from what is experienced to the *experience* of what is experienced (Bortoft, 2012). To assist this seeing, I looked to Goffman’s (1959, 1967) dramaturgical metaphors to focus my attention on the way the students presented themselves in social interaction using a broad semiotic repertoire of verbal and non-verbal cues. Attention to such detail in our face-to-face encounters allowed Henry to appear. He was soon identified as a focal participant and the classroom with his classmates and materials objects became the backdrop.

To begin with, I looked at the different contexts in which Henry was performing and produced a colour coded overview of his encounters in different contexts (See Figure 6.3 and Table 6.2). I transcribed all data related to these encounters. Rather than coding themes, as is usual in qualitative studies (Punch, 2014), I was drawn to significant moments, sometimes just lines, and these were highlighted. Transcripts of particular interest were then read by my supervisor. We then compared our responses after listening to this data and I gathered fieldnotes, summaries and memos and synthesised these in one document. As this was a first-person perspective, the written descriptions developed organically as narrative with my journal entries and memos providing much of the personal detail, especially my affective responses to what was happening in the room. As these documents grew in number, we began to view significant episodes as scenes, and we played with

sequencing of these scenes in a bid to highlight the aesthetic moment that would provide the shudder.

This collaborative analytical process was ongoing for the 10 months that I was conducting fieldwork. This meant that listening to data became a recursive practice with overlapping phases.

In short, the practice of attending extended into the collaborative space where together, we both attuned to Henry’s languaging practices and to my affective experiences. This kind of aesthetic listening is an analytical practice which departs from traditional sociolinguistic processes of data analysis and interpretation (Kubanyiova, 2023). The purpose was to deepen our encounter rather than explain Henry’s words and actions or my responses. To resist the urge to analyse and categorise experience is to surrender oneself, heart, body and soul, in response to the voice of the Other. This sensory commitment enabled Maggie to live my experience: to laugh at the chaos, to recoil at the discomfort, to puzzle over the entanglements, to enjoy the playful subversion of roles, to weep at the injustice. By presenting these moments as CNF, it is hoped that the reader will do the same.

Figure 6.3: Key to the overview of Henry’s encounters

Key to contexts	
Context	Colour code
Interview	Orange
Before/after class chat	Yellow
Classroom activity	Light Green
Speaking Milestone	Light Blue
Unplanned classroom discussion	Yellow
Planned group task	Pink
Teacher initiated discussion in response to situation	Grey
Zoom lesson	Light Green
Observation of participants in another tutor’s class	Light Blue
BOC Workshop	Brown

Table 6.2: An overview of Henry's encounters

An overview of Henry's encounters

Context	Date	People	Henry's participation	Field notes and memos	Trans	Recording Time
Post class chat about why he was absent	08.10.19	H	Tells me why absent – had biopsy	V		3:21
Classroom activity – ordering cards to make sentences x3	08.10.20	H & M	M moved to sit with H – how they worked and his surprise at M knowing grammar that he didn't	V	-	-
T initiated discussion in response to lack of homework	17.10.19	H/Mai/Jas/Fay	H asking Qs when I ask him why not completed HW (First 5 mins of recording for this day)	V	V	11:00
Discussion related to news of Vietnamese in lorry	24.10.19	Jas/Fay/Mari/Maisie/Tan	Lorry Incident – he's absent from recording in terms of speaking but his behaviour shows he is affected by topic (see conv after class and interview 1)	V	V	8:50
Making collages of what's important to them	24.10.19		Surprisingly quiet recording. H doesn't speak until everyone has left. His collage is all about the lorry not himself	V	V	55:16
Chat after class	24.10.19	H/L	After lorry discussion – Iran and how people from UK view it – woman at bus stop	V	V	20:57
Interview 1 face to face during half term	28.10.19	H/L	His family, Iran, his name, targets, Aerodynamics, studying, previous academic attainment, his collage – lorry, his church	V	V	56:00
Sharing information about books read over half term PW the WG	04.11.19		H has completed reading log (see image) but doesn't share in class discussion / Hamlet	V		26:50

Pronunciation of -ed, T spontaneous response to pron issues	05.11.19	Jas/fay/Nig/Maisie	H doesn't join drilling or offer any answers to questions asked but makes his own notes and carries on with the worksheet	V	V	10:04
Developing sentences – comp of violin news story	07.11.19	Jas/H/Maisie/Fay/Marc Tan/Nig	H joins in giving answers when boys on his table do. Offers one contribution about my own IT problem		V	30:15
Following the class about White Fang	11.11.19	H and Nina	Not related to lesson. He hangs back and comments on why I have no reception on phone but leaves when N doesn't.		V	6:07
Children in Need	14.11.19		Child Homelessness, charity. <i>listen again to link with other conversations about homelessness</i>	Notes not thorough		1:35:08
Observing my Ls in an extra class for Employability	19.11.19	H/Jas/Maisie/Em/Tan	Ls are attending prep course before they can attend the L1 'preparation for classroom assistant' course	V (in book 1)		1:02:14
Vocab work – feelings in prep for a speaking carousel	26.11.19	Jo,Marie, Marc, Tan	Eliciting vocab and group work ranking feelings in terms of strength, discussing how this is relative. In pair work He is not on any of the PW recordings (check again)			41:41
Writing session – Ls have been working on skills to write own story	26.11.19		Observations on how H has dealt with whole story thread this month and watching him write – relies on phone	V (in book 5)		-
Classroom activity in IT – but unplanned discussion in middle	28.11.19 (2)	H&M	Conversation in middle of class related to events in Iran – M very upset and H talking to her about it in Farsi –	V	V	Whole recording 8 1:46:53 (last 20 red)
Chats outside class	28.11.19 (3)	H/L	after class activity on the same subject	V	V	Part of recording above 8:50

Speaking Milestone	03.12.19	H, Marie, Maisie	Doesn't speak exactly about the topic given, turns recorder off with Mai	V	V	16:18 2 nd missing
Talking about the future – grammar etc	10.12.19	F, Maisie, Jas, Ninas Marie	Plans for future/end of term party/feedback – what they find useful (<i>separate group recording – listen again</i>)			1:22:26
BOC workshop	23.01.20	E2B/C	How H participates	V	V	54:00
Cover class for G – chat beforehand	14.01.20	H/L	H early so suggests also takes opportunities to speak to G. Advice for illness and needing mum			11:00
Group Task - Planning trip - using IT and preparing presentation	29.01.20	H, Adam, Ibo, M	H's role within group and how he avoids the group discussion by being the IT expert	V		55:24
Chat before	04.03.20	H	results from his 3D modelling exam			
Vocab work - illness	04.03.20	Hen, Mais	Discussions about illness			1:52:45
BOC workshop	10.03.20	E2/E3	How H participates	V		
Lesson observation for DET	11.03.20	E3 observer/mentor	H has prepared the material for the intro to Excel and he assists during the set up stage	V		No recording
First Zoom class	29.04.20	M, I, F	H helps out with instructions etc. arrives early to chat			56:16
Interview 2 Zoom	15.05.20	H/L			V	1:38:22
<i>Need to check notes and recordings for term 3 Zoom and add</i>						
Interview 3 Zoom	22.07.20	H/L	Progress to next course but transition into general chat about his future		V	59:46

6.5 Presentation of data

Following our multi-layered attending, I sought a creative vehicle to portray these data. Rather than the more traditional ethnographic monograph, it is a piece of Creative Nonfiction. This medium offers an effective means of communicating a coherent, embodied narrative while staying true to events as I experienced them. In this way, the role of listening subject is passed on to the reader who has the opportunity to engage affectively with our story, to 'live' the emerging relationship between Henry and myself set against the backdrop of our, often, emotionally charged ESOL classroom. In line with the overarching principles guiding the study, this had to be an aesthetic presentation that did *not* decontextualise events, present fragmented excerpts, break down language into discrete pieces or use transcription systems that would detract from the flow of the narrative. It does not seek to explain. In short, embodied written accounts are made possible through the presentation of ESOL encounters as a piece of Creative Nonfiction entitled *The Novel*. This is divided into 3 micro chapters: *The Lorry*, *The Story*, *The Pandemic*.

In the spirit of CNF, the layout and numbering conventions are omitted for this chapter. Instead, timestamps guide the reader through the scenes. These timestamps are different for each chapter; for example, *The Lorry* is not presented in chronological order, so clock times help to guide the reader, as do the coloured bands that begin each episode: green indicates whole class activity, yellow is an after-class chat, and pink denotes an interview. Other features of narrative writing have been employed such as altering the chronology and making use of flashback/forward for dramatic effect. Scenes are the building blocks of Creative Nonfiction and rather than moving from everyday moment to everyday moment, these scenes move from what Saldaña (1999, p. 61) calls 'significant epiphany to significant epiphany.' The framing, or overarching narrative, is structured around a key event in each chapter but it is the ebbs and flows of the relationship between us that forms the narrative thread in the novel as a whole.

To reiterate, although this is a creative piece, it is nonfiction in the sense that everything presented here is true to my data and my memory. Creation lies in what has been purposefully omitted or highlighted, and how events are sequenced and juxtaposed.

The narrative commentary throughout is a first-person account which is interspersed with student voices. Their words are taken directly from the recordings to show languaging in practice; the only poetic licence in their use is the omission of excessive 'erms' to move the dialogue along. CNF often combines genres creatively and here I intentionally use two different styles for dialogue. Whole class

interaction is written as playscript to capture sentence fragments from multiple voices, often delivered at pace. Dialogue between myself and Henry, which occurs during chats after class, is in alternating direct speech indicated with double speech marks. Capital letters indicate the line is spoken with volume and italics denote word stress. There is also a font change to convey the style of a novel.

6.6 Ethical considerations

This qualitative study concerns an extended period in classroom life with a group of students who are labelled migrants and refugees and due to this ascribed status in the UK, they are also considered vulnerable. As I am in their classroom in dual role as teacher and researcher, the assumed power differential creates potential challenges not just with macroethical concerns related to respect, beneficence and justice but also with ongoing microethical challenges that are an inherent part of quotidian relations with other human beings (Kubanyiova, 2015). This thesis further amplifies attention to ethical issues since its theoretical framework is grounded in Levinasian relational ethics. Paradoxically, this may result in clashes of principle; for example, while macroethics demands acknowledging the position of my research participants as vulnerable, relational ethics demands they are not categorised as such.

Kubanyiova (2008) does not see this clash as an issue; rather it is an opportunity to add rigour to ethical decision-making. An adherence to macroethical principles does not necessarily guarantee ethical research conduct in ongoing situated practice. To address this, Kubanyiova advocates an ethical framework where macro and microethics function in a symbiotic relationship. In this study, whilst observing macroethical procedure, I also integrate perspectives from the micro dimension which is concerned with 'everyday ethical dilemmas that arise from the specific roles and responsibilities that researchers and research participants adopt in specific research context of ethics' (ibid, p. 504). Microethics encompasses *virtue ethics* (the researcher's ability to identify and address ethical issues) and *ethics of care* (recognition of relationality in the research context). The latter is evidently tied to Levinasian perspectives.

At the onset of the study, I consulted both the BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2011) and Recommendations on Good Practice in Applied Linguistics (The British Association for Applied Linguistics, 2006). I also referred to the institute Safeguarding policy. I then submitted my Ethics Review following the University of Leeds (UoL) ethics procedure, and approval was granted on 20 May 2019 ([Appendix 10](#)).

I begin by detailing key ethical considerations and measures taken before, during and after the fieldwork phase. As outlined in the Ethics Review, the main ethical consideration at the start of the project was to avoid coercion in recruiting ESOL students and gaining their informed consent. As noted by Hugman et al. (2011, p. 1278) it is important to identify 'implications of the context in which consent is being sought'. I had anticipated that the perceived asymmetrical relationships of power between tutor/researcher and student/the researched, may lead potential participants to feel pressure to agree. In turn, I considered the detrimental impact this might have on teaching relationships in future. The institute Safeguarding policy clearly states that learners 'have the right to be protected from harm, to be safe and feel safe from abuse of any kind'. Following guidelines in both the institute Safeguarding policy and UoL Ethics Policy, I took steps to ensure my learners were recruited responsibly. These steps are outlined on the approved ethics review and include gaining informed consent for all means of data collection. I expand on this below.

Participant information about the study was carefully worded to maximise clarity and comprehensibility. On my review form I had considered providing written translations, but this proved unnecessary; the students use translating apps on mobiles as a matter of habit. I devoted also lesson time to talking through information and consent forms. Students were given ample opportunity to engage in conversation with each other, in whichever language was most helpful, in order to clarify understanding. I allowed a week for the students to digest the information sheet and further questioning was encouraged before signing the consent form. There were several points that were duly emphasised: participation was voluntary and had no bearing on the outcome of their current or any future course; they had the right to withdraw at any opportunity without giving a reason; they could decline to answer personal questions; they would be identified with pseudonyms; sessions and interviews would be recorded and photos taken; they would need to give consent by signing.

This last point has been noted as an ethical issue in its own right due to the connotations it embodies for migrants whose lives are determined by legal documentation (Dewilde & Beiler, 2021). To mitigate potential tensions associated with signing, I offered to record their agreement orally; however, this proved unnecessary. These forms were digitised, filed and stored securely ([Appendix 11](#)). Since this project spanned a 10-month period, I returned to both forms at the beginning of each new term. The students were reminded of the content and given the option to decide whether to continue. There were no withdrawals and no changes to consent.

The fact that the content of the form was discussed and signed in class time signalled a potential issue since students could have felt they had to agree with the consensus of the group. This was tackled in a tutorial and resulted in the option of videorecording being removed from the research design. My decision to audio-record interviews and classroom sessions and take photos was based on the need

to capture student responses and patterns of engagement as they appeared to me in the moment. I wanted to have recourse to their actual words rather than relying on memorised versions. Being in the classroom as both teacher and researcher, there was potential for affecting the quality of their lessons. As a researcher I wanted rich detailed data but paying attention to fieldnotes during lesson time would seriously hamper my teaching. Therefore, recording voice and image afforded a balance and limited impact on the lesson.

In terms of equal opportunities, 28 students from both ESOL classes were offered the chance to participate in the same way. All agreed to participation, and all were offered an initial interview for a one-hour timeslot at a time convenient to their personal schedule; 16 students took up the offer. I was mindful that students were given travel costs only for the days they were to attend lessons, so the interview schedule was dictated by their preferences. They all had the option to combine the interview with their regular tutorial and there were options for students to attend in the half term break.

In terms of beneficence, students' comments suggested they found the interview of personal benefit despite not being offered anything tangible in return. The interviews were regarded as extra speaking practice and students who stated they lacked confidence in speaking were surprised and proud to find they accomplished an hour with minimal difficulty. This has been noted elsewhere in the literature in research with English language students (Koulouriotis, 2011). The students had produced a collage to guide the interview and I also used the institute prompt for long term goals. Most students deviated from both prompts and guided the interview in directions pertinent to their own agendas. Some saw this as a chance to air certain grievances, particularly in relation to dealings with the job centre and ESOL provision. Other students were keen to tell their version of the asylum process and Henry, the focal participant, saw this research as a chance to communicate to the British public the atrocities happening in his country. In contrast, Maisie wanted to talk about her children' achievements and poetry. All students were given the chance to read the first transcript of the interview; only Marie and Henry did so, and they did not ask for anything to be deleted or changed. As for the project as a whole, it was an ESOL class that they were grateful for anyway, so credit cannot be taken for that benefit.

Manging recordings was a potential ethical issue taking the *respect for person* principle into account. As noted in section 6.3.1, entire classroom sessions were recorded as well as some paired and group discussions. This may sound excessive from an ethical perspective since much of the data was not or could not be used. However, I routinely reminded students they were being recorded and at the end of the session checked that they agreed for me to transcribe or summarise the content. This minimised the disruption to the flow of lessons. The only person to resist the recording was Henry who simply

turned off the recorder when working with a partner. It was perhaps regarded as an invasion of privacy, but he never mentioned the reason.

The privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of the participants have been protected from the onset of data capturing. Direct identifiers have not been used in fieldnotes, transcripts, file names or in the study itself; all participants are identified with pseudonyms. Any descriptions and quotations have been similarly anonymised. Handwritten field notes were digitalised as a matter of daily routine and audio recordings were uploaded to secure files and removed from digital recorders. Recordings and participant folders have been labelled with pseudonyms rather than direct identifiers of any kind. All data has been stored on my UoL OneDrive and is therefore protected by the UoL dual factor authentication system, thus ensuring sole access. Transcripts and other written documents were shared with my supervisor through UoL IT systems only. No one has had access to any raw data.

An important facet of any qualitative research is the relationships that develop as a consequence of prolonged close contact. How these relationships and their inherent positionings shape the research should be acknowledged as a matter of ethics and this requires reflexivity. This study is complex in this regard because my identities merge and collide at various points, so positionality is not static. Being grounded in relational ethic, the study demands that I attend to my position in each moment, so I am conscious of how I am representing myself as a teacher and researcher throughout.

6.6.1 Reflecting on trustworthiness

Macroethical principles usually dictate that trustworthiness, validity and transparency be fleshed out in an ethics review. These constructs have limitations for evaluating this qualitatively driven study given that the main purpose is to foreground the subject's (my) lived experience, rather than deliver an objective 'truth' or make defensible knowledge claims. A range of perspectives is not required so triangulation does not figure in this research. My aim is not to deliver generalisable results that can be applied to other ESOL contexts. Through a phenomenological lens, I engage in practice that teaches me about myself and I comment on my aesthetic responses which are 'true' to my experience. I describe one possible way to enter into an ethical teacher-student relationship and show what might be gained from attuning to the other. Validity is achieved to an extent through the consistency between theoretical and methodological frameworks and the choice of conveying my experience through a piece of Creative Nonfiction.

6.6.2 Ethics of representation: Jenny and Henry

The first ethical decision in any project is to consider the moral ends of the research and what or whose purpose is being served (Ortega, 2012). I acknowledge that this study was partly due to a personal desire to learn more about the nature of ESOL classroom life in order to understand how a student I thought I knew took her own life without giving any indication of unstable mental wellbeing. I wrestled with the decision to include Jenny when she has no chance to respond. Although many may disagree, I believe my decision to include Jenny's story is an ethical one precisely because she is unable to tell it herself. A second reason why I believe this is ethical is because from my personal experience, Jenny is not the only student to have found herself in this position and I am not the only teacher to have had to deal with it. Yet, these realities are not documented in the ESOL literature, nor do they figure in the political and media rhetoric that frame migrants' lives in the UK. It is my view that it is important to acknowledge where people are failed by systems and other human beings.

Secondly, I insist this study is not about Jenny, just as it is not about Henry. By attending to an ethics of care I hope to prevent the objectification of students in this way. However, I am aware how this does not wash from an ethical standpoint. Although this is my story, my lived experience, and my vulnerability on show, I unavoidably include student information, with a major focus on Henry's life. The Novel has seen many twists and turns because of my indecision on who, what and how to include others. The overriding concern was with Henry's data, since our emerging relationship is evidently the essence of the study, but following the pandemic, I lost touch with him.

However, a year later I received an email related to his progress with studies which led to a meeting and a discussion of the project. Henry asked me to remove all photos and checked that I had not included certain information. He agreed that his name and city would not lead to identification. But he made a point of saying this was not an issue as he is in the UK legally. As someone coming from a positivist research background, Henry's reaction was, more than anything, one of surprise. He was most concerned that my study had no 'real data', no statistics and no definite conclusion, and he questioned if a story could really provide evidence for research. He did not read the thesis but promises to do so in future.

The Novel

The Lorry

The Story

The Pandemic

The Lorry

Date: Thursday 24.10.19

Time: 12:43

Place: IT Room

After class chat with Henry

“I COME BY BOAT, OK?”

Henry’s words erupt into the room. I am facing away from him, leaning over a desk, shuffling books. We had been having a chat after the other students had left, as we often do. I thought our conversation had come to an end so I resumed the tidying around and supposed he would do the same. To be candid, I was surprised that he stayed behind to chat today because he had been so distant and uncommunicative in class. I actually felt quite annoyed with his apparent lack of engagement in our collage activity and his lack of interest in our spontaneous class discussion, especially when it had taken so much for Tandy to share the story of his journey to the UK with us.

But now Henry’s words halt me in my tracks. In a snap second, the realisation of what he is *actually saying* hits me. My mind is doing acrobatics trying to piece together the episodes leading to this eruption. I feel a surge of panic (or is it guilt?) that I hadn’t read his behaviour more sensitively. Why hadn’t it crossed my mind that Henry might also have had a similar experience?

Pounding heart - Pounding heart.

Rush of heat - Clammy palms.

Oh goodness.

Breathe.

Come on Louise, turn round.

As I turn, I meet his wide, expectant eyes. He is still standing next to the table where his collage lies upside down having been rescued from the bin. He hasn’t moved. He is rooted to the spot, coat on, clutching his empty laptop case, waiting for a response.

Date: Thursday 26.09.19

Time: 9:50am

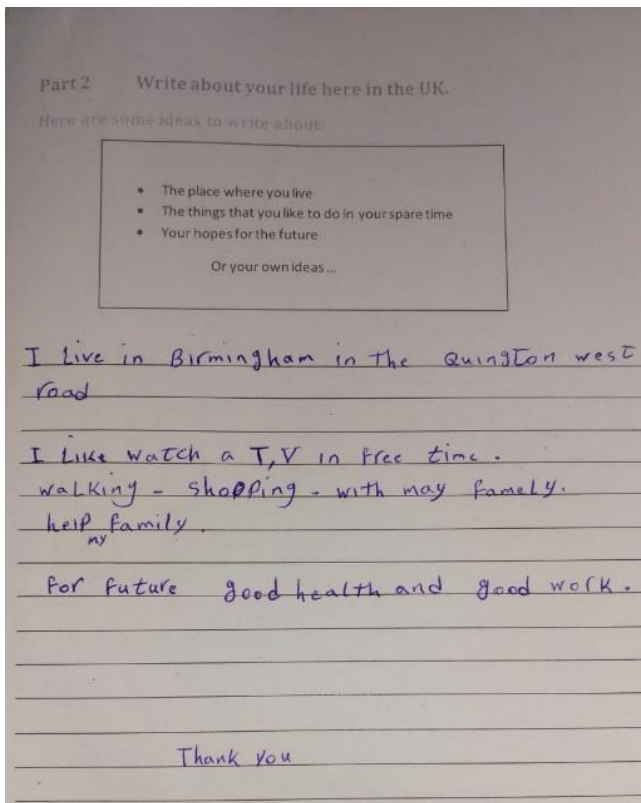
Place: IT Room

A light knock at the door and an unfamiliar face peering through the window. We are 20 minutes into the session and my patience is already wearing thin with interruptions and latecomers. As I open the door, I can see the student standing before me is new. He is holding a registration slip and a set of test papers in one hand and battered briefcase in the other. My heart sinks. We are in the third week of term which means he has missed crucial induction input, not to mention the obligatory ‘getting to know you’ activities. When are we going to ‘get to know him’ now? And how will he fit into a class who have begun to forge friendships and establish routines? I notice he is wearing a suit jacket and an apologetic frown. I hope that my sinking heart is not visible on my face. Translating his frown into words, he apologises profusely for interrupting and tells me he wanted to wait until break-time, but he was told to knock on the door. I take his papers. He keeps his arm outstretched as he introduces himself, “you are Louise? I am Henry”. I am a little taken aback at the charm, and I laugh a little as I shake his hand, returning the formality, “Very pleased to meet you Henry”. I ask him to join a table and promise to chat later and look at his tests.

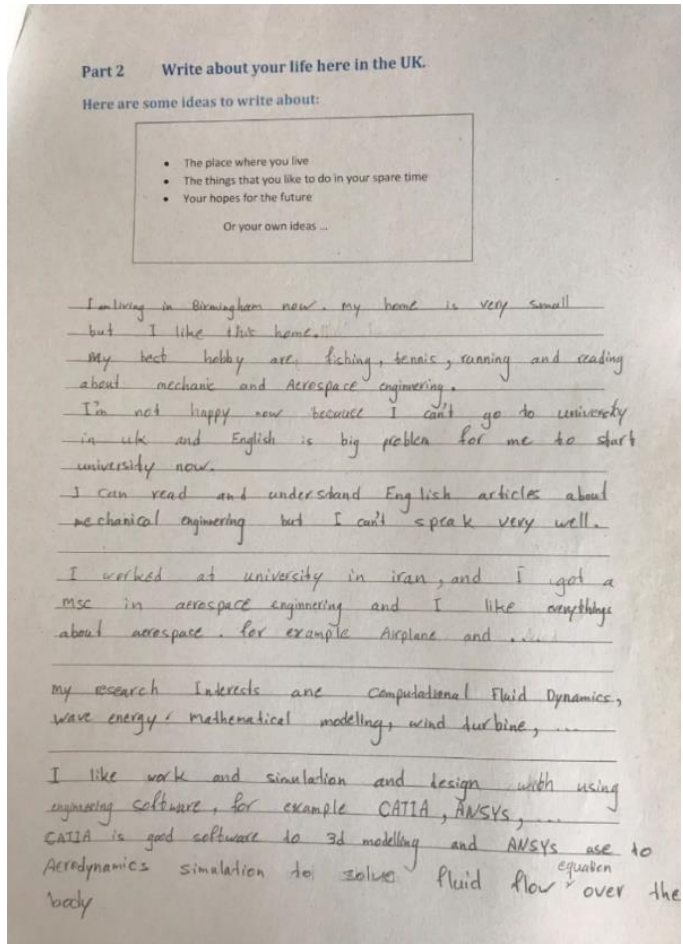
The purpose of today’s lesson is to give learners the tools they need to email in case of absence. If students don’t take responsibility for notifying their tutor when they are absent, then this triggers a red light on the progress tracking system (eTrackr) along with repeated phone calls from a progress coach. Red lights and home phone calls are to be avoided at all costs. For this new academic year, the learners have been assigned a school email address and password and today is the first time we will access their account from the new IT suite.

Before tackling the technical operations, the learners are going to complete tasks in groups to scaffold the writing of an email: they discuss what valid reasons for absence might be, they reorder a text, they identify features and appropriate language, and they write an email collaboratively. As the groups are busy with the final task, I flick through Henry’s tests and discover that he has been put in the wrong class. He has achieved 98% on the Reading assessment (2% spelling error) and his writing shows a fluency and control of language that I would not expect at this stage in an Entry level group. When I compare two responses to the

task, the disparity between levels of writing competence is glaringly obvious. The first is from a learner who has just been ‘promoted’ to Entry 2 while Henry’s response is on the right. The information he has chosen to share is informative and confirms my suspicion that Henry should indeed be placed in a higher level, especially in light of the goals he outlines. On paper, he should sail through the group writing activity which is in full flow right now.

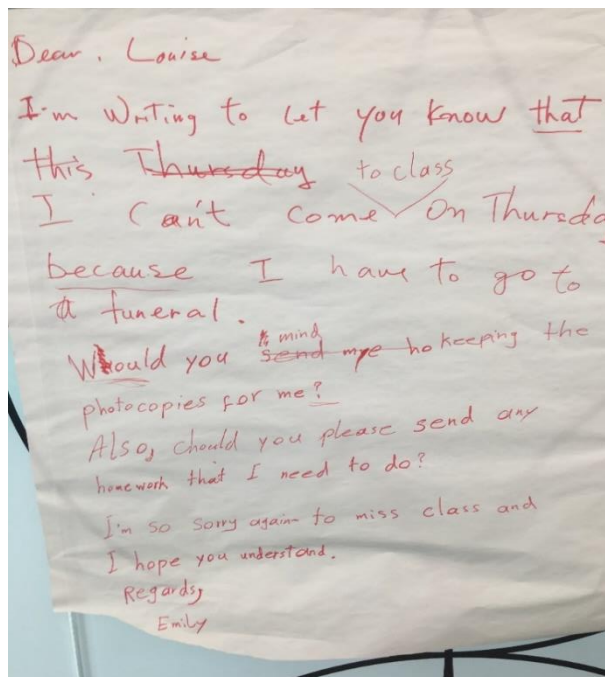


Diagnostic writing from a learner, newly promoted to Entry 2



Diagnostic writing produced by Henry

However, as I watch the learners interacting in their groups, I am now surprised to see Henry sitting back from the group. He is very upright, not relaxed at all. He is looking intently at what is being written but he doesn't move closer, and his face doesn't give any indication of what he thinks about their creation. Jasmine has control of the pen; she is standing and is asking everyone for contributions as she writes. She is trying to involve Henry in the discussion about word order, but he says he doesn't know. Nina is kneeling up on her seat to get a better look and they are all chipping in. They have more or less reproduced one of the email models they had to order, changing the reason for absence (Jo's idea; she has just attended a funeral of a close friend). I feel sure that Henry could contribute but he doesn't agree, disagree or suggest any improvements; on the contrary, when Jasmine asks him if he wants to change anything, he says no, he thinks it's good.



Collaborative writing from Henry's group:
email explaining absence

Following this activity, the learners are to compose their own email directly onto the pc and send it to me. They are to use their new institute emails to access Outlook in Office 365. It sounds like a straightforward task, but it really isn't. It's absolute mayhem.

Teacher, Teacher! What's my password?

How am I supposed to know *your* password?

Teacher, Teacher! Password no working

You're right. I don't know why. It needs resetting. Do you know how?

Thank you, Henry.

Teacher, Teacher! My email not working.

That's your personal email address, not your college email!

Thank you, Henry.

Teacher, Teacher! What's my Username?

Your college ID! It's a 7-digit number

What's digit?

Oh! Not again!

Thank you, Henry.

Teacher, Teacher! Say my name not correct.

Oh how many times! Username! It asks for your Username!

Thank you, Henry.

Teacher, Teacher! I don't have email, it's lost

Give me strength! You've opened Word not Outlook ... Yes, I know they're both blue!

Thank you, Henry.

Check it again...

You've got caps lock on!

You've written the whole email in the subject line!

You're sending that email to yourself!

Cc is not the subject line!

No punctuation at all?

My name's Louise... Dear Louise, not Teacher

Teacher, Teacher!

Ask Henry!

At the end of the class, I have my email open and as the learners send their short emails explaining an absence, they are delighted to see them drop into the screen. I am already beginning to mourn Henry's move to a higher level. Everyone achieves the objective. Everyone, except Henry, ironically, who has been too busy solving others' issues. This is to become a recurring theme.

At the end of class I ask Henry to stay behind for a quick chat about his diagnostic tests. I tell him that he may have found his way to the wrong room and suggest we go to reception to organise a transfer. He does not agree. We have stuck the collaborative writing onto the classroom windows and gesturing to his group's offering, I ask if he could spot anything that needs improving. He says he can but it's not necessary because all the class could understand it. He believes that the learners all speak better than he does; he mentions how they were asking and answering questions so quickly in the group work. He 'can't do this'. I tell him he is doing it now and he says 'no, my English very bad', a phrase (I am to learn) that crops up by default every time he is complimented somehow. He is determined to 'stay in Entry 2' so I finally give in, secretly delighted. A smile creeps across his face for the first time today as he looks around at the computers and tells me 'And er, I stay because er you need me, er you need help'. He is not wrong. I laugh and he nods his head smiling. He picks up his briefcase, thanks me and leaves with a satisfied grin. How am I going to explain this upstairs?

Date: Tuesday 08.10.19

Time: 9:40

Place: In the classroom

The first of three short assessments (Milestones) for this term focuses on Reading and Employability which means understanding signs, notices, instructions, forms. Yesterday we discussed reading in general and we thought about the phrase: *reading for pleasure*. Learners

shared what kind of books they enjoy, what language they prefer, what their children read. Henry shared in a brief statement how he reads only books about *fluid dynamics* for pleasure. I didn't really know what this was at the time but it sounded impressive and I reacted with an exaggerated 'Wow!' I asked him to tell us more but it seems he had said enough already. From being delighted that he had something to offer I was immediately irritated that he wouldn't elaborate, especially when Jasmine asked me (not him) what he said and wanted to know more about Henry's reading habits. I thought nothing more of this, but it stayed with Henry. He waited 21 days to challenge me about it.

For homework, the learners have photographed things they can read on their journey to college and in their area, and today they are showing each other, explaining and guessing where the signs are; this causes some excitement, and the room is bubbling with chatter. Learners choose to get up and mingle and Marcus is trying to guess where everyone lives from their photos. Everyone has something to show.

Everyone except Henry.

He is sitting with Maisie in a corner of the room away from the buzzing of the group; they are chatting in Persian and he is scrolling through photos on her mobile. I go over and ask if she has seen *his* pictures and he says he didn't take any. Again, I feel more than a little irritated because it wasn't a time-consuming homework and I thought it would be something they would enjoy –it just needs everyone to join in. On several occasions he has said he wants to improve his speaking but given the chance to practice, he doesn't take it. He doesn't even bring the tools to make it possible. Why not? I guide Maisie towards Marie so she can read the signs in someone else's photos and I ask:

“Where are your pictures Henry?”

“I forget this homework.”

“You forgot yesterday as well.”

“Yes, sorry, erm er, because, you know, I am not well”

“You're not well? what's wrong? I mean, can you tell me what's wrong?”

“Because I have erm er biopsy” He points to his chest - I know I'm staring. But I can't think of anything to say. Thankfully he continues “not now, before, for example, before one month”.

“Ok” I say slowly, nodding at the same time waiting for more.

“Is good now, results good erm er but now have pain, big pain, and er I am worried because before no pain”.

Not for the first (or the last) time, I feel guilty at my irritation with Henry. I join him at the table. We discuss the time it takes to heal after surgery and the medication he is taking, and it transpires that this was the reason for his delayed arrival at our class in the third week of term. Puzzle pieces keep dropping into place with Henry – why didn’t he tell me this at the time?

Date: Thursday 10.10.19

Time 10:02

Place: IT Room

Today Henry arrives half an hour late. He doesn’t offer a reason and I don’t ask; I just nod towards an empty seat next to Nigel. Today we are thinking about and discussing goals. Learners are required to input both long and short-term targets onto the institute progress-tracking system, part of which we are going to attempt today. I am anticipating more mayhem with learner access because as a staff, we have been struggling with it ourselves. For this reason, I am intending to enlist Henry’s help at break time.

I notice that today his battered briefcase has been replaced by a black bag slung over his shoulder – is it a laptop case? He puts it on the floor but doesn’t take anything out of it. He gets a pen out of his pocket, and I notice a second change: a casual navy puffer coat has usurped his suit jacket. I nod towards him and mouth ‘Very nice’. He smiles a sheepish smile. Henry has missed the build-up discussion about the purpose of target setting, smart targets, language related targets, skills development etc. but knowing that he comes from a university environment I am taking for granted he will be familiar with the process of target setting. Once he is settled, I hand out a hard copy of the form they will need to complete online. I talk through each section with the learners who are firing questions at every opportunity. I take this to be a sign of their nervousness, which often emerges when it comes to form filling of any description. To take some of the pressure off, I give the learners 30 minutes to look over the form with a ‘talk partner’; I suggest they make notes, use mobiles to check vocab and maybe chat to others on their table. I can see that Henry and his partner (Nigel) don’t exchange a single word. After

10 minutes I get to their table and pretending I hadn't been eavesdropping, I ask what they have discussed. Henry says he is ok and doesn't need any help. I ask Nigel if he would like to ask Henry a question and he says he is ok as well. I leave them to it because they *are* writing ideas but about 5 minutes later, I look over from the other side of the room and Nigel is pointing to his paper while in conversation with Marcus.

Following this prep time, the learners use a visual prompt to share their thoughts about long term goals in groups. They can choose whether they want to talk generally or whether they want to share their actual personal goals and I encourage questioning.

Prompt sheet for discussing long term goals; produced by the institute for all FE students.



Henry is on a table with Marcus, Jo and Nigel but he does not look like part of the group. He has moved from the chair next to Nigel and is now sitting at the far end of the table, legs crossed, hunched over a copy of the form, with a pen in his hand but not writing anything. I don't know why he moved. He is frowning and looks as if he is reading something he doesn't understand. I can see from here that he has completed the sections he is staring at so what is going on here? Marcus is grilling Nigel who says he doesn't mind sharing 'true things' but he just doesn't have any long-term goals:

Marcus: What you mean you don't have future goals?

Nigel: I never think where I see myself.

Marcus: Don't you think where you be in future?

Nigel: No, I never think.

Marcus: What about for your children?

Nigel: No.

Marcus: or for yourself, you know, your career, your life with family, healthy?

Nigel: No, I never (*he is smiling and shaking his head now because he has the attention of the room*)

Jo: What about for your childs? You don't think?

Emma: (*from the next table*) Where you want to be in 3 years? you don't have wish

Nigel: Anywhere

Jo: what here? London? And what job you do?

Nigel: yeah I want job but just any job.

Jasmine: (*from another table*) Any job is not goal.

Marcus: You *have* career I think? (*He has spoken to Nigel about his construction work before*)

Nigel: Yeah I *had*, Just I want to working and I want to, to be ...ALIVE!

With this declaration he throws his hands into the air, treating us to a huge toothy grin which has us all laughing.

Henry doesn't join in.

His eyes are still trained on the form. Is he listening? And when Marcus sees that he has exhausted his exchange with Nigel, he turns his attention to Henry who is still avoiding eye contact with any of us.

Marcus: What about you?

Henry: Me? for what?

Marcus: (Reading from the board) Where do you see yourself in 3 years?

Henry: I don't know, maybe here.

Jo: In Entry 2? still? Ha!

Henry smiles but he looks so uncomfortable squirming on the front of his seat. He bends down and rummages around in his new bag but surfaces with nothing. I feel his discomfort and I turn my attention to the whole class to feedback some of their discussion from other tables. As Marie is telling us about her dream of becoming a chef, I can see Henry visibly releasing tension like a deflating balloon as he sinks back into his chair.

At break time he tells me he has to leave, and I can't hide my exasperation as I point out that he's already missed half an hour today. I explain that it is important because we are going to set a new language target and he hasn't completed the first one yet. As usual, his answer to this is that he wants to improve speaking and we can talk about it tomorrow. Having dismissed my concern, he shows me a message on his mobile. His new computer is being delivered this afternoon, so he has to be home to receive it. I mistakenly presume that's why he has a new laptop case, but he says no, he has only eaten rice for two months so he can buy a desktop computer to do his work. The laptop case is from 'one friend at church'. He opens it, showing me and laughs. There's nothing in this case except a scruffy notebook. This makes me giggle as well. The laptop is next on his list when he has saved for it. I am concerned that he should eat properly especially as he has been unwell and he says no, this is what he must do because without his work he will be ill anyway. I sigh heavily and say if he must go then he must. He fetches his coat and comes back looking doleful:

"I am very bad student I know. If, when someone come late to me, in class or or anywhere erm like if someone half hour late it er make me very angry. And now I come late and I leave early. I am very bad student". He lowers his head like a child who is awaiting punishment and I can't really tell if he is serious or joking with me.

"No you're not, you've just got a lot going on at the moment. It's ok I understand but"

"Thank you"

"But let's try to aim for 100% next week ok?"

"Yeah, I can, I can everything now I have computer"

“Yeah I’m sure you’re really excited about your new comp..” Then I realise. “Oh no, Henry! IT! How am I going to manage? You can’t go! We’re doing eTrackr today!”

I’m only half joking. He laughs and leaves.

Date: Thursday 24.10.19

Time: 11:41

Place: IT Room

Creative activity following IT session - collage



It’s the week before half term and we are due to have a tutorial to discuss progress but also wellbeing issues. I have decided to combine this tutorial with the initial interview for my research project and to give us plenty of time, most of the class have agreed to come into college during the holiday for an hour-long appointment. I usually like our first tutorial to be led by the

student and this will also suit the kind of interview I'm going for. To this end we will use 2 different interview guides: firstly, the visual prompt they have already seen for long term goals and secondly, a *portrait collage* with pictures that symbolise things that are important in their lives.

Today we are making the collage and I am looking forward to this as it has always generated lively discussion in the past, even a rendition of 'We Will Rock You!' on one occasion. I've asked everyone to bring in newspapers, magazines, leaflets etc. and at the beginning of this session they are looking at each other's materials, plus some that I have strewn across tables. Already, it is quite a buoyant atmosphere with learners milling around as they select materials and circle the tables. I leave them to chat as they skim through the papers. I have one long table in front of me and two smaller tables to the left – Fay and Jasmine have taken up their usual seats opposite each other, right in front of me.

Henry is sitting on the furthest table next to photocopier... alone. He hasn't brought any newspapers or magazines. He flicks through the papers on his table but doesn't stop to read or choose anything. He soon pushes them aside.

The newspapers they have brought in are plastered with the story of the 39 people found dead in the lorry in Essex yesterday and the headlines are brutal. Fay and Jasmine begin to notice the difference in the words and pictures in their respective newspapers and the way the story appears on the front pages. I find it really fascinating that they have noticed, and I join their conversation. Pretty soon everyone on the table is listening and making comments. Henry inches his way over to see what we are talking about. He peers over Fay's shoulder to read the headlines. But he doesn't sit down and join us even though there is plenty of space. He goes back to his table, sits with his back to the class, gets out the grammar book he has bought himself and buries his head in it. How can anyone not have a reaction to those headlines? Why doesn't he say something? or at the very least show some empathy in his facial expression? I'm exasperated again. What will it take to get Henry to engage in class discussion? I ignore him back.

Fay is desperate to communicate what she has heard on BBC news and Jasmine is desperate to understand this news story so asks questions to clarify what she is being told. It transpires as the dialogue emerges that several learners have heard the story and they attempt to join in the discussion at some point. One by one, heads turn to listen and the bubbling of background noise in the room peters out. I know Henry can hear us because it's quiet. He looks up every now

and then but doesn't say anything until Maisie asks him a question in Persian in the middle of this dialogue:

Fay: Ermm 39 people they died in the freezer

Louise: In this truck, yes. So did you read that or did you hear it?

Fay: I hear it on the BBC

Louise: On the BBC, ok...does anybody else listen to BBC news?

Jasmine: *(to Fay)* And you understand? *(impressed or a little sceptical?)*

Fay: Hmm... I tryI try. Every night and every morning, I try to understand, and I understand now.

Louise: That's very good, if you, if you *do* try. We *do* need to know what's happening in the UK and around the world, I think. This story is a *tragedy*.... do you know what *tragedy* means?

Jasmine: *(very abruptly)* They die.

Maisie: Sad story.

Louise: Yes very very sad story, because 20, no not 20, how many?

(Several students call out '39' suggesting that they have heard this news already)

Louise: Yes, that's right, 39 people were found in-

Fay: And young people, the oldest is around 20, 29

Jasmine: How did, er how er how it happened? Accident, how it's happened?

Fay: No, no accident, erm in the , erm, the driver

Jasmine: Hm

Fay: pick up them

Jasmine: Hm

Fay: and er...the truck... close, no open, no erm, er, no air

Marie: Oh!

Fay: and er, no er windows

Jas: Oh god!

Fay: ...and they die. Without oxygen.

Jasmine: Out of oxygen?

Fay: *without* oxygen.

They all talk between themselves as they try to work out what has just been said; the volume rises. Because of the rise in volume Jasmine's raised voice now cuts through the babble as she asks no one in particular:

Jasmine: How long they were... how long they were in the truck?

Louise: In the fridge

Jasmine: It was *fridge*?

Louise: It *was* a fridge, well freezer, I think.

Marie: fridge? Oh gosh!

Marie's shock is written all over her face. Students are repeating 'fridge', turning to each other to check they have understood correctly. A fusion of languages adds nervous energy to the space and in the midst of the drama, Maisie leans behind Marie to get Henry's attention and ask him something in Persian. He gives a short response, she gasps, wide-eyed, cupping her hands over her mouth and he just nods and puts his head back down, leaving her staring forwards.

What did he say? Whatever it was, Maisie looks horrified. He doesn't say anything else till 12:30 when the class has finished, and classmates have left.

The table in front of me continue to tease the details of this story from Fay who goes on to explain that they have got the driver and locked him up. Fay shows Jasmine his picture and she exclaims in disbelief:

'He's boy!'

We are all silenced by her observation. Nobody moves back to their seat – we are all trained on this intrusive artefact in the ESOL classroom with the face of a young man in a cowboy hat. This picture speaks a thousand loaded words in its silence. I push papers around the table aimlessly, wondering how to continue. Tandy breaks the silence, but not the tension.

Tandy: I came by train!

Louise: You came by train?

Tandy: From er Calais (*miming under*)

Louise: From Calais ...oh on the ... under...under the water

Tandy: in truck, in truck and...in the, in the train

Louise: So you were in the back of a truck like this?

Tandy: Yes, inside the truck

Jasmine: Fridge, fridge truck, fridge? It was fridge truck?

Tandy: No, it was different

Jasmine: Different truck

Tandy: Other truck, was er er (*searching for the word*) erm *goods* truck?

Louise: Goods truck, ok

Tandy: I know this freezing truck. It's no good, some people they doesn't know it, getting in, open truck and come inside, they don't know it's freezing, so dangerous for people.

Louise: Do they pay money to the driver?

Tandy: Yes some.

Maria: Ogghh, pay for die!

Louise: How many people were in your truck Tandy?

Tandy: Only me.

Louise: Only you? Just you, oh ...

Tandy: In the train many people, 30, 40, just for chance, people get chance, get chance and policethey catch you, just chance...chance...

Tandy's voice fizzles out. It goes quiet. This quiet turns into an awkward silence - awkward for me. I feel we all share some discomfort. There is nothing I can say.

After what seems an eternity, I resume instructions for the activity. I show the learners my collage and explain why my pictures are special for me. The activity continues in relative silence. I am bustling about, overly upbeat, trying to fill the silence asking about their choices, commenting on design - but after about 10 minutes I give up the pretence. Their finished collages are vague, generic profiles with pleasant images that could have been anyone's story.

Except Henry's.

On previous occasions, creating collages has generated welcome, excited chaos in the room with cuttings all over the tables and floor, shouts for scissors and glue, people busying themselves, music playing, and a sense of purpose in constructing a visual narrative.

But not today.

Maisie's collage



Henry's collage



Date: Monday 28.10.19

Time: 10:58

Place: Room 21

Interview/tutorial

Half term and most days this week are scheduled with interview/tutorials. It means a lot that they are coming in their free time. I can see Henry hovering outside holding two take-away coffees. He doesn't knock the door. We are on the opposite side of the building today in a room he is unfamiliar with, although inside it is laid out in the same way as all the rooms on this floor – café style. Maisie is just leaving and as I open the door, they greet each other with warm smiles. They exchange a few words and one of them said something funny because they start laughing. I am dying to ask what was said but I am conscious of prying into others' conversations when not in the usual classroom environment, even then I can be a bit too curious. I think if he wants to tell me he will. And he does. Maisie has told him it's not like a 'real interview' and he shouldn't be nervous. Henry hands me my coffee and I ask him why he feels nervous. He says he doesn't, but Maisie had been.

As we enter, he takes in the room and comments on the view of the garden which we don't have from either our room or the IT room. Heading towards the table where my things are, he tells me this is a nicer room because of the light. I think so too. He could sit in any of the three seats left and he chooses to sit alongside me. I pick up a sugar sachet that he drops onto the table and he reprimands me for needing it because it is "bad for healthy". He tells me that his father used to work in an English sugar factory in Iran. He seems keen to make the connection. We move on to the location and shape of the buildings and compare roofs on English and Iranian houses. This is possibly the most interesting start to a tutorial or interview I've experienced in a long while.

As the conversation develops over the next hour, he discloses more of himself to me one snippet at a time but first he wants to get the business out of the way. He opens his folder like a legal dossier and works through each section. His progress, his tests, his red light, his targets. He approaches these areas in a fitting brusque, business-like manner, ticking off each one in turn,

not at all like the friendly soul I've just been passing the time of day with over coffee. When it comes to targets, he is finally able to let out what he has been harbouring for 21 days.

“Ok, my targets.”

“Your targets ok. This one you should have done by the 24th so did you do that or not?” He reads the target himself under his breath and replies, “no, no no”

“Ok do that over half term then”

“Ok yes”

“Bring me the article and we'll chat about the article that you choose from the newspaper, ok?”

“From newspaper? No”, he's not asking, he's telling me. He does not want to read and talk about a newspaper article.

“Well anywhere, any article, it doesn't matter where it's from. Or anything else that you like reading”

“OK.” He puts his pen down with deliberate care, takes a deep breath announces slowly and with determination, “I *don't like* speak about my target in class.”

“Ok”, with some trepidation and a reassuring nod, I wait for more.

“Because my goal and my target is different with another people” I maintain eye-contact and nod. “And for example, erm if erm you can remind about like, er remind?”

“Remember – remember yeah?”

“Yeah, I said I like to study, I like studying, erm reading *fluid dynamic* book, ok? And you... ‘Wow!’”

As he delivers this seemingly offensive reaction, he jabs a pointed finger in my direction, pauses, and performs an eerily accurate impression of me.

I remember thinking at the time that I didn't understand him. I had heard *dynamic*, and I know he's interested in *aerodynamics*, and I thought that's an amazing thing to be reading for pleasure, hence the ‘Wow!’ Now I feel awful. It seems I had put him in an embarrassing or awkward situation in front of his classmates. No idea why the revelation of his reading material

should cause such a reaction but his whole body is telling me this topic is not for sharing. To make up for this, I ask him more about fluid dynamics and I feel relieved that our conversation changes tone - almost too quickly.

With life in his eyes, he bounces to the front of his seat and picks up his pen. From fluid dynamics we move on to 3D modelling, engineering software, *AutoCAD*, the big bang theory, what is science and what is the work of God. He sketches diagrams of wings and the formation of flying geese and throws his whole body into explanations of lift and drag force. Although I understand very little, I see and hear his passion. His enthusiasm is infectious, and I stand up to join him in the drama of lift and drag. And as we chat, he manages to embed his actual goals in the conversation: to get a PhD and teach at university. Nicely played Henry.

But he invariably returns to his life situation, and I feel heartbroken for him when he shares his absolute frustration at losing everything he's worked for, feelings that he's also shared with people at his church, he tells me. As he speaks, he picks up pace and the pitch also climbs higher:

“University is very important for me, but I *can't* stand up Louise”.

Does he mean can't stand it?

“because erm I speak about this subject to another people in church, because from 18 to 33, now I'm 33, to now, every time, every day, every night, every time I study, every time study, every time book, every time just study ok, only study...and in my family my grandfather er, erm forget me, ok because erm in weekend my family go to my grandfather and grandmother home and I'm in home and in my room study, study, book, book and every people in my family forget me ok? and in one time put erm a small puzzle, put put put put” climbing a ladder with his hands as he stands up to make the climb seem even harder, “and make a big goal, and get near big goal... EXPLODE everything! Ok? ...And now in UK I'm in first” showing the bottom rung, “it's very difficult for me. I can't forget... with white hair and everything is finish. I think I don't like er speak about this but I think 35 middle of life...life is finished for me”

Date: Thursday 24.10.19

Time: 12:30

Place: IT Room

After class chat with Henry

As class finishes, Henry is collecting the collages that are drying on tables. He has already tried to dispose of his own which I grabbed off him as he was throwing it into the bin. When I asked him what he thought he was doing he just said he didn't like it. I didn't push him to explain but, scowling inside, I did flatten out his paper and put it back with the others. He has said very little today. He had a conversation with a teacher who came in to use the copier and noticed the pictures Henry was gluing to make his collage. I didn't hear their conversation, but the teacher commented how tragic the lorry incident was. I'm not sure if Henry will stay behind to chat today but I hope so because I don't want him to leave like this.

He brings the collages to the front table and puts them in a pile. His is on top and as I peer over, he turns it upside down. I look up and catch his eye and he just says: "I don't like". What doesn't he like – the design of his collage? the activity? the whole lesson? He didn't join in the discussion today. He didn't chat to anyone. I thought he had chosen to work in his grammar book but when I wandered over, he had written just one sentence, so he hadn't engaged there either. He didn't follow my instructions and he is now making his feelings clear with an unambiguous, symbolic refusal to discuss his upturned collage further.

I don't say anything, just smile. He goes back to his table, zips up his bag and comes over to me holding his grammar book. I thought he was going to show me something, but he puts the book down and picks up his coat. He doesn't put it on. The fact that Henry is still here making routine actions look awkward makes me stop packing my bag and give him my full attention. I say how much I like his new jacket and that I'd like one just like that for the winter. He makes a comment about the cold weather. We've spoken in class about this being a stereotype for English conversation – I wonder if he is picking up on this, whether he is trying to start a conversation, any conversation, or if he has something specific to say. I tell him I am looking forward to winter because I like snow and I ask if it snows in Iran. He glosses over the weather question and proceeds to talk about how Iran was good before, but not now. He likes the idea of people of different faiths co-existing and laments the fact that this is no more in his country. This is all blamed on Iran's leader. Apparently, money is sent out of Iran and Henry says it is

to 'make problems'. He believes the word *Iran* has negative connotations in the UK and he is judged as an Iranian:

"In bus stop, one old woman talk with me, erm, 'today' erm 'is my birthday today' erm speak speak speak. But after some question and she ask 'where you from?' 'Iran, I'm from Iran', "Finish together. Just look me like this, don't speak with me after"

"Why do you think she did that?"

"I don't know, because News every time speak about Iran, Iran. *Iran*, one word, one word you know. BUT Iran name, country, people, country different to people. You now erm Iranian student, you have Iranian students, now maybe you think good about Iran".

I reassure him that yes, I 'think good about Iran' and he continues with information about the church he attends twice a week which is 'very important now'. He names his friends and tells me about them, what he admires and who they pray for – including those in the lorry.

"Religion is very good because every time erm, pray for everything, every people, for example now this erm this news, 39 people died"

"In the lorry"

"In the lorry yeah, and we was yesterday, Wednesday, we pray for family because is very difficult for family, for example after I come to UK, one month erm don't speak mother and my mother can't see me....After er.. video call, my mother hair, all of hair white, all". He pauses, "it's very difficult for mother and father, you know"

I feel so very sorry about this and it makes me babble. I say that my thoughts are also with families of these people but also with all the migrants whose stories we hear in the media, their dangerous journeys. We don't know where the people in the lorry are from yet, but in a few days, we will learn they are all Vietnamese and it really is the stuff of nightmares.

I wait for Henry to continue. He doesn't. Not knowing how to continue either, I resume my tidying, mumbling how awful this is. I start shuffling the students' books to make a pile and as I do so Henry announces:

“I COME BY BOAT, OK?”

And there it is. I feel a wave of heat rush from feet to head as I turn to see if I have just heard him correctly.

“You came by *boat*?... which way? which way did *you* come...which route?”

“...I don’t know...erm from Turkey to Holland, Netherland I think, Netherland or Belgium with er lorry, with lorry”.

“From where?”

“From Turkey”

“In a lorry from Turkey to Belgium?”

“And after with boat to UK. It’s very, very dangerous very

“Did you come on your own?”

“This boat is small and er finish er finish fuel,” I am shocked and it probably shows on my face. He gives a little laugh as if to say yes, you heard me correctly. “Finish fuel!”

“Where? In the water?”

“In the water yeah, in the water in middle sea. Finish fuel and er driver told, told er me and friend erm ‘*put fuel, fuel, but*’,” he makes the movement of the sea with his hands, checking he has the right words “very large... *waves*?”

“Waves yeah, oh my goodness!”

“Me and another people give Farzin, Farzin my friend, give Farzin, and Farzin in back of boat, erm er put fuel in erm in erm...er”

“Boat?”

“Fuel tank. And after see the UK, this driver go, every, er 4, 4 person just go to sea, push, I can’t see and I can’t swimming and my friend can’t swimming. It’s very dangerous!” He’s almost laughing, a hysterical air, and I feel my eyes widen.

“But could you stand up in the water?”

“No! No erm...”

“But you can’t swim! How did you get to the shore?”

“2 people can swimming, swim?”

“Swim”

“can swim. Erm 2 people cannot swim. Me and my friend can’t, I can but little you know, a little, erm after 5 minutes I’m tired, and can’t swim. And 2 people can help me and Farzin. It’s very diff, erm dangerous, every way to come UK dangerous” and he’s laughing almost hysterically again as I stand with my hands on my cheeks, eyebrows to the sky in disbelief.

“and...I know these people don’t know this lorry is fridge. You’re sure, these people don’t know, after erm come to lorry and lorry erm, move. And these people now ‘*wow this is fridge*’ and after time” he mutters something quickly in Persian but can’t find the words “for example” he hammers his fist on the door

“Banging?”

“Banging yes this driver can’t...”

“Driver can’t hear, oh my goodness!”

“Very...er”

“Very dangerous”

“Very dangerous yeah”

I feel exhausted. No wonder he was quiet today.

Date: Monday 28.10.19

Time: 10:00

Place: Room 21

Purpose: Interview/tutorial

Mid-way through our interview, hoping that I am reading the situation well and have the timing right, I open Henry’s collage. He sighs and moves away from it. There are no pictures

symbolising areas of his own life that are important to him, as requested. His is made up of pictures from the front page of **The i** on 24.10.20. He has carefully cut out and stuck pictures of the refrigerated lorry, the young driver and a map of the route. There are no headlines. He tells me he didn't like talking about this in class and he wishes he had not chosen these pictures now, especially the one of the driver. His brow is furrowed and he's fidgeting on his chair now. He's sitting right on the edge of it and he has turned his face from me to the picture. He speaks with his mouth downturned, which makes his delivery even sadder.

“Why did you throw it in the bin?”

“I just, I don't like. And after finish, I think about this and I don't like to...” he whispers to himself in Persian and doesn't seem to find a way to express himself as he continues “er erm erm *put_* this picture here”

“Hmm”

“Ok?”

“Take it off then”.



He puts down the pen and pulls at the corners to lift off the young face but he doesn't remove it entirely; he interrupts his own action with his thoughts as he slaps his hand down onto the driver's face,

“ ...because maybe this guy *don't* understand these people are in lorry, you know?
because every people say me erm ‘driver don't know me and him in lorry’ you know?”

and maybe now this guy erm don't make, *doesn't* make this problem, you know and ...”

He fidgets again and mutters to himself in Persian; when he doesn't speak, I try to fill the gap by speculating about the driver. But Henry is lost in his own thoughts and doesn't seem to hear me. He cuts into my speculation with a pained expression:

“Maybe er maybe it's *good* guy, maybe, maybe it's *good* guy yeah, you know?”

I see his point; illegal immigrants do not announce to drivers that they are sneaking on board and maybe the driver is not at fault.

“So can you explain to me why you chose these pictures?”

“Ok because erm, erm before this time, you speak about this Thursday, before, in church every people pray for family of these people died. Everybody. Because every people in church erm er er experience? experience this erm this *way*, ok for example me with boat, another people in container, another people in erm er tra, ta, er”, I think he's going to say truck but no, “tank, tank”

“Tank?”

“Tank, er tank erm empty tank, maybe, maybe in way put oil or another thing in. And I and another people in church have experience about *this way*”, pointing to the container, “and I know it's very dangerous it's very crazy and er family of these people is now very *pres*h you know? *pres*h

“Pressure? Is that it?...I'm not sure that's the right word erm...oh I'm sorry I don't...well it's just really really sad, heartbreaking”

“Very sad yes, trag, trag”

“It's a tragedy, yes” reminding him of the word I used earlier.

“Tragedy, yes, my mother, erm in Iran ...erm have it brown hair ok and I think one month don't any news about me, and erm after come to UK and *give* phone and install WhatsApp application I can to speak with my mother with videocall, erm my mother hair, it's white...white”

I feel myself filling up. I just don't know what else to say.

Tragedy.

The Story

Prologue

Last year the institute organised an incentive for ESOL students in partner centres across the city. *My View – A Collaborative ESOL Project* proved to be a popular activity. Nearly 70 students, armed with smartphone cameras, took to the streets to snap views which held some significance for them. These were made into a booklet which can still be found on the institute website. Jenny's view and description featured inside, along with Nina's. It was Jenny's photo that made it to the front cover.

My View...



Birmingham Morning Sunshine by J



I took this photo of Symphony Hall from the bridge. It was a sunny morning. I often go to college through this road and I like to go this way because this is quite a beautiful place.

There are many old and new buildings, good restaurants and a long canal... This is very close to the Symphony Hall, which I often visit to listen to the live orchestra because I absolutely love live orchestra.

I also like Birmingham's sunny days because the UK weather it is not always sunny. Sometimes the weather keeps changing in a day... raining, sunny, high winds and sometimes there is snow in the winter. That is why I specially love sunny days in the UK.

My View by N



I took this photo of a homeless person sleeping near Birmingham Library. I felt it was a winter's day - I felt he was cold, he was sick, he was hopeless, he was afraid and lonely. Sometimes I think about a lot of people in my country hoping to live in the UK because they are searching for peace and a home.

This year the collaborative project is a more ambitious affair called *My Voice*. All learners are to plan and tell a story which will be recorded. A selection of stories will be chosen for the website. In comparison to writing a brief description of a view, telling a story is a somewhat of a tall order. While our students might well disclose snippets of their life stories now and then, we would rarely ask them to structure these events into a coherent narrative with all the conventional trimmings. As tutors we question our *own* ability to do justice to this activity in English, let alone thinking about it in a second, third or fourth language. No, this is a challenge that will need a fair amount of support. So, for the next 5 weeks we are dedicating our scheme of work to all things Story.



Story: The Build-up - The Business - The Rescue

Week 1 - Monday

It's the week after half term. The learners filter in and soon it's a hive of activity as they catch up on each other's news. I ask them to find out something interesting their classmates did in their week off and to show their reading logs and books to each other. Their half term task was to complete a daily reading log with absolutely anything they read, including signs, food packets, bills, whatever.

I join the table with Jasmine, Fay, Tandy and Marie. Jasmine has been sick which is a shame because she had been looking forward to celebrating the Festival of Light; in fact, she had talked of little else before half term. She tells us she was so sick because she ate too many sweets. I show serious concern. She claps her hands and laughs, at me for falling for her ruse. She was making a joke – she actually had a virus which she caught from her grandson. I was impressed with her joke. Meanwhile Henry and Maisie have entered quietly and are chatting on a separate table.

I bring the class together and ask everyone about what they have been reading over half term and whether they've completed the reading log. Most unusually, Tandy looks like he is trying

to catch my eye and has his reading log open on the desk now. Marie is leaning over and looking at it and behind his head she is pointing at him and making a face that says to me – *Look at this!* I go over and see he has read four things and has completed the log exactly as I demonstrated so I hold it up and show the class. I am truly delighted with his efforts, and this must be obvious as he sees my reaction and beams. He looks so proud I think he might burst and, maybe looking for the same praise, the others start waving their logs about.

Henry does not.

He is the only one who does not have a reading log in front of him. I am annoyed and disappointed about this. Firstly, because reading is his forte and this was less of a challenge to him than the others, and secondly because I thought after our interview in the holiday, he would do it, for me. Ignoring this for the moment, I turn back to Tandy. He has enjoyed a book about the post office and has made a list of words with Arabic translation. He wants to read some to us and chooses, *declaration, signed, weigh, weight* and *scales*. This prompts a class discussion about the difference between kitchen and bathroom *scales* and how often we weigh ourselves and weight in general.

Henry offers nothing to this discussion.

Sitting next to Tandy, Marie has read a history book which belongs to her son. There is a story about a witch from Worcester which Jasmine is really interested in - Marie will bring the book in and this generates more chatter. At this point Fay pipes up. Apparently, she's been reading Shakespeare! She says she likes the stories. I ask if she has her own books – she borrows from her daughter who is, I now learn, an English teacher. She never mentioned that in the tutorial. She says 'some vocabulary is very difficult' which is such a perfect understatement. I tell them I love Shakespeare's stories and I proceed to enact the story of Hamlet with all the drama I can muster, stabbing an imaginary curtain, drowning myself, duelling with invisible opponents and choking on poisoned wine. The students follow me about the room, eyes wide. Their reaction to the death of Polonius is priceless. As I'm stabbing the curtain as a frenzied Hamlet, I go for the dramatic pause...

“And who do you think was behind there...?”

The ghost!

The uncle!

The mother!

“No, ...Polonius!!”

Nothing.

The silence is deafening as they have not yet twigged the implications. I can see the cogs turning. Suddenly a voice explodes into the silence:

Jasmine: Oh! The father! No! ...the father of the girlfriend!

A collective gasp. Then a flurry of excitement in various tongues as they explain to each other what's going on.

At the end when all lay dead, I explain it's a *tragedy*. Henry now utters his one and only contribution to the lesson. He says simply:

“Like lorry”

* * *

With the rest of the class in buoyant spirits, I decide this is an ideal opportunity to introduce the storytelling project that all the ESOL students will be involved in this term: *My Voice*. There is a handout with instructions. I am aware this is a big ask for Entry level learners, so I try to big it up.

“So, you're all going to tell your *own* story. There are three suggestions here: you could talk about a happy memory; you could talk about an experience when you learnt something important, or you could talk about your journey to the UK.”

The news goes down like a lead balloon. I try to fill the uneasy silence explaining that the story can be a recent experience or a memory from childhood. Nothing. I search for an alternative - does it matter if they don't write about themselves? Maybe something less personal would be less daunting? I take the spontaneous decision to change the goal posts.

“What about telling a traditional cultural tale?”

Silence. I fill this one as well saying we will look at stories together to get some ideas. I refer to Marie's history book – they could re-tell a historical event. Marie is nodding but no one else

joins her. So now I turn to fantasy and I'm babbling about unicorns and magic and despite my enthusiasm in tales of fantastical beasts, no one is impressed. I keep digging my hole and give them the time frame. And then, the nail in the coffin – this story will be the basis for their final two Milestone assessments.

Well, that does it.

No excited whispering, no bubbly atmosphere, no wide eyes and no smiles. I continue to make things worse by asking what tenses stories are written in usually. I say we'll focus on past tenses and how to talk about feelings. *What?* I try to draw it all together by referring back to the stories they've enjoyed reading over half term but to no avail. I've burst the bubble and the tension in the room is palpable.

In a bid to rescue the situation I ask Jasmine if she minds my sharing what happened to her during the holiday because even this could be an idea for a story. She says she will not talk about being sick. Instead, she will tell the class about playing the piano! I didn't know she could.

“You play the piano? That's great! When we have our parties, we're always looking for someone to play an instrument.”

She tells me “I play to sing for God not for party.”

It transpires that she plays keyboard in the temple. I try to bring everyone into the conversation saying it's amazing the things we don't know about people we see so often. Jasmine ignores my interjection. She finds her flow and continues delivering her key message – “if we look to god, we can find peace.” It is almost like a sermon, and I wonder how many times she has told this particular story. She has found her audience as now. All eyes are trained on this enchanting storyteller. As she nears the ‘punchline’, she surveys the room, pauses, and then smiles, whispering “God is light”.

Into the silence I jump again saying I know many of them go to church too – all different churches. I think I ruined a moment, but Jasmine is not deterred. Tandy says he goes to a mosque not a church. Nigel says he doesn't need to go to church to pray – he can do this at home. Jasmine nods and smiles at him knowingly,

“God is inside you; he knows you're praying. When we close our eyes, He is there, and He knows us and what we want. In every religion, God inside.”

She has the floor and she's not giving it back. She goes on to tell a story about Guru Nanak and the 'very big stone'.

* * *

This was a masterclass in captivating an audience, myself included. I look at Henry; he's leaning forward. His head rests slightly to one side and he seems absorbed in the story. I muse on the fact that for the second time today the class have been absorbed in a story of sorts. In my head, I thank Jasmine for the rescue. The students are asking her questions now and a discussion emerges about different beliefs.

Henry doesn't join in.

We've spoken many times about his church and how important it is to him, but he offers nothing now. I'm mildly irritated again.

At the end of class, I collect the reading logs. Henry doesn't have his on the desk, so I don't ask him for it. He hovers waiting for the others to leave. I resist the temptation to grill him over his lack of participation today and instead I ask if he has any idea of what story he will tell for his Milestones. He squirms on the spot, looking very uncomfortable with the question. He frowns at me and says he doesn't like stories. He doesn't elaborate. I presume this is why he hasn't bothered with the reading log. So... imagine my surprise when he pulls out a completed reading log from his laptopless case. He is now desperate to show me, and he is animated as he talks me through some computer related user-guides he's read.

When he's finished, for the second time in our short relationship, he makes it clear that he does not want to talk openly about his reading and his goals in front of the other class members.

And he does *not* want to tell his story.

Henry's holiday Reading Log

Reading Log - What did you read?			
Title	Text type	Date	What did you learn? New words? A new fact?
1. The Nutcracker performed by The Birmingham Royal Ballet	leaflet	Friday 25 th Oct	Performances on 22.11.19 - 14.12.19 It's at the Hippodrome 60 dancers It's a Christmas story New word - gigantic (very big)
2.		Saturday 25 th Oct	
3. CATIA user guide - chamber command	User guide	Sunday 26 th Oct	1. I can create a chamfer on edges of solid body to change sharp edges to chamfer edges.
4. CATIA user guide - Shell Commands	User guide	Monday 29 th Oct	1. I can create a solid body with a thin thickness with <u>Shell</u> commands New word - <u>Shell</u>
5. CATIA user guide - Creating Surface-Based Features	user guide	Tuesday 28 th Oct	1. How do I cut a body with <u>Surface</u> with <u>Split</u> commands? 2. How do I make a solid body with <u>Close Surface</u> commands.

8. New Surface Pro 7	web page	Friday 1 st Nov	Surface pro 7 is ultralight and versatile 2-in-1 adapts to the ways you work, transforming from laptop, to tablet, to portable studio.
9. Python User guide	User guide	Saturday 2 nd Nov	1. Sorts are guaranteed to be stable. 2. It can take advantage of any Ordering already present in a dataset.
10. Python user guide	User guide	Sunday 3 rd Nov	How I can update my code New word: Modernize, Futurize, Subset

Loss

Week 1 - Thursday



METRO.co.uk

Three days later, still looking for inspiration for story ideas, I stumble across a newspaper article which appeared in in the Metro about a violinist who left his instrument on a train; after making a plea on TV it was returned to him in the car park at Waitrose. Jasmine had lots to say about his carelessness with such a treasured possession. We discuss what objects are their prized possessions and whether they have ever lost anything valuable. I told them about losing my wellington boot in a muddy field and having to hop home. And I also told them about losing my daughter in Marks and Spencer's. This prompted a flood of stories which they exchanged in their groups. Enthusiasm was in the air. Everyone had something to offer.

Everyone except Henry.

*Nina lost a ring her mother had given but
she found it years later under the bed.*

*Marie lost a favourite recipe
handed down from her grandmother.*

Emma left her bag on the bus,

Dotty lost her son's hamster in the garden,

Marcus lost a tooth.

Nigel left his homework in a friend's car in London,

Fay lost herself in London!

We've all got a drawer of odd socks – how do these get lost?

Tandy 'lost' a pair of shoes on his journey to the UK.

Jasmine lost her home in Afghanistan.

Jo lost her husband.

“What about you Henry? Have you ever lost anything valuable or precious?”

“Me? No no, nothing”

* * *

Two hours later, Henry slowly packs away his things and tells me again he doesn't like this story writing thing. When everyone has said their goodbyes, he asks me a question. He is concerned about how I felt when I lost my daughter in Marks and Spencer's. I tell him I joke about it now, but I was terrified at the time. He says he knows this.

He furrows his brow.

“My mother lose, er, she lose ME and now, now with white hair”

He pauses and I don't know what to say. He has told me this several times before, but it seems much more poignant now. He half smiles and continues.

“And me, for me, Louise, what I lose? I lose er lost, *lost* my life”.

I could cry.

Absence

Week 2

Thu 11/14/2019 10:33 AM

Dear Louise,

I am writing to tell you about me absence. I have pain due to kidney stones and I can't sit in a chair and have to walk constantly. I got on the bus today to come to class but it got worse because of sitting and cold and I couldn't stand so I went back home. I'm worried and I don't know when to take the exam so please let me know if possible. Best regards,

Avoidance

Week 3 - Monday

Henry returned this week with no mention at of his illness, so I didn't pursue the point. But the story avoidance continued. And more unusually, Henry did not seek time with me as I had

come to expect. I cannot lie, this upset and confused me a little, especially after the confiding I had experienced in previous private chats. And of course, the interview during the holiday.

As he walks in, I already have the plan for the day on the board: 1st session a Children in Need shopping activity sheet to talk about the amount raised and to embed maths; 2nd session, using timelines and mind maps to plan the first draft of their story. Glancing at the board Henry tells me he has to leave at break time for an appointment. It might just be coincidence. I don't want to ask about his appointment in front of the others, so I ask him to tell me at break time. I also say he will have to plan his story for homework. I give him a template and say we can talk about this at break time too.

At break time he shouts "Bye, see you tomorrow" and leaves.

Double Avoidance

Week 3 - Tuesday

Henry attends the full session, but he is late. When he arrives, he is momentarily caught off-guard because Dotty is in his preferred seat. Things go from bad to worse. He hasn't completed the plan I had given him - instead he shows me his homework for GCSE Maths class! When I go over our lesson objectives, he seems totally thrown to find that not only are we writing the first draft but there is also some drama to be done. He may also be feeling nervous at the appearance of Hayley who is observing as part of her teacher training course. The others in the class are used to people just dropping in as they have already completed at least one term at this institute, and we have frequent observations/learning walks etc. But for Henry this is a new experience, and I didn't really explain why she was there other than to have a look at what we were doing. Mistake? Probably.

I remind everyone that today they will begin to write their story and I ask if they have their plan – is it a personal story, is it a cultural story, a memory or a retelling of a story like the one we're reading? I go to each and ask if they know where they will start – all say they have an idea but when I get to Henry he just says 'No'. I remind him it is for Milestone 2.

"Yes I know about this but *today, test?*" He looks horrified and the class has also gone quiet at hearing the word *test*.

“No this isn’t a *test*.” As I explain to the class yet again what this story writing is all about and how the process works, I continue making eye contact with Henry until I see him relax, just a little.

“...So you see, it’s not a test you do on one day, it’s a *process*, ok?”

“Ok”.

Henry, still standing, gives a nod to accompany his monosyllabic response. But he doesn’t look convinced.

Before writing the draft we are focusing on *Feelings*. We perform different emotions, we describe pictures, we guess how others are feeling, we say how we feel when..., we say what makes us feel..., we speak in the style of... .

So, Henry’s lost his seat. Shifting weight from one foot to another as his eyes dart around the room, it seems he is feeling anything but comfortable. He seems to be willing a space to magically open up next to Maisie. But in the absence of magic, he has no choice but to change tables. He dithers on the spot for a few seconds, playing at adjusting the strap on his bag, before settling on a spare chair next to Jasmine. It doesn’t matter who else is on the table, if Jasmine is there it is always that bit livelier than anywhere else in the room. She has entertained us on previous occasions with her singing and her storytelling and it seems today is no exception.

Jasmine is going to demonstrate the mime game. Picking up a card from the top of the pile she launches into the *What’s My Face?* improvisation round with unbridled enthusiasm. She reads the card, nods to herself and walks out of the room closing the door behind her. She waits a second or two and then bursts through the door like a thing possessed. Hands on hips and face screwed into a concentrated ball of fury, she moves slowly and imposingly from table to table looking for something. As she gets to her own table, she throws a very pointed finger at Henry who topples back in his seat. She grabs her phone off the table, pauses to stare accusingly at him, and then storms back out of the room. Students know the rules – no shouting out what they think is on the card until the mime is finished. Laughing wildly at this performance, they wait until Jasmine slams the door behind her and then adjectives splutter into the space:

Angry!.. Upset! ...Annoyed! ...Mad! ...Furious!

When he's over the shock, Henry joins in with a half-hearted laugh. But my absolute delight comes a few minutes later when, coaxed by Jasmine, Henry takes a turn. Disobeying the rules, he sifts through several cards. He puts his chosen card down and taking Jasmine's red pen, he writes something in a large circle on his book. He stands up hesitantly and shows us the page with a huge 40% in red at the top. He lowers his gaze and shakes his head from side to side tutting and looking mournful.

Nigel: You sad!

Henry: Sad no

Jasmine: You fail your test, yah and you sad?

Henry: My test, yes I fail but I'm not sad

Fay: Are you miserable?

Jasmine: No this is same as sad

Fay: Yes, but synonym

Henry: No I am not sad, and not this (*pointing at Fay*)... how do you feel if don't pass exam?

Nigel: Annoyed

Henry: No

Fay: Frustrated! Frustrated I feel

Jasmine: No, see his face, not this, frustrated is this (*putting both hands to her head and pulling at her hair*)

Fay: (*indignant*)I know 'frustrated'

Jasmine: Do again so we see

Henry obliges with a second mime while Jasmine looks through her vocab list to find the word she seems to have in her head.

Jasmine: I know, I know! Disappointed! you are disappointed!

Henry: Yes! Yes!

Henry smiles and collapses onto his chair looking relieved. He doesn't take anymore turns.

After break I give instructions for the writing. They will write for 45 mins without worrying about spelling or grammar, just focus on getting their story on paper. And no mobiles! I say they can ask me for any help after 15 mins but if they don't, I won't come around looking over their shoulder today.

At the end of the session as I'm flicking through the books, I'm hopeful. But there is nothing but a date in Henry's book. He has been writing in class and it looked very much like the exercise book we use but it was obviously not. I never did get to see what he had written in that lesson.

Refusal

Week 3 – Thursday

In the first session of the IT lesson, students are learning how to save photos and insert them into their Word doc. Henry mills around in his self-appointed role as teaching assistant (no complaints from me there), helping to field a multitude of problems.

In the second session, it is a different story. The idea is that students read each other's drafts making comments and suggestions. They then type up their first draft, editing as they go and hopefully inserting pictures.

Henry has no story.

I ask where it is and he tells me he doesn't like it. He is going to change it to a story about Shiraz.

I ask to see the original and he says no.

I ask him to tell me something about his new story and he says no.

I ask if he has a plan. Not really. He will collect pictures first.

He then proceeds to gather pictures in and around Shiraz which he arranges creatively on a PPT slide.

I feel helpless. I do nothing. I let him do his own thing.

Conversation

Week 4 - Monday

In preparation for recording stories next week for this burden of a Milestone, we are practising using the audio recorders with a speaking activity. The students will tell or read their first draft for their partner who in turn asks questions to clarify what is happening and shares opinions on content and delivery.

It's all fun and games learning to work the devices and many of the recordings are interrupted, muffled, absent. Henry is partnered with Jo and Maisie. The rest of the class are in pairs, but we are one member short, so they form a trio. Henry knows how to use the recorder and it doesn't leave his hand, even when I ask him to put it in the middle so all can be heard clearly. I have told the class that they have 10 minutes for Speaker 1. I will not intervene unless communication breaks down so I'm settling down to observe Henry's group first. Maisie volunteers herself to be Speaker 1 and after a 9-second exchange in Persian with Henry, she begins. Jo couldn't look any less enthusiastic as she flops back in her chair with a sigh, legs stretched out in front of her, arms folded.

Maisie: My name is Maisie. I am Iran/

Henry: YOU er come to close (*he is barking at Jo who is sitting quite far back from the table*)

Maisie: Close

Henry: Come!

Jo: Finish first she (*Jo misinterprets the sharp hand gesture thinking he is asking her to join in a conversation*)

Henry: no, YOU listen to *SHE*

Jo: Ok

Henry: Come!

Maisie: my name is Maisie, I am Iranian.

Jo: Yeah

Maisie: My story in Iranian women. The women are in the world but they are equal with men. Yes? We have work hard to achieve equality in our so, socuety (*she now has problems pronouncing 'society' and tries several times*)

Jo: Doesn't matter. Wasting a time, just go. Continue, continue.

Jo yawns loudly and puts her head in her hands as she waits for them to work out how to pronounce 'society'.

Maisie: Society yeah, in my country for 2 years, for 2 years ago, the people was in hope of democracy but also lost everything they had. Woman, especially woman, er very limited but Iranian woman don't give up and they tried to regain their freedom. Nasrin Sotudeh one of these woman. She was born in the 30 of the May, of the May 1963 in Langarud. She was study law at the Shahid Behesti university in Tehran.

Jo: I don't understand nothing

Henry: You don't understand?

Jo: I don't understand but doesn't matter you know, it's her story not my story.

Henry: No no erm this her story BUT you think about listen then after finish erm if you have erm a question, you can ask a question of? about this ok?

Jo: I think you find the basic, simple, if there are a lot of word I don't understand after you know, choose something, I telling you I don't understand just find a simple I think is better, if you writing something like this you know its difficult cos this one is easy (*pointing to her own*) but your one is quite hard

Henry: No, look. Nasrin Sotudeah studying law ok? Iran government is very bad ok? She don't like this government ok? Government put you in prison

Maisie: Prison yeah

Jo: I mean now in your country is it peace or still horrible or still not fair? You know, I mean is it freedom, you er have freedom, if there's no freedom still they control you, you know, everyone, you know, no food, no money, no job.

The conversation continues in this fashion, and they go off-topic comparing Iran and Hong Kong, discussing whether there is peace, whether people have freedom. They story-tell but on their terms in their way.

After 10 minutes Maisie has not completed her story. The students should now swap listening/speaking roles. Henry and Jo decide to take 5 minutes each. I move on to observe 2 different pairs. Later that day when I listen back to this second recording, Jo has attempted to tell her story which is actually just her daily trip to the market, but Henry, with the device glued to his hands, has not seen fit to record himself. This is the beginning of a pattern which makes me incredibly cross at the time.

Frustration

Week 4 -Tuesday

I tell Henry I'm incredibly cross. No, granted, this is probably not textbook teacher behaviour for the beginning of a lesson but I still don't have a first written draft or a recording with anything about Shiraz. As I said – I'm cross.

Seemingly unmoved by my rant, Henry starts to explain that he has a new idea. While he is in mid-flow, Jo thrusts an iPad in front of my face. She has brought proof, pictures of her parking space being used by other people! This is her greatest bugbear; she has complained to the council and she is now looking for sympathy from Henry who does a sterling job of being interested...perhaps to deflect from the lack of story? She then involves Maisie, explaining where her front door is in relation to her space. I am defeated. But I am also rather glad that these three have found something of a friendship.

Today's lesson is a feedback session for their stories. I've read drafts and listened to oral tellings and I can't lie, I'm disappointed. Maybe this really was a tall order. Many of them are still without a main event despite frequent and varied input. The many ideas they have come up with have been abandoned. Many are still struggling to describe an experience and they have fallen into the trap of talking about a safe, tried and tested topic in ESOL: their daily routine, like Jo's market trip. As a last attempt to encourage a rethink, we read together my childhood story about losing my wellington boot in mud. We analyse features look at

adjectives, paragraphs etc. and then we redraft. I say they can use their mobile today to help with translation. In hindsight this may have been a mistake. I could comment on anyone of the class members who all took this as carte blanche to spend half their time tapping their mobiles, but I focus on Henry.

Henry has his mobile open for the entire session; he has it in one hand and is writing with the other. He's not looking up words because he's not tapping. I presume he's copying a story - I'm painfully aware he doesn't like this activity. After 15 minutes I start circulating and look over Henry's shoulder. He has indeed found something to copy but it is in Persian, and he is translating it into English. It looks like information about an historical site from the buildings I can see. He had collected some pics together in IT last Thursday and I presumed he was now reconsidering the historical tale about Shiraz. At several points in the hour, he leans over to Maisie to show her something and they exchange words whispering in Persian. Her face lights up when he shows her, so I let them carry on. At the end of class I ask Henry what his story is about, and he says, 'About Iran'. He doesn't expand. I say I look forward to reading it as he scuttles out of the door.

He doesn't tell me he has not left his notebook. I can't believe I fell for it.

Again.

Protest

Week 4 - Thursday

The students are completing their second drafts. They have my written feedback to work with, but they have also been emailed their recordings from Monday so that they can listen to themselves, and the comments made by their partners.

The headphones aren't working. None of them. Great!

Passwords aren't working either so most of the students can't access their email anyway, nor their story which is supposedly saved to their OneDrive. Marvellous!

Those with access are still confusing the Outlook and Word icons because they're both blue.

I know!

Some of them can't remember if they've written it or not and they are not aware of whether they saved to the pc or to the cloud. We have been repeating this every Thursday since October so when they can't remember *again*, I walk to the wall and pretend to enact an idiom - *banging my head against a brick wall* – which they all find hilarious.

Of course, I laugh along with them, but I am not laughing inside. At every turn something blocks our progress, and I am becoming noticeably frustrated now. How is anyone supposed to get anything done like this? How can I rescue this hour of chaos? In a state of exasperation, I insist that someone from the higher echelons comes to see what it is like trying to teach IT without working tools. I explain to the learners that Wendy will come into the lesson after break to see what's going on so we need to highlight as many problems as we can. Meanwhile I enlist the help of Henry who has solutions and calmly sets about applying them.

Henry has been avoiding writing or even talking about a story in the last few lessons. I had intended to interrogate him about Tuesday's invisible offering but I'm just so grateful he is here to lend a very useful hand that I don't even mention it. He has a self-made clip board in his hand. He has drawn a table and has clipped it to the lid of photocopy paper box with a bulldog clip from my tray. I hadn't intended it to be a full-scale operation, but I leave him to it. Wendy enters as he is moving from student to student performing the checks. She doesn't ask.

I pour out a list of IT-related grievances to Wendy and while I am in full flow, I notice Henry and Maisie in deep discussion. Maisie has stood up and looks as if she is getting upset. They are both standing next to her computer. She starts rummaging in her bag and when she pulls out a packet of tissues, I need to know why. She is not crying but she takes a tissue and wipes her nose and then scrunches it up in her hand. Her other hand is also clenched, and she repeatedly opens and clenches again throughout this exchange. Her shoulders are also tensed, lifted towards her ears; she looks as if someone has tightened her whole body by pulling her up by a string. I call over:

Louise: Henry? Maisie? Can I help at all?

Henry: Sorry, sorry

Louise: No, it's ok, is it an IT problem?

Henry: No, no er

Maisie: My story in er last week in Iran er happens in er last week er people

(She speaks in Persian to Henry. She looks and sounds close to tears. Her voice is shaky but she still looks as if she wants to continue speaking. I walk over with Wendy)

Maisie: Last week er in Iran petrol er er rise... and people er erm in street erm er

Wendy: Shouting about it

Maisie: Shouting yeah

Wendy: Protesting

Maisie: and the government ...killed the people in er street and er ...in er ...go...

Henry: Prison

Maisie: Prison and er er...err.. very people er difficult, my daughter, my son in house, can't up here, my daughter very bad and er stay, er in the city people very *(she shakes her 2 clenched fists)*

Louise: Oh Maisie

Henry: The government shut down the internet for erm 2 week and now after erm open internet come news...but internet in Iran now is very slow, ok and er 250 people er die and er I think er 2000 people now in prison.

Louise: And we have heard nothing about that.

Maisie: No nothing

Wendy: I've only heard about it from another Iranian student.

Maisie: In er in er BBC English no.

Wendy: Nothing no.

Maisie: CNN no er in world no no say ...about *Iran*

(losing control of her speech a little more as she gets closer to tears, the pitch gets higher and almost sobbing with her breath as she searches for words to explain)

Maisie: er internet er can't can't!

Henry: Government in Iran very clever ... shut down internet for 2 week because erm because erm cannot send er news *outside (calm and measured in comparison to Maisie)*

Louise: So how do you get news, how do you know?

Maisie: Last, last week

Louise: And can you still make phone calls?

Henry: No er I er call to my family with telephone and my friend...in my city and now internet is on but erm very slow and people er

Maisie: Afraid, afraid

Henry: afraid to send

(Maisie speaks in Persian)

Henry: Abroad

Maisie: Abroad yeah

Maisie turns to Henry again and they continue to speak in Persian. I feel I'm intruding. And Wendy. There is nothing we can offer to this conversation that doesn't sound trite, so I awkwardly butt in and say I'll be here if they need me.

Wendy goes to help Jasmine and I move over to Jo who is having all kinds of problems and has pushed herself away from the desk in protest. Slumped back in her chair, arms crossed, she's not impressed and tells me this is 'waste of time' because she's nearly 60 and can do everything she wants on her ipad. I can't deny she has a point. Henry comes over at this point and gets involved. I presume he is going to help her with access as he leans over to tap the keyboard at lightning speed. But instead, he signs himself in and clicks who knows where on the internet to show us video footage from the streets of Iran which is horrifying.

Henry: Look this!

Jo: What this?

Louise: Oh my goodness... *(I bend over Jo's shoulder)* Are they chucking petrol bombs or something? it's hard to see

Henry: No bomb, guns

Louise: Oh goodness...Look at all those people!

Henry: But because internet is shut down

Louise: Nobody knows

Henry: Near to 200 people died. With gun. In Iran.

Louise: And who is doing the shooting? The army? ...the military?

Henry: Yes er change er (*he pulls at his jumper*)

Louise: Clothes? Change the clothes?

Henry: change to normal, same with people, come to street and (*he points his fingers like a gun and fires making the sound, just once*) because another country can't, can't see this problem

Louise: Oh my goodness Henry.

Jo: This is bad, like China done this.

(Tandy has come behind and is looking over my shoulder – he doesn't say anything, just shakes his head. The video ends and we just look at each other. Tandy sniffs)

Louise: Are you ok Tandy?

Tandy: Yes teacher, no, I don't find document.

And we're back in the room. Henry goes with Tandy and I sort Jo out. When calm is finally restored, I look around the room. Nina has taken out a box of crackers and she's snacking in between the typing. Jasmine is listening to music - she has one of her earphones in and is singing softly as she designs a border for her story. Marie is tutting a lot and hammering the keys – her story is about injustice for women in Brazil. Maisie is typing one-handed; in her left hand she scrunches up her tissue. I don't suggest she'd be better off using 2 hands.

Henry is gazing around. He looks disappointed that everyone is working quietly without issue and he returns to his own seat. He knows he should be working on his story. I wonder what he's actually doing this time. I need to have the conversation.

I go over to see what he is doing. He has a page full of pictures - not the same slide from last week. No writing, no story. I should be more than annoyed with him now but I just smile. I am conscious that he is upset by news from Iran and also there must be a very good reason why he

will not commit to this story writing. He has told me so many stories. I know he is capable so what is the issue? Looking at these new pictures I try to coax a story out of him.

“Wow...that’s a lovely picture these are some beautiful images”

“Yeah, like this picture ...mother...father” he leans over to ask Maisie a word in Persian and then adds “memory”

“Memories yeah...so you’ve been to see all this many times.”

“This tree, near the friend. My sister and me as child play game, under that tree.”

He seeks help from Maisie again and there is another exchange I can’t understand. She laughs and shakes her head. She can’t help him with this translation. She looks at me and puts both hands over her eyes and Henry, following her lead, gets up and pretends to run off.

“Oh cool! Hide and seek! You used to play hide and seek”

“*Hidey seek?* yeah”

“Great game, yeah, what a place to play hide and seek! Are you going to write about this then? in your story?”

“Yeah under tree with my sister”. He’s ignoring the question and I don’t ask again.

“So you lived very close to this place?”

“Yes, my city erm fif fifty, *fifteen* ...kilometres to this place, er from Persepolis”

“I used to visit places like this in Greece, I love this”.

“You should travel Iran.”

“Yes, I would love, oh no, not now. I don’t think I wanna go right now”. I emit a nervous laugh and Maisie follows me with similar laugh too. But Henry looks very serious as he explains:

“This picture for Iranian people you know...for you, this government is very good with you because erm this country want erm to another country erm think about this government, this government is good”

“Yeah, yeah”

“Ok?...you haven’t any problem...if you work in UK about Iran and search about Iran, erm erm try to erm, er ...try to erm ...” He closes his eyes and squeezes them tight as he is searching for the word. I wait with baited breath and suddenly “*publish!* publish news about er government of Iran and after travel to Iran, this is very big problem for you. But, now you can go...ok? Just no publish.”

“Yeah, I know”. I am actually not convinced at all that I would be safe after the images I’ve just seen, British or not.

“Shiraz is very good because you can see er Perspolis and Shiraz...and this place” again he turns to Maisie who obliges with the name of a tomb.

They continue to move between Persian and English to show me other sites around the city they’re so proud of. The more I show wondrous interest, the more they find. They are like excited children as they perch on the edge of their seats and use their arms to punctuate every new thought they share. I hear about the tomb in Cyrus where the king is buried. I hear about the tomb of Hafez whose poetry Maisie has spoken about on several occasions. She has dropped her scrunched up tissue for the moment and I continue to make encouraging ooos and ahhs to extend the distraction. But Henry brings us back to reality soon enough.

“But all close round this place now”

“So you can’t go any more... that’s very sad”

“Because. This government of Iran wants to erm erase?”

“Erase?” I mime to make sure I’ve understood.

“Erase, yeah, about people Iran because people Iran...erm Iran have a king and now Iran just have this”.

He shoots a scathing look at the computer where we watched the video of his Iranian people being executed.

“I want a help!” Jasmine shatters the moment’s silence from the other side of the room. Henry springs to his feet. He looks delighted. Maisie goes back to her typing and at the end of the lesson most students have a typed story with some kind of image to enhance the design.

Not Henry.

After class I expect Henry to dash off before we launch into the lack of story conversation again, but he surprises me. He says he can help me to tidy up because he has an appointment at the job centre and has half an hour free. Right, now is my chance.

“I don’t like job centre, I like to find good job and finish because erm benefit no good you know”

“Mmm”

“Benefit is very bad.”

“Not enough money to live on?”

“NO...enough for me, but it’s not good er money because another peop English people pay erm... and people with no house.”

“You mean you don’t like taking money ...because people are homeless...is that what you mean?”

“Yes because homeless need more to this money”

“But they won’t get it anyway!”

“It’s very difficult for me to see for example one girl one *girl* outside asleep. Very cold outside”

“I know I know...I hate it...especially when they are children, the same age as my children, they are very young children I think and they have just a sleeping bag, filthy, dirty”

“Yes very dirty, very dirty and bad erm” he creases up his face and waves his hand in front of his nose.

“Smell”

“Smell...you know, in Sunday me and my friend and 3 person of church outside help to homeless, tea coffee ... I think this person can change but need clever person speak with them about god, about life because these people can change to normal person”

“What’s normal Henry? Are you normal? am I normal?”

“Yes because you have a good life”

“Is that *normal*?...ok”

“Yes because you sleep in your home and you have a child and you have a goal and you try to reach erm...erm ok...but these people don’t think about anything appointment, don’t think about anything...every time drinking alcohol and erm erm ...drug and you know”

“Well some of them...but not, not *all* of them Henry”

“These people, me, from God, you from God me from God and all of erm ...our, no all of erm...we...same”

“Us? all of us?”

“Yes but just *think* different, you have a good think, me not a good think and these people can’t think about, can’t think about things”

“About going forward? about the future?”

“Yes, but I speak with them...very erm very good...erm...” He puts his hand to his chest.

“Heart, good heart”

“Very good heart and kind, erm I think this person can change. For example, now me in UK, my family in Iran. You can see Maisie speaking, erm have it nearly cry you know because she have children in Iran. She speak with me and erm erm erm ...er and bomb!”, he mimes the bomb exploding, “but after explode and smoking, and people in the street, ok?” He raises his voice as his speech gets faster and I see his eyes beginning to water. “Near the home of” he gestures to where Maisie had been sitting.

“Maisie’s home?”

“Maisie home and daughter in home can’t er” he puts his hands round his neck and pretends to choke and gasp for breath.

“Can’t breathe!”

“Yes can’t breathe and now she very worried”

“Oh my goodness, no wonder she was so stressed, not stressed but anyway”

“I think Maisie now is cry”

“Yes. But it’s really good that she can talk to you though Henry because she can speak properly, well speak her thoughts, you know have a proper conversation with you and I think that helps her.”

“Yes I know. Now erm after finish, I speak about Powerpoint. I told Maisie she can make a Powerpoint about story and this is very easy for you to present ok?”

And just like that he changes tone bringing the conversation back to business. I go with him. I say it’s a great idea and I say he could teach the class how to do it. He is bashful about this suggestion but agrees if I help him prepare. I suggest we strike a deal: I help him prepare; he writes his story.

He doesn’t say no...

Change

Week 5 - Monday

Today we are looking at how poems tell stories., Henry is absent. It’s a shame because I would like to have seen how he tackled the short ‘Feelings’ poem following a model.

To add to my disappointment, it has now been decided that telling a story orally is too demanding for Entry 2 learners and an alternative has been found. I will organise a separate event when students can have a story-telling session between classes so those who have put time and energy into this don’t feel it is all for nothing. Their Speaking Milestone is tomorrow. I break the news at this late hour that they will be doing a task which has been taken from an Entry 2 Exam paper.

Henry does not have this information.

Relief and revelation

Week 5 - Tuesday

Henry is ecstatic at the news!

He has arrived early to apologise for his absence and to ask if he can tell me his story privately, not in front of the whole class. He is curious about the layout of the tables, and I explain the new Milestone assessment which will be conducted in pairs and recorded. The mics are sensitive to background noise, hence the attempt to create a little distance between the tables. He welcomes the news with a beaming smile, the like not often seen on Henry's lips. He is unfazed by the change. He tells me it is better to choose something from an exam because his classmates need to progress through these exams next term. He makes a beeline for his favourite table, changes the angle and moves the chairs. He is very spritely. Who knew such news would prompt such behaviour!

Over the next 10 minutes, every single student except Nigel stops at the open door, taking in the room before creeping in. Jasmine and Fay ask me what's going on but the others inch in, smiling at each other nervously and raising eyebrows. Nigel saunters in and sits himself comfortably at the back. He leans back in his chair and gives the impression that this is going to be a walk in the park for him. We have a chat about the task and I see a collective lowering of shoulders as tensions dispel.

New task: Speak in a conversation with one partner for 3 mins. Each 'candidate' should ask 4 accurate questions. Examples of what might be expected at this level are given: Is there a park in your area?; Where do you buy bread?; How do you travel to college from your neighbourhood?

Time: 3 mins

(I ignore this. I say they can record up to 10 minutes if they are enjoying the conversation.)

The topic: Talk about your neighbourhood

Henry doesn't like the topic and says so. He asks if he can change it. He doesn't usually ask.

Encouraged by Henry's bold challenge, several other pairs now ask if they can change this topic and since it's not an accredited exam I have no issues with that. Thinking of how I need to listen back to 6 conversations about local areas ...it would not be my preferred topic either.

Marie and Henry choose to talk about their respective countries – well let's say Henry suggests it and Marie has no objections. They are sitting opposite each other because Henry took it upon himself to move the chair. He sits on the edge of his seat throughout and moves a lot crossing and uncrossing his legs. He remains throughout the discussion with a pen in his hand and some sheets of paper in front of him which he uses all the time to help him explain - as he did with me in his interview.

As I am taking in the room, every time I look over it is Marie who is looking intently at Henry as he speaks. She still has her coat on, not only on but done up. I am heartened to witness that Henry manages some eye contact, although this seems tricky for him to sustain; he has to avert his gaze after a while to get back to his pen and paper.

Had this been a formal exam this pair would have failed because the criteria state they should ask 4 questions each, accurately, and stick to the topic. So would most of the other students for that matter. For me, this mostly one-sided conversation is worth a million neighbourhoods.

Marie: So about my life in Brazil...Ok, so where are you from?

Henry: I'm from Iran

Marie: Iran?

Henry: Do you know anything about Iran?

Marie: No I am curious for that

Henry: Ok erm....Iran....is a very nice city with erm very erm good people, erm *very* good people because people of Iran have a good heart and ermvery kind...so I think and this is very important, now I speak about Iran because do you know what happened last week in Iran? (*she shakes her head*) in Iran last week increase fuel price, fuel cost erm...increase

Marie: Ok

Henry: Erm after this problem erm people of Iran came out of home to street to erm...erm...protest, you know protest?

Marie: Protest I know

Henry: And after this one erm ...erm after this one government erm government erm... soldier and do you know soldier?

Marie: Yes

Henry: Soldier and of government came to fight.... with people

Marie: Fight with people, ohh

Henry: After er this one erm erm this erm protest change to very big fight

Marie: Ok give me one second – why the peoples go outside for the protest, why?

Henry: Because fuel price.

Marie: Oh the fuel price?

Henry: The fuel price is come up.

Marie: Is come up.

Henry: For example, before in Iran, one litre do you know *litre?* (*mispronounces so she doesn't react*) You know, unit of fuel.

Marie: *Litre (she pronounces it as in Portuguese)*

Henry: No *litre*. Unit of fuel.

Marie: Ok

Henry: Ok? For example, one litre of petrol, of petrol one thousand (*pause*)

Marie: Ok

Henry: After increase, change to 3 thousand.

Marie: Wow that's a lot!

Henry: It's very expensive, ok. And in Iran after increase erm fuel, price of anything come up

Marie: Right that's why the people go outside.

Henry: This is very erm headache for people because erm people of Iran now haven't any money to buy this ok, everything is expensive in Iran, for example one family, after erm

Marie: Ok

Henry: For example my my uncle, erm... milk for baby is very expensive

Marie: Wow

Henry: Very expensive for example, you work one month maybe you can buy erm erm 5 milk just finish.

M: Wow

Henry: It's very expensive and this is very important because, you know this is very important you know Iran have erm oil, maybe, erm maybe, maybe erm half oil of world for Iran

Marie: Half from Iran ok

Henry: After take out

Marie: Yeah

Henry: erm send to another country and er leader of Iran er leader of Iran is very dictator erm take this money and er think this money for his

Marie: Hmm

Henry: Ok this money and this is very important because erm without Iran the world to export to Islam to other country and this money pay for this and people of Iran have very big headache pay for this ok and after this one, after this fight between er, erm

Marie: The police and the people ok

Henry: The police and people, erm start to fire to erm people

Marie: Wow

Henry: Ok, this is very important you know (2 second *pause for dramatic effect*) 200 people. Of. Iran. die.

Marie: After that.

Henry: Yeah die and 7000 of people arrested and in prison ok?

Marie: Ok

Henry: Erm before erm, before erm fire, government of Iran shut down, shut down internet...everything

Marie: Oh

Henry: Before, this is very important, they think this is very clever and I think erm they are very clever before shut down internet, phone, shut down everything because they don't like erm they didn't like to er outside news, outside of Iran because if you know about this government of UK

Marie: What's happened?

Henry: Ok maybe make a big problem for government of Iran and this is very bad. After erm...erm.. after kill 200 hundred people and 7000 now in prison erm... family of erm family of dead people want to give crops

Marie: Crops what you mean?

Henry: Government takes one and family of this die for example son and daughter erm the of Iran told them they give money to give your crops and some family of Iran don't know for example some people son now in prison or die

Marie: Ohhhhh

Henry: You know it's very bad and its very er... sad

Marie: Ok why?

Henry: This is very important, I think this is my job, speak about this problem to other people you know

Marie: Yeah

Henry: I try to speak about this because people of Iran want to listen to them outside of Iran

Marie: Yeah, what's happened there

Henry: Because this country, another country can help to these people so I erm I decide to talk about

Marie: Can I ask you some questions?

Henry: Yes

Marie: Ok why did you coming for England?

Henry: Erm...because erm this is very good questions because before, my brother died. Family after my brother is very bad, erm very bad condition

WHAT? He never gave me a clue to this in an hour-long interview, or our chats since then. Why is this just tripping out of his mouth to Marie.

Henry: And after this problem, I forget my religion, Islam, because I think this problem makes from my religion and I decide to change my religion to Christian

Marie: Christian ok the same me, Christian yeah

Henry: Because God erm God in er Christian is very good... I change to erm ...erm Christian and after government know about this, this is very dangerous for me and I leave my country and come to UK

Marie: To UK, when did you coming to UK?

Henry: Mmmm one er one years ago

Marie: One years ago awww *ok*, that's why you coming to England because you you brother's died and so you change your religion, so you come here that's the point you come here or?

So matter of fact. His brother hasn't just moved house – he died! I feel this deserves so much more attention.

Henry: Yes and now try to make new life

Marie: Oh yeah, you coming alone or?

Henry: Alone yes, before I have a friend, my family in Iran yes my father and my sister and my mother in Iran...er before I have a friend, had a friend in UK but I forget my friend

Marie: So in Brazil we have the same problems, the government now is very...erm ...

Henry: Dictator

Marie: Sorry?

Henry: Dictator

Marie: Dictador yeah...I don't know you know about er you read the news about Brazil?

Henry: No no

Marie: No ok so I listen too much, I know something, I open the Facebook, everything in Facebook so no have, this is government now, don't have tolerance for the different people like err... lesbian erm... gays erm... if you have different options, opinions, they don't accept

Henry: Hmm

Marie: So it's very strict about this

Ten minutes is almost up and Henry turns off the recorder here as he hears me giving a 2 minute warning. I wish there was more to listen to. I want to hear more from Marie but as I listen to this for a third time, I wonder what life must have been like for them all losing a brother, a son. Fearing for a second son who changes religion. All the learners in this particular class have spoken about their faith but so far Henry has not spoken openly about the reasons for changing religion. I wonder if he would be happy sharing the same information with a Muslim student. I wonder why he chose not to share this with me before. He knows I will listen to it, but the fact is he just didn't.

He told Marie from Brazil.

* * *

I bring attention back together as a class and Jasmine tells me 'it's nice this chat'. I suggest we swap partners and talk to someone else if they have enjoyed it. I do a 3,2, 1 Go! and there is a frantic, and actually quite a dangerous scramble to sit with a partner they choose. I've never seen Emma move so fast as she trips over her bag to get to Marie. Nigel doesn't move at all – nor does Henry. After running round the class and missing opportunities, Jo ends up back in

the same seat which she finds hilarious. Maisie ambles over to Henry as if she knows he is keeping the seat warm for her. I'm intrigued to know what they will choose this time.

I never find out and I'm really annoyed. This would have been an interesting conversation, but for the fact that Henry deleted it all! He had control of the recorder – of course he did. He said it hadn't recorded because he made a mistake. Then he smiles a wicked smile; he's having a 'joke' with me! I know he's had a hand in erasing it ... or maybe he didn't even record it in the first place. I ask him why it's empty. He tells me it was not '*useful*' for me. With that, he bounces out of the room.

15 minutes later he returns chatting with Marcus as they leave a coffee on my desk...along with a packet of sugar-coated almonds. Where did they find those?

The end

Week 5 - Thursday

Today is the last day for finalising stories in their Word documents. I am stern with Henry about staying in his seat. He must complete and his classmates are capable of doing this alone now. I also do very little except play requests on Youtube. There's a hectic but upbeat vibe in the room as everyone helps each other get the final copy ready for display.

Henry doesn't participate in any of this production. I can see his open document and I don't recognise it. No Iranian monuments, no historical sites, no tombs and no tree! I peer over his shoulder, and he blocks my view with his hands. "Not ready".

He didn't finish today.

A week later I receive an email with Henry's final 'story' attached.

I didn't see Henry again for 4 weeks.

The Kind God and the Unkind Human

by Henry

The kind God and unkind humane

If you were God, would you create a human being who can decide to do anything?

I thought about this for a year and with the help of my friend we came to an interesting conclusion. I think our God could create human in two ways.

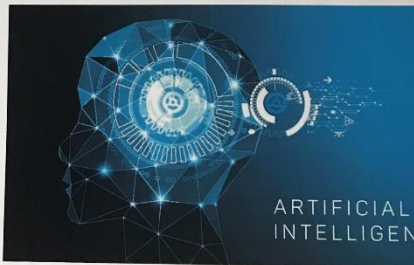
- I. Human with the ability to decide to do anything.
- II. Human without the ability to decide to do anything.

God chose the first option because he loves human and allowed to make a decision and we can live freely so he created human like himself and with the ability to make decisions. If the second option were chosen, human would be created like a robot and God could have planned only to do good and thus human would only be able to do good.

This choice is only a sign of God's love, and it is our choice to do good and bad so we can be like our Father in choosing good.

The development and manufacture of humanoid robot is a great wish of engineering science and has made great progress with the advancement of the artificial intelligence robotics industry.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is wide-ranging branch of computer science concerned with building smart machines capable of performing task the typically require human intelligence. AI is an interdisciplinary science with multiple approaches, but advancements in machine learning and deep learning are creating a paradigm shift in virtually every sector of the tech industry.



$$7530000000 \times 1.720 = 12951600000$$

$$12951600000 \div 40000880 = 323.783$$

So if the people of world hold hands so we can create 323 belts earth.



It is a symbol of the friendship and affection of all human beings that we can be like our God in this and:

1. No one will sleep outside in the cold and rain.
2. No one will be homeless.
3. No one will be depressed.
4. No one will be killed.

Because all people will love each other and help each other and the world will become as God wants it that we will be like our father. I hope human will be change in the future and the world can experiences this day because it will be the most beautiful day in the world and we can call this day "**Lovely world**"

The biggest concern in the development of humanoid robot industry is that it is capable of making perfect decisions because it may decide to do bad things and humans cannot control it.

Returning to the main topic, I believe that if we look at the Earth and humans we can see that we did it ourselves with God and Earth so we're afraid of building a robot like ourselves. Of course, if we can make it, which I don't believe we can do.

One day that God will be pleased with the creation of human and we will become like our father.

First of all we have to solve a question and this is a symbol and we may not be able to do it. Circumference of Earth can obtained:

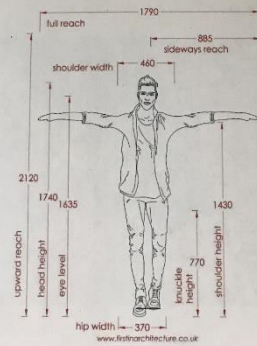
$$\text{Circumference of sphere} = 2\pi R$$

$$R = \text{Radius of Earth} = 6371000 \text{ m}$$

So we can obtain:

$$\text{Circumference of Earth} = 2\pi R = 2 \times 6371000 \times 3.14 = 40000880 \text{ m}$$

And population of the Earth in 2017 were 7.53 billion and we know from the ergonomics of the body and fig ... that the least distance between the fingers is as follows.



The Pandemic

This term I am sharing the E3 class with Gary. I'll be taking the students for an IT session every Wednesday while Gary focuses on developing language skills. The reason for a dedicated IT session is to prepare students for an ICT Award as it is believed they are able to complete the Entry 3 level tasks, 'even though their first language is not English.' It's not my forte, but neither is it Gary's. I drew the short straw. Fortunately, Henry has been moved to this higher level which means I will have help at hand; on the downside I will only see him for one session per week. Fay, Jo, Tandy, Mark, Marie, Maisie and Jasmine have also been moved 'up'. There are 3 other Iranian students in this class (Ibo, Nancy and Sheena) and I wonder how this will play out for both Maisie and Henry.

Business as usual

Wednesday 15th January

The second week of a new term and Henry is back and waiting for me at the bottom of the escalator with his coffee. I am relieved. Also, with coffee in hand, I smile as the escalator moves closer to meet him. He jokes that we are still starting the day with coffee, and he says he is ready for work. I wasn't sure if he would be back to be honest. I haven't seen him since he emailed his story to me in December. I don't mention the story and neither does he. He was absent for the final week of term, and he wasn't responding to emails over the Christmas period. And why should he.

I have barely stepped off the escalator when he bursts into an excited speech about the fact that he has been very ill. Oddly buoyant considering. He looks as if he may have been quite sick as he is a bit pasty and has certainly lost weight; this is weight he cannot really afford to lose. He accompanies me to class filling me in on the not so pleasant details of his symptoms. As we settle into the room he is still going. We're now onto the remedies for his symptoms

“Drink erm ...water and er lemon and er ginger and honey er mix, very good for cold flu”.

“It's *very* good, I had that over Christmas. I was ill *all* over Christmas so that's what I was having too”.

“In Iran, my mother, if I was sick my make food. My mother, my mother... everything!” He smiles at this.

“That’s it, yeah. Now you miss you your mum hey when you’re ill”.

“Yes”

“Me too. I still miss my mum when I’m ill and I’m 53!”

“I think mother is very important person in life”.

“I think so too”.

“Now I can er understand, you know, because before, er near me, I can’t understand, now because she not here so I can understand now”.

“We have a saying in English - *Absence makes the heart grow fonder*” I say it slowly, accompanied by what I think might be helpful actions. They’re not. He looks at me quizzically, so I try an explanation, “You know, you miss someone more when you are not together, you realise ‘oh my goodness they’re not here what am I going to do?’ We take people for granted I think”.

“Yes, yes erm , we not...we *don’t* understand how er how much er...er...”

“We *appreciate* them?”

“Appreciate yes”

“You know, I used to argue with my mum about all sorts of things when I lived at home but then, when I moved to Greece, I used to call her every day. I spent lots of money on the telephone”.

“I *cannot* call to my mother every time”.

“You can’t call? Why not?”

“Dangerous erm for my family er me to call every time.”

“Dangerous?”

“Just can call Skype er sometime but erm you know, er... I afraid”

Fay bounces into the room, bright and breezy.

Fay: Oh, my Louise! How are you?

Louise: I'm very well, how are you?

Fay: Very good I'm very pleased to meet you.

Louise: to *meet* me? to *see* me ...we already met; you know me already ...so you're pleased to *see* me now.

Fay: Yeah yeah, ok, (*she ambles over to the desk, bends forward, looks me straight in the eye and enunciates*) I . am . very . pleased. to . *seeeee* you".

I am delighted with the sarcasm. Henry smiles, shakes his head and busies himself with his bag.

The rest of the class drift in. This is usual on the first day of a new term. We chat and I decide to get everyone in a circle play the adjective game to learn new names and have a bit of fun. Hopefully, this will set the tone for the day, and the rest of the year. I give very little explanation about the game – that *is* the point. It goes like this:

Louise: I'm Louise and I'm lazy.

Jasmine: You lazy? No you are not lazy.

Louise: No I'm not really lazy but just for this game I am. Ok then, I'll do another one, I'll start again, listen carefully. I'm **L**ouise and I'm **l**ucky.

Tandy: What you mean *lucky*?

Fay: She lucky, lucky (*she gives him a translation*)

Marcus: why you lucky?

Louise: I'm lucky because I have 2 amazing children....and.... because I teach you! But that's not what this game is. Just listen again. I'll start again. I'm **L**ouise, I'm **l**azy, **l**ucky and **l**ovely

Marie: Ok so I am Marie and I am from Brazil.

Louise: Is she right? (*confused faces*) Yes, you are from Brazil but that's not the sentence I want. I'm **L**ouise and I'm **l**ucky.

Jasmine: So, I am Jasmine and I am lucky.

Jo: No you jealous.

Jasmine: Why? Why I am jealous?

Louise: Yes! That's it well done Jo. She's **J**asmine and she's **j**ealous. (*Lots of whispering now*)

Jasmine: No, but yes I am Jasmine but no jealous. I am Jasmine and I am ... I am kind.

(*the class are getting it now so they shout in chorus*) 'Nooo!'

Louise: No that's not it (*laughing*).

Jasmine: I am kind ...I am not jealous person.

Louise: I know I know ...and I'm not lazy but just for now I'm **L**ouise and I'm **l**azy and you're **J**asmine and you're **j**ealous

Fay: I'm Fay and I'm fast.

Louise: Yes you are!

Jasmine: No, she is not, (*to Fay*) you not!

Fay: I am Fay and I am frustrated (*hilarious mime clenching her fists and waving them above her head. The class laugh*)

Louise: Yes you are! Frustrated, what a great word... you remembered!

Fay: Yes, I like this word.

Louise: So, have you got it now? I'm Louise and I'm *lucky*, she's Jasmine and she's *jealous*, she's Fay and she's *frustrated*. Am I frustrated?

Chorus: No!

Louise: Is she lucky?

Chorus: No!

Louise: Is she lonely?

Chorus: No!

Louise: ...am I?

Henry: Maybe

My head turns sharply towards him, and I raise my eyebrows in a mock affront - he laughs. A smile creeps across my face to acknowledge his ...joke? And so, the lesson continues in the same light-hearted fashion. We say nothing more about illness.

The Beginning

Tuesday 21st January

News online: The Guardian website

China confirms human-to-human transmission of coronavirus



The Workshop

Thursday 23rd January

In the activity room



Despite the news headlines, not a word is mentioned about the virus today by anybody. All attention is focused on the voice workshop which I have organised with the new Artistic Associate at the Birmingham Opera Company (BOC). The visit serves our mutual purposes nicely. Every ESOL scheme of work is expected to have enrichment activities embedded, better still if they engage the learners in the community in some way. Trips to the museum are a staple. And BOC are hoping to inspire potential volunteers to join their upcoming production as chorus members. Their funding depends on rounding up a cross-section of the local community.

After the last session with BOC, which was less successful than on previous visits, I decided that it would be wise to keep numbers down and try to make sure learners were of a similar level so the workshop leaders could have an idea where to pitch language.

Ignoring institute politics, I opened the session to the Entry 3 classes only. E2 classes were not invited this time and my explanation of numbers and levels, while not directly challenged, was not met with complete understanding. One colleague commented that they managed it last time and it was 'alright'. When I reminded him that many of the students were not engaged, he said 'not everyone likes singing'. Sarah was concerned the students would hear about it and think they'd been left out; she commented that language should not be a barrier and what we offer to

one, should be offered to all. However, the irony is that she did not actually bring her learners to the last session because it was towards the end of term, and she wanted to ‘finish the past tense’. Anyway, the culmination of the conversation - I found myself saying I’d organise them another session for E1/2 later in the term. I heard from the manager that one of the other E3 teachers was going to give his students the choice because they didn’t all enjoy it last time. He didn’t say anything of the kind to me. None of his class came. After the session, in the staffroom he ambushed me as I was walked through the door to say sorry, but his learners just did not want to go. I said, ‘Oh that’s a shame, why do you think that was?’ He said he had given them a choice and they wanted to do some ‘real English work’ – interesting.

Henry tolerated the workshop. He stood in a corner behind Marcus looking uncomfortable for the duration. This is not to say he didn’t participate; he joined in with the games, vocal exercises and singing but while Marcus and Jasmine threw themselves into it with gusto, Henry looked like a rabbit in headlights and barely opened his mouth.

At the end of the session the workshop leader, waving a clipboard with the sign-up sheet, asked who would like to be involved in the community project this year. I had already told them about mine and Jenny’s experience the previous year and shown a collection of photos so they had a vague idea of what they might be signing up for. The form was nothing daunting; it asked for Name/Nationality/Postcode/Email. Most of my class added their details, although basing my judgment on the way they chose to engage today and their comments on the photos, I am not sure they actually intended to follow it through.

We were informed that BOC would be holding a taster session for all newcomers on 5th February along with professional opera singers, musicians and other volunteers from the vicinity. Maisie was particularly excited as she had tried to join the last production with Jenny but couldn’t commit to the travelling. This time all rehearsals and performances will take place at the museum, a stone’s throw from our college, so it should be more accessible for all. Jasmine joins Maisie to ask for more information and the leader is delighted – they don’t usually have volunteers from Iran or Afghanistan. Having been involved in the last large-scale production, I comment that they probably don’t have many volunteers from those postcodes either. I have a lump in my throat when Joanne tells me she will go because she would like to see what her friend Jenny had been involved in.

Henry had his coat on and was halfway out the door before the clipboard left the leader’s hands.

Worry

Friday 24th January

In the cafe



I am supposed to meet Jasmine at break time to give her information about the BOC taster session, but she doesn't show up. This is unusual because her attendance record is outstanding, and she was very much looking forward to going along to the museum for the taster. I am concerned. I ask Gary if he has any idea where she is; apparently, she received a phone call in class this morning and practically collapsed at some news she had from London. We know nothing more except she left immediately on the brink of tears. I worry about her for the entire weekend.

Bad News

Tuesday 28th January

In the corridor

At break today Jasmine tells me her nephew has passed on leaving behind 2 young children. It was totally unexpected; there were no indications that he was ill beforehand. She thinks it's a heart attack, but her family don't really know. She says people keep asking her if it could be *Coronavirus* and this scares her. She tells me the funeral will take place next week, but she is

going to London tomorrow to be with her sister and help make arrangements, so she won't be in class. During our conversation she learnt a new word that I wish I hadn't had to teach.

'with my sister we choose this box, you know for burn'

'a coffin'

'*coffin* you say like this?'

'yes coffin'

'coffin of wood we choose. Simple'

She looked drained and her eyes were heavy and struggling to open. I asked why she was here, and she said she had to inform us she was going to be absent. I told her to go home.

That was the last time I saw Jasmine.

News of the World

Wednesday 29th January

In the classroom

After recent shocking front page headlines, tutors have been asked to focus on the news with their classes. We have been asked to speak about *The virus* for several reasons: 'we' want the learners to be aware of what's going on in the world but 'we' should also try to warn them of potential fake news they might be reading. And following the flood of photos on the internet showing worrying hospital scenes, we should try to quash any kind of panic.

Gary and I chat about this. We figure that whichever way we approach it, people in hazmat suits will inevitably spark a fearful reaction. We agree that previous classroom discussion with this particular group of students suggests they like to keep themselves well-informed about world events. And we question whether *our* news stories are going to be any more reliable than those being read/watched by our students. If indeed they are different. So, we decide to plan an activity which might actually detract from the potential panic.

The chosen task: For 3 weeks Gary has chosen to focus on ‘The Future’ to enable students to speak confidently about their plans and ambitions, a strong focus in ESOL for Work curricula, for setting targets and competing the all-important ILP. To complement this, we decide to use the IT session to practise finding information so the students can plan a future holiday in groups. There are 3 elements to the task: planning and research; producing a poster; presenting the itinerary to the class using the language they had focused on for future plans.

So today we begin the holiday task. But before I can even get started, the students derail my instructions to discuss precisely what Gary and I had planned to avoid. Their digression begins with questions about my daughter’s predicament in China and very soon they demonstrate that far from being out of touch, they are very clued up when it comes to world news - more so than myself as it happens. Besides virus news there were 3 other pressing headlines that were just as relevant to them. These crop up in conversation before we even get started on the lesson.

Trump unveils peace plan seen as favouring Israel

All 9 bodies recovered from crash site of Kobe Bryant's helicopter

U.K. to let Huawei provide some 5G equipment

At the beginning of the session, Henry is asking me about my daughter. I explain that she left China for Chinese New Year and she’s having a holiday in Thailand. Now she’s stuck there and worried about going back. The students start asking me questions and chatting amongst

themselves. The volume rises. Ibo tells us there are now cases in France and Germany and Marie says she heard on the news it's also in the UK. Several students agree they have also seen on the news of cases in the UK.

Jo has brought in the Metro – 7 copies. She does this every lesson since we did our collages way back in October. I happened to mention how useful it was to have the chance to look at the papers together, so we often begin by finding a story that interests us. Now she distributes said papers and suggests we find the news about cases identified in Europe.

It's not front-page news. Instead, The Metro headlines the business with Huawei. Ibo now takes it upon himself to explain to the class about Boris Jonson's controversial decision to allow Huawei to build part of the UK's 5G network. He says the Chinese are going to use it for spying. When I glance at the article, I see it says this is exactly what Tory backbenchers are worried about. I didn't know this. Of course, Jo from Hong Kong jumps on this as a certainty. Jo also tells me she heard on the news that the man in the UK who allegedly has Coronavirus lives just down the road and has been taken to the city hospital. From one potential panic to another. I tell them that this might be a rumour. I explain *rumour* and we discuss how rumours spread and expand on why there is such a lot of fake news these days. Jo is affronted that I don't believe this man is in hospital with Coronavirus. As it turns out she is partially correct, and I didn't know anything about it.

In the next second, Ibo is on his smartphone and tells me that there are reports of a case in Saudi but as he points out, I wouldn't know because I don't speak Arabic. Fay wants to know how this is happening because it can't just 'fly to different countries'. I say I believe these people have all been in Wuhan or had contact with someone from the area. To explain the 'flying' I use the word 'contagious' and Henry wants a definition. In explaining, I use the word *catch* and Tandy mimes catching something. Jo finds this amusing – she blows at him, and he pretends to catch her virus. Henry says it doesn't work like that but anyway this is a very useful word. I say they might be hearing this word on the news if they watch or listen to English language reports so they should listen out for it.

Reading something on page 9, Jo shouts out '14 days, 14 days stay in home' and we discuss that yes this is probably not fake news but sensible advice because you might not know you have it. May be there are no symptoms. I say we will watch the news very closely but at the moment the worry is in China. Joanne says her friend has ordered masks from China and we discuss why they produce so many there and wear them in the street already. They are all aware

of the problem with air pollution in Beijing and other cities and we talk about what causes that. We also discuss the pollution in the city we live in. They have noticed Chinese students wearing masks before the outbreak.

Later today, I speak to Gary about our morning sessions, and it seems despite our best intentions to remove it from our classroom space, the conversation inevitably comes back round to the spreading virus. I tell him about these conversations we had aimed to avoid:

Adam: What we can do teacher for this?

Louise: I don't think we can do anything right now.

Adam: They can, we can injection at GP, I hear this.

Louise: Not right now, I don't think. But I think they are trying to develop a vaccine; in China I believe.

Ibo: China now building special hospital, will finish, finish erm 10 days.

Louise: Yeah, I saw on TV all the bulldozers, you know those huge vehicles that clear

Ibo: Yes yes I know bulldoze, 300 bulldoze

Louise: bulldozers yeah, 300 – is that how many there are?

Ibo: Yes, to get (*asks Henry for a translation*) ready, yes, ready quick, special for separate

Louise: to keep them separate yeah, in isolation.

Henry: Yes, I know this.

Ibo: What is this?

Louise: What? Isolation? This is when you put someone with an infection or you know, a *contagious* disease, you put them away from people who do *not* have the infection or disease (*Pulling him away from Henry to make my point*)

Adam: Where it comes from teacher?

Louise: from Wuhan in China.

Adam: Yes, yes, we know place but no, where it come from, from animal?

Louise: Well, I've heard several stories about it coming from animals but I'm not sure.

Marie: What animals?

Louise: Well, maybe a bat, a snake.

Ibo: Yes, you know Louise some people there eating, eating dog, everything.

Louise: Mmm but I don't think

Ibo: And the dog or animal have the virus and people eat.

Flora: China long long time eating these animals, this same stuff, nothing happened, but why now?

Marc: This is true yeah.

Izzy: Some people says it's about eating dirty food.

Sheena: So, I hear not animals, someone he *do*, not animals, *people* do virus, make this virus

Louise: Where did you hear that? Did you hear it on the news?

Sheena: No no, I saw on YouTube.

Louise: Oh really, YouTube

Sheena: It was doctor saying but I don't know, could be fake, yes? fake news?

Louise: Yes, fake, that's right...could be. We'll probably get a lot of fake news with this because people are worried and when people are worried, you know, they look for answers and spread ideas around.

Marie: I think they make the virus.

Louise: Do you? Well, I think we just have to keep an open mind because not even the experts agree. I mean I heard that it was from a snake but obviously I don't know...

The conversation continues in the same vein as students comment on how different foods are eaten in different countries. I give my opinion on the consumption of garden snails, fish and sheep eyes and try to draw attention back to the point that as a general rule we need to think

about what we're hearing and whether this might be true before we pass it on. Henry is keen to confirm how important this is.

I then try to bring focus back to the task. But this time I distract *myself*. Shuffling the newspapers around I notice the tragic story of Kobe Bryant and I mutter to myself that the world is going mad. Adam asks me what I am saying, and I hold up the picture. Most of the class know who he is because there is a chorus of 'basketball'.

Adam: This so sad teacher, with *(he looks up and moves his hand in a circular motion while making the sound of a helicopter)*

Marcus: Helicopter.

Louise: Yes, it was a helicopter crash.

Fay: What happened, who is he?

Adam: He died, not just he, and daughter, they, er erm, what you said now?

Louise: They crashed in a helicopter.

Maisie: Oh no! *(she cups her hands over her mouth then turns to Marie to ask her something I can't hear)*

Marie: No, the mum is ok and another girl, daughter, but I think is worse for them, you know.

Marcus: All bad news.

Fay: Yes, no more news.

Louise: Ok, shall we leave that behind for a while and think about something nice like going on holiday

Adam: Yeah nice

Not even 20 seconds into my explanation that they can go on a 'dream holiday' and we digress again.

Louise: It's a dream not real, a dream holiday – remember we talked about this last week? You're going to do some research on the internet and plan your dream holiday for your group.

Adam: Oh I like holiday, and I not had for a long time

Louise: Everybody likes holidays I think, don't they?

Ibo: Yeah but no in China (*Everyone laughs*).

Louise: Yeah maybe not in China right now.

Ibo: No in China and no in Syria

Adam: Yeah bombs too many

Ibo: No in Yemen no in Iran,

Tandy: No in Sudan

Fay: No in Somalia

Marc: Not in Libya

Adam: No Palestine ...but yesterday I hear they try to stopping the fighting.

Ibo: Yes but it's, it's from USA, from Trump so what he wants from this?

Adam: Is plan for 4 years.

Henry: But Palestine are not support this, they will lose a lots of, of erm (*he asks Maisie for a translation; she shakes her head as Marcus jumps in*)

Marcus: They will lose land, they lose capital, they lose rights... I can't talk about this.

Ibo: Look this (*he's Googled, and wants to show me a map of the proposed territory divide*)

Louise: Yeah, is that a bridge? over Israeli territory? so they separate Gaza

Adam: (*with a huge grin and eyes wide he says loudly*) What you said?

Louise: I said that Gaza is sep

Adam: That's how you say? (*others join in the laughter. I'm not sure what's so funny*)

Louise: What,... *Gaza?* (*more laughter*) Why, how do *you* say it?

A chorus of 'Gaza' rings out and doesn't sound too dissimilar to my ears. I try to copy which provokes more amusement. But it's distraction enough to change the subject.

* * *

I go through instructions for the tasks for today's session. They are going to try and file their documents in OneDrive, and we discuss the importance of being organised. This filing is a thankless task. There are so many issues with system; it saps the life out of the first 45 minutes. Fortunately, Henry was able to assist.

Following this, I muster some interest for our main activity with some pictures of exotic islands and we have a whole class discussion to think about how they *are going to* plan a trip and what they need to research. As they shout out key words (transport, cost, accommodation, activities, sightseeing etc.) these go onto the board to be matched with Who, Where, When, How, What and then I elicit questions they should answer. For every sentence I repeat, over-emphasising the *going to*....What are you *going to* do there?

They are quick to tell me they've done this with Gary, and they know how to use this for future and the difference between will/present continuous. On the table in front of me, Adam catches my eye, smiles a knowing smile and with a twinkle he says something to Ibo about Ghana. I say yes, great idea, they can go to Ghana if they want, they can go anywhere they like. He laughs and explains he didn't say *Ghana*, he said *gonna*. He learnt this from Gary in class yesterday and he likes it. It seems they all like it as they start chanting short phrases.

I'm gonna go shopping,

I'm gonna make dinner,

I'm gonna buy some milk,

and they all want to say their sentence to me, so I let them.

Henry doesn't join in with this.

Adam is delighted to tell me Gary said they should use it when they are talking to me today to see if I would notice and he's ecstatic that I did. Not wishing to destroy Adam's mood, I didn't point out that I hadn't actually noticed – I just thought he'd chosen an interesting destination!

In groups they have a planning meeting to make all decisions before break. After break they will do the research and create an informative poster. I check they know they need to answer the questions and decide who is searching for what. Henry joins a group which includes 2 other Iranian students. I suggest they mix themselves up but no, they have chosen and that's that. The way they approach the task differs in each group.

Group 1: Jo, Fay, Flora, Abby

The girls get off to a shaky start and it is clear that not everyone grasps the objective. Jo says she doesn't want to go to the museum again, so she suggests going on the new tram that goes from Birmingham to Wolverhampton. Flora explains it's not a local trip, they have to go somewhere new: 'We dream to go to see something nice, no Birmingham.'

She would like to see the Northern Lights. Ignoring this, Jo says she went to Canada last year and I can see Flora is getting exasperated with her talking about her real experiences. She raises the pitch and volume of her voice, changes her tone, makes her hand gestures bigger. Joanne doesn't seem to notice the exasperation and continues that she's also been to LA. Then she goes back to all the things she can do in Spain. Flora says since they've both been to Spain before, they could go to Italy for mountains and views.

The most amusing thing about the conversation that follows is that they talk about the expense as if they actually have to pay for it. They're worried about going 10 days because it's expensive and then they start thinking closer to home again. I hear them and reassure them it doesn't matter because I'll give them as much money as they want! Abby would like to show everybody Egypt because it's not just pyramids and tombs. After much deliberation, they eventually decide on Vancouver, Canada. Flora organises who will search for what. Jo suggests a package deal because that's what she did when she went to Vancouver. But she doesn't want to search for it because she doesn't like using the computer, she'd rather use her ipad. As a compromise, she agrees to find pictures.

Group 2: Henry, Ibo, Nancy, Tandy, Adam

If there was a misunderstanding in Group 1 it was tripled in Group 2. Adam thinks they have to choose a different destination each at the beginning. And again, they worry about expense. Throughout the conversation Nancy thinks they have to use the information from the board to write complete questions as she had done the day before in Gary's lesson. Henry just listens to begin with which is noted by Tandy who reminds him he is group leader. When he does take charge, he delegates jobs leaving himself with most of the donkey work to search online. Some of this is done in English but he chooses to do most of the explaining in Persian to Ibo who then relays these instructions to the others when Henry goes off to the computer.

Ibo: Ok so no China

Adam: I like Maldives

Ibo: South America, Argentina...?

Nancy: (*slowly as she's writing the question*) how - long - do - you - stay - there?

Ibo: About er one years?

Adam: One years for holiday??

Ibo: Yes, yes.

Adam: Come on!

Ibo: (*slapping his head as he realises his error*) One month one month, sorry!

Adam: Yeah, I think maybe you are a rich man

Ibo: Maybe 3 weeks.

Adam: Yeah I like it. Where are *you* going?

Ibo: I going Turkish.

Adam: Which city?

Ibo: I think Istanbul.

Tandy: 2 weeks is better and we go to the same place guys (*he's started saying guys since meeting Gary*)

Adam: (to Henry) And you?

Tandy: Just you listen eh? What do you think?

Henry: Maybe Thailand.

Adam: Is nice Thailand. You like Thailand?

Nancy: Why do you want to go there? What about Paris? It's closer

Tandy: I think better holiday on plane, you know, not too far, 2 hours.

Adam: Yeah plane better.

Ibo: You think? I think train.

Nancy: No is better. Think now plane, car, ship?

Henry: By boat is more dangerous.

Adam: dangerous? No not dangerous. I think plane only 2 hours.

Henry: No less, sometimes one hour sometimes longer, I think, I don't know.

He doesn't challenge Adam but we both know he knows differently. They continue toing and foing till break when we do a quick round up of destinations.

Louise: Ok, where are you going?

Jo: Canada

Ruth: Malta

Ibo: Paris

Nancy: France

Ibo: Paris France

Louise: Ok, that's pretty close

Marie: Wales

Louise: Wales? You have the whole world and you want to go to Wales?

Marie: I come from Brazil so I know South America, and I know is hot. We all know hot. And Fay doesn't like to fly and she (*pointing to Maisie*) doesn't like the water.

Louise: Oh ok, makes sense

Marie: Wales is nice. We go camping in Wales, camping, climbing, hiking in the fresh air. Is nice.

I wonder why Maisie doesn't like the water.

* * *

After break I check they know they have to produce a poster which answers all the questions and then they will present it to the class as a group. Rejoining Group 2, Henry gabbles something to Ibo and toddles straight over to the computer to search for accommodation and things to do for the week. Ibo reminds the others what they're doing and goes to sit next to Henry. He is searching for the train and ferry – I thought they had decided on the plane but I don't interfere. Nancy is in charge of finding images and printing images. Adam and Tandy are in charge of the poster. They both speak Arabic but their conversation is mostly in English.

Adam has a new phone and wants to search with it but he can't get onto the wifi because his student account is currently blocked – this is another reason why he was volunteered to do the poster. He actually does no part of the poster except a short dictation; he is dyslexic and really struggles with reading and writing. Instead, he wants me to take pictures of him and his group because his phone apparently has the best camera. I draw attention back to the poster and help with ideas for design.

Next time I go back to their table they have 2 small packs of biscuits open. Leaning back in his chair, he is dictating to Tandy 'I will go holiday to Paris'. They have a conversation about the future tenses and how they are going to talk about their trip. They argue about use of will. They're trying to write their plan in full sentences, so I remind them as I'm circulating that this

is a poster and I show them a model from a previous class. As I walk off, Adam takes a biscuit, picks up his coffee and says to Tandy, ‘Take your time, relax now’.

There really is so much Persian going on in the room today, but the aim was to use the internet to search for information. Every group achieved this, so I stop fretting about the Persian. They also appeared to be enjoying themselves bustling around the room and I didn’t hurry them. The posters were great and so the presentation was put off for the following week.

* * *

After class, Henry stays to help Nancy finish off. While they’re sticking and titivating, I ask for Henry’s opinion about introducing Excel to the class. I think they might enjoy something different as IT lessons are so often limited to Word for ESOL students. Henry runs with the idea.

“I can make a document, for example click on this and then do this...ok?”

“Oh yes that would be great”

“And Louise, I thinking Outlook, how they can install Outlook erm on, on the mobile and I think this one very good. Ok? I write this one”

“That’s really helpful (he laughs). No I mean it Henry that is *really* helpful for me.”

In the papers

January 30th Thursday



The Presentation

Wednesday 5th February

In the classroom

A week had passed and almost everyone had forgotten about today’s presentation. They needed time to review their poster, decide who was going to talk about what, and to practise. I reminded them of the fact it was a future trip, but I didn’t mention that they should try to use particular language they had learned for talking about future plans.

Henry’s behaviour today was unlike any other student’s. The other 3 groups went to different rooms and worked together to give a coherent presentation. Henry’s group struggled to decide who would speak about what. When he knew what part he would talk about, he went back to the computer because he needed to do more research – he was going to talk about the transport and wasn’t satisfied with the information on the poster. His group then stood out in the corridor and rather than rehearse together, Henry walked to the far end of the corridor to practise his bit alone.

* * *

They enjoyed watching each other’s performances and clapped spontaneously at the end of each. Three groups were well-rehearsed and took us on a lively run through their itinerary. Henry’s group produced a string of unconnected monologues. But they were also treated to

rapturous applause by classmates who didn't seem to notice or care that the presentation wasn't linked with suitable connectors!

During feedback, I pointed out that in addition to their very appealing holidays I was also interested in their choice of language, and I praised the variation. Despite the drilling, *going to* didn't really make an appearance. No, they had much better ideas and as an example:

Marie: We are planning to travel by car because we will be able to load our equipment inside.

Maisie: We are thinking of going camping because we can save money.

Flora: We are hoping to catch a night flight so we don't miss another day.

Marcus: After we have set up camp, we might just go for a hike in the mountains.

In the papers

February 7th and 11th



The ICT Award

February 12th Wednesday Lesson

In the classroom

Before class, Jo and Henry are in the corridor talking about the BOC taster session. I usher them into our room, and she tells him he should have gone along to the museum last week. She has taken to heart what they said about needing more volunteers for the show and since it was just her and Maisie that attended, she is taking it upon herself to recruit. It seems her impression is that Henry's life is spent on his computer.

Jo: How you can manage it? You know on computer, this, this is dead body! Ha! This is not life. You know you need to find, you know, find some enjoy.

Henry: Yeah, I know because in my life I'm every time alone. It's very difficult for me, opera and sing, play together.

Jo: Yeah, I know you say you're not interesting, but you can still go and enjoy and try and get more fun.

Henry does not seem at all convinced that this will bring him any kind of fun but when Maisie comes in, he does ask her about the experience. Her only offering is that it was very long. I was there; it was. However, she got used to standing for three hours at a time and actually attended all rehearsals until the show was cancelled on Sunday 15th March due to the Pandemic.

When most of the learners have arrived, I explain that today is the day for completing a segment for the ICT Award. *Unit 5: Find information*. They have a simple worksheet where they will outline what they want to find information about and why. They have to do the following and provide evidence:

1. Perform 2 x Web Search.

Evidence = copy-paste URL

2. Use 'Get Help' function, typing in a problem they need to solve eg. How do I save an image?

Evidence = screenshot

The issue is the evidence. The irony is that they can do the searching but saving and uploading to One Drive is still proving difficult for staff at the moment as we're still trying to synthesise 3 different systems. I look over at Henry with a face that says 'you will help won't you?' he smiles and says 'Yes I know, I can help'.

When we get to explaining the 'Get Help' part Henry says this is the most difficult way to search for help he has ever seen, and that Google is much better. I am inclined to agree but I say this is a requirement for the Award. He rolls his eyes and turns back to Maisie's computer.

I look over a few minutes later to catch him doing the tasks for Maisie. I tell him not to do it for her. When he is happy that Maisie can follow his demonstration, he leaves. Maisie immediately gets her smartphone out. I go over to remind her we are learning how to do this on a computer. She is searching What's On at the Rep - I'd previously told the class about the productions of Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2018) and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2019). She says when she needs to search, she is at home, and she doesn't have a computer at home – she uses her phone.

Just copy the URL and have done with it!

Jasmine wants to know more about the Staffordshire Hoard that she loved last week on our museum trip. She is writing down some information in her notebook. I say she only needs to copy the URL to prove she found it. She asks what the point of this is if she doesn't read or use the information she was looking for. Can't argue with that.

Ibo says he would rather go to the museum to see it for himself because it is a 5-minute walk. I tell him to find out what time it opens then, and he says he knows that already because he asked one of the staff when he was there last week! Can't argue with that either.

Fay has decided to go back to the museum to take pictures of the jewels in the Staffordshire Hoard, so she doesn't need to look up anything about that. Instead, she wants to search for a bargain. I say that's a difficult thing to search for unless you know where the bargain is. Undeterred she types *Bargain* which does actually bring up a host of items along with a map of the local area showing where to purchase. She glances over her shoulder at me – is that a smug smile?

Sheena doesn't want to find anything.

Nancy wants a recipe. She takes a photo so she can make stuffed vine leaves at home. She doesn't need a URL for that.

Marie searches for jobs at Marks and Spencer and says writing down the reference numbers and looking up the new words is more important than copying the link.

When it comes to using the Get Help function, Ibo says he doesn't need to type Help because he doesn't have a problem.

Nancy wants to type 'How can we help the homeless?' No Nancy, it has to be a computer problem!

I get round to Henry's computer and his evidence document is empty.

"Henry where's yours? Have you done it yet?"

"No"

I carry on having a conversation across the room with him as I check the other screens. He's also checking screens on his side of the room.

"Well make sure you finish yours before you help anyone else."

"No next week. I need to help with this one because password doesn't work so she cannot to save."

"No *this* is the week for completing this unit."

"I do it in my home and email to you."

"No Henry. You're supposed to do it here so I can see you do it by yourself!"

As I finish my sentence, I realise the absurdity of what I've just said. I stop, turn round and Henry is already looking at me, smiling. I shake my head smiling back at him and turn back to Jo's screen. I don't mention his web search again and he doesn't ever do it.

When my frustration hits its peak, I stop all activity.

We use the remainder of the lesson to discuss the volunteer application forms that were delivered to the class earlier with a message of encouragement for all to apply. I figure I might

as well help them with something they actually need so we talk about potential posts and the skills they could offer. Interestingly, no one mentions their first language as a skill.

* * *

After class, I tell Henry that I've spoken to my manager about the kind of role he could volunteer for. She wants him to work with the marketing team for job experience rather than volunteering in the classroom or doing translation. His face brightens with this news, and I explain what this might entail. I give him a form to complete at home and he jokes with me:

“This one I *can* do in the home”

“At home, yes you can... very funny”

“Ok now my ticket”

“What ticket?”

Showing me his phone, we talk about a journey he has planned. He has to attend an exam and he's worried about missing his connection if his first train is delayed. I've heard nothing about this exam until now.

I wonder if he's told Marie.

I learn it's for software design. Apparently used by Rolls Royce. He knows the software and is confident that all will be well as long as he can understand what the question asks in English.

He then unfolds a paper from his bag with the details and I see that this has cost him some money.

“Gosh is that just the VAT?”

“£40 the VAT, £247 the whole”

“Goodness, that's a lot, but it's worth it Henry to have a qualification like this I think”.

“Very difficult for me to save this money, maybe 3 months I save, no eating no nothing, just for example, cucumber and cheese and bread to save this money”.

Oh Henry. This takes me back to the time he said he was surviving on ‘just rice’ so he could buy his first computer in the UK. He continues repeating how he doesn’t know if he’ll be able to read the questions quickly enough and I continue responding with confidence boosters. About 5 minutes later, thinking our conversation is drawing to a close, I say,

“I wish you all the luck.” whilst crossing my fingers. Henry just laughs and shakes his head.

“It’s good luck to do this”.

“Good luck?”

“Yes, so I cross everything,” I say crossing my legs and arms as well.

Laughing he says, “Good luck yeah, very good”.

He doesn’t make any moves towards the door. He hasn’t finished.

After a few seconds’ silence he returns to the conundrum of not being able to understand the questions and he proceeds to tell me all about the exam. Better late than never.

20 minutes later he has talked himself into confidence. Rummaging in his bag he pulls out a paper bag and he hands over a huge chocolate chip cookie “This one for you”.

“No! I can’t take your food, you eat it,” thinking of the bread and cucumber.

“No because I have, in my room for tea, for coffee. You like, I know, very nice”

“Oh that’s very kind of you Henry. Thank you so much.”

“No, thank you for listen, for listen every time, and talk about me, about my life”

With a mouthful of biscuit, “it’s my pleasure Henry, my absolute pleasure”.

Virus News

February 26th Wednesday Lesson

In the classroom



Henry is absent today because he has his exam. He's emailed to tell me, and I sent him some crossed fingers. Along with his message was an attachment that I couldn't quite believe – an instruction booklet for creating a pie chart in Excel.

There's a lot of sickness at school, teachers off, teachers ill but coming in anyway and many students with colds. Ibo has particularly nasty cough. I ask him if he's ok and he tells me five schools have closed. I ask him if he knows why.

Ibo: Big big problem this virus. Iran yesterday around 70 people die.

Louise: More, I think.

Ibo: More? This crazy.

We talk about the Deputy Minister for Health who was in the news last night; he has the virus. Ibo gets the news report on his phone to show me. It's in Persian but I see the images. He shows me the minister giving a conference and as he mops his brow, we discuss how



clear it is that he has a high fever. Ironic. The Minister for Health.

On a different table Jo and Fay are discussing other countries where the virus has spread. They say how it is getting difficult to buy soap, sanitiser etc. I tell them I was surprised to see hand sanitiser on the counter in Starbucks this morning, not just in the toilet. Jo tells me her friend has ordered lots of boxes of masks off Amazon and the price has tripled since July. They ask about my daughter who has made it to Europe. I explain the irony of her coming all the way from China to escape the virus only for it to follow her here.

Jo has been to market and has brought in fruit to share. She offers me a strawberry, but my hands are covered in sanitiser, so I tell her I have to wait to wash – she empties half the packet into her bag of apples and gives me the rest for later. She offers around some grapes; no one is keen to take one today.

Fay comes in and I ask how she is. She's 50/50

Sheena coughs loudly. Ibo tells her to go home,

Nancy is worried about her family who are in Tehran.

Jo is annoyed that more is not being done at the airports.

Maisie comes late. She missed the bus because she was talking to her children in Iran. She smiles and says "they're ok, ok" but it is not a smile of joy.

Sheena puts one arm around Maisie's shoulder and gives her a hug.

Ibo coughs a really chesty cough and I jump back from the table because it is quite a sound. I cover my own mouth and in trying to make light of the situation, I joke that I need a mask. He says he has one and pulls it from his pocket. This is the first time I've seen a student with a mask, and it surprises me. Adam tells me he has one at home because his mum is very ill and catches everything. Ibo has apparently got several boxes of them; I wonder if he knows something that I don't. I haven't even thought about buying a mask. He is determined to make his point.

Ibo: We should all every people using it now, in bus, in train, in college, school, shopping, everywhere

Louise: To protect yourself and other people you think?

Ibo: Should the *government* say this, yes, er *government* should

Louise: How many of you have masks?

Most say they don't, including me, and Ibo starts shaking his head.

Ibo: Should be every people use.

Sheena: I went to pharmacy, and he says he is out of stock

Louise: Out of stock, really?

Sheena: Yes, pharmacy say no masks now.

Jo: You can order on Amazon but now more expensive.

Nancy: I order online

Louise: (*trying to make a joke*) Ibo you could make some money here, selling some of your masks

Ibo: (*seriously*) No, I don't sell.

Sheena: No you keep them, you might need them with your (*she forces a cough*)

Louise: Cough, he has a bad cough.

Ibo: I think maybe close all school.

Louise: Well we just have to watch the news everyday and follow what's happening here.

Ibo: Yesterday, government say we're looking close schools.

Adam: why, why close?

Ibo: (*sounding more exasperated*) Why? Why? Because this Coronavirus is very bad.

In the background the Iranian girls are now shouting over to Jo's table, and I hear the word worried several times. Flora says she's worried about her children and Jo tells her to buy sanitiser for them to take in their bags and to teach them to wash their hands. With mock indignance Flora says her children know how to wash their hands.

Health and Sickness

Wednesday 4th March



Henry is in early. He walks in looking bashful and I think that means the result can't be bad.

“Go on then, how was it?”

“Passed”

“Yay! Well done, congratulations Henry. I'm really pleased for you.” He shows me the proof on his smartphone, and I can see he has a really high score. “Henry this is an amazing result!”

“Good?”

“It's more than good” and I listen as he tells me about his experience of catching the train, speaking to the ‘examiner’ and the fact that he will definitely be progressing to the next level. This seems to have been such a confidence boost for him and I couldn't be happier. I would like to tell the class about his exam result, but he has told me off before for bringing up his achievements in front of the class and I have learned my lesson. However, at some point today he has a chat to Marcus about it. I take this a good sign.

The last of the latecomers amble through the door and Adam shouts out “Come on pull your finger out!”

I splutter out my mouthful of coffee, laughing at this unexpected outburst. The class join in almost chanting ‘Come on, pull your finger out’.

Louise: (trying to get a grip) What did you say?

Adam: From yesterday we learn come on, move and don't be lazy -this is pull your finger out

Louise: Oh did Gary teach you that? It is an expression but it's really not one of my favourites.

Adam: He told me teacher, very useful.

Louise: I bet he did

Everyone settles down and I introduce the aims for the first session today. We are going to talk Health and Sickness because it is cropping up more and more in general conversation in the café, at break, on the escalator... and I find students are searching for the same words again and again. We begin the class with the usual 'How are you?'. There are the common stock responses which is what I might expect but more recently, some of the class have started actually answering the question. Today's responses:

Henry - Very good, very good.

Adam - Fine thank you how are you?

Ibo - Not too bad.

Maisie - Fine.

Fay - I am very fine my Louise.

Tandy – yeah, I am good, no problem.

Marie - I'm ok, just tired.

Marcus - To be honest, I'm a bit stressed.

Flora - I am ok, ok, but I am worried with the schools.

Nancy - I am ok, I don't sleep very good but ok.

Sheena - My backache is very bad.

I give them space to expand if they want to. Marcus is stressed and fed up with the traffic and the parking in his area. Sheena's recurring lower back pain is making sitting down uncomfortable and she takes this chance to ask if I mind if she gets up and walks around

sometimes. Of course, she can. I notice she has a support bandage on her wrist but she doesn't mention this, so I don't ask. No one else wants to elaborate.

Abby is not here yet- she's usually late. And my response is usually to shout something sarcastic about buying a watch. I've been meaning to talk to her about it but I'm so pleased when students do arrive that it seems wrong to have to challenge a lack of punctuality. Ruth now saunters in and without a mention of the time I ask:

Louise: Did you notice anything different when you came up the escalator?

(Ruth shakes her head so Marcus answers)

Marcus: Yeah, this liquid

Adam: It's soap I think.

Henry: No, not soap, is antibacterial.

L: Yeah it's hand sanitiser, antibacterial liquid to clean your hands. They put it there on Monday and first thing in the morning I caught somebody having a bath in it!

I do an impression of him lathering himself in this sanitiser which the students find amusing. He wasn't the only one I've seen dripping in the stuff either. We discuss how much to use. I say it's quite precious and we have to be careful with it. Ibo has his own.

As I bring up the PPT with images of people suffering some kind of ailment, there is a rush to get mobiles out to take pictures. We digress on respecting people's privacy and then begin. It is a lesson that is so familiar in the course books of many a language classroom, but this particular topic does not really feature in ESOL for Work curricula so the novelty of it is well-received.

For each ailment I learn something new .

Chicken pox: I tell them how I caught chicken pox on holiday at the age of 14. It was embarrassing at the time, I refused to go to the beach, and I was left with ugly scars. This prompts talk about other scars we are left with from operations. Nancy has had keyhole surgery.

Asthma: We do a count of how many of us have asthma. We show our inhalers and compare colours. We discuss the price of prescriptions and I tell them you can buy Ventolin (the blue one) without prescription in Spain for just over £2. Marcus is concerned about whether this is legal. Flora talks about her problems getting repeat prescriptions for her children and she

spends too much time at the GP. Flora's son has had a bad asthma attack. She says with confidence that Coronavirus is dangerous for asthmatics.

Diabetes: Adam's mum has Type 1 which is why he has to be careful and wear a mask. Jo has Type 2. She never said. She is disappointed with herself because she is not disciplined enough to exercise and watch what she is eating.

Arthritis: Sheena's mum has arthritis. She is concerned because she is now getting pain in her joints. Jo has something special from China which is good for arthritis. She will bring it tomorrow.

Lupus: Lupus is not at all what I thought it was – I had taken a cough syrup called *Lupituss* (or something like that) so I presumed I knew. It's nothing to do with a cough. Flora explains what it actually is because now I learn, she 'was' a nurse. She didn't mention that in her tutorial. Adam Googles and finds a picture of the rash you might get with this condition which he walks round showing everyone.

Meningitis: I say that this is something that usually affects younger children but sadly there was a teenage girl who died from this the last school I worked in. Looking towards those with children, Flora explains the symptoms focusing on the stiff neck and how to recognise the rash.

Lyme Disease: Adam knows it's from 'little spiders' and he does the fastest web search to show us a picture. We talk about pets carrying them and the dangers of ticks going into your skin. Fay gets confused with mosquitos and malaria and Adam thinks that in comparison, 'Corona' is less dangerous than malaria. I didn't know how to spell this - Henry points out it is written with a Y. Thank you Henry.

TB: I explain this is something my grandma survived, and we discuss how and why it has made a comeback. We compare scars from the BCG vaccine. Marie is convinced she hasn't had this because she can't find a scar. Nor can Tandy. Flora tells us TB can develop into a form of meningitis.

Eczema: Lifting up my sleeve I show them my rash. We talk about how it seems that people who get allergies often get asthma and eczema as well. Adam and Fay question whether I should be in school and are surprised that is not contagious.

And the stories keep coming.

In spite of huge potential for the pessimism, today's class feels light-hearted and congenial. Humorous interjections pepper the discussions and allow us to laugh with each other. We laugh about the way 'the English' see just a hint of sun and they are out with shorts and no top, lobster-pink from sunburn, so painful and self-inflicted. Adam says you might as well put yourself in an oven. And because the pictures I've drawn are a bit ambiguous, Adam thinks the image for 'stomach ache' is 'disabled' and he suggests I take drawing lessons.

We discuss broken bones, and Maisie tries to explain what happened to her. We ascertain that she fell into the gutter. She was cycling and slipped off the pavement getting her foot stuck in the wheel - both legs were broken. She lies on the floor to show us how her legs went in opposite directions. This puppet-like demonstration prompts great hilarity. We all agree it's dreadful but the way she lies there looking double jointed sparks spontaneous laughter. Marie fell from the second floor and broke an arm and a leg but on opposite sides of her body. Adam broke a leg and arm on motorbike and ended up under a bus. He also treats us to a demo and Jo remarks he should be in action movies. I tell them about the only thing I've ever broken, my thumb, when a horse threw me over his head into a brick wall. Henry had his nose broken playing football: 'my friend is very big and big shoe on me, my face, in goal.' But the highlight of my day is when we are considering the difference between runny/running nose. Out of nowhere Henry shouts out louder than he has ever said anything at all: 'Runny egg!'

* * *

During break, Abby takes this opportunity to tell me why she is often late. She has a medical problem. It's a kidney problem and she's had blood in her urine. She takes vitamins, iron tablets and other medicine because she can't eat properly. She walks slowly, gets dizzy easily, gets throbbing in her head. She was rushed to hospital two weeks ago because of low blood pressure and she worries that she has 'very weak blood'. She's not supposed to have tea or coffee, but she doesn't like drinking anything else. She has to take her children to school but cannot rush afterwards. Because she can't move quickly, she just phones reception every day with the same excuse and she feels really bad.

I don't get these messages. I feel awful because I am constantly throwing comments at her for arriving late. I thank her for sharing with me and say now that I know, there is no need to keep

calling reception because it's stressful. Later, when I communicate to my line manager that I'm making these allowances, it is suggested that if Abby cannot arrive on time, she should attend a later class or return to lessons when she is fully recovered. I am bitterly disappointed with this response.

Marie waits for Abby to leave and then confides that she thinks her son is not really ill but has learning difficulties. She is worried that he has problems with concentration, that he is 'not developed, he doesn't have attention, forgets very quickly, doesn't hear, doesn't remember. He's not even walking properly, like he doesn't have balance.' She is comparing him to her younger son who knows more and catches on very quickly. She has changed 3 schools because the teachers keep telling her it's because he can't speak English. But she has a feeling, a mother knows her son. She wants him tested but the schools say no. I suggest she goes to her GP and explains the symptoms as she just did to me.

* * *

After break the learners come in and they are still talking about symptoms of Covid. Flora says she's going to lock herself in the house if it comes to Birmingham and she shouts over in my general direction,

Flora: Why they don't close the schools?

Louise: Because they don't think it's serious enough yet, it causes panic doesn't it? People get scared and start doing stupid thing things, like people going shopping and buying the whole supermarket, all the toilet roll.

Flora: but the children is sick quickly and they sitting together and spread very easily

Louise: True but there's no evidence that children are being badly affected at all, at the moment it's older generations.

Henry: People are already sick.

Louise: Yeah, people who already have problems with their heart,

Henry: Cancer. People not strong.

Louise: Yeah, what do we call that when your body can't fight disease, a virus and you catch everything? ... that system in your body that fights.

Fay: Circulation system?

Henry: No, blood this is.

Sheena: Stops you get sick, system fight virus.

Nancy: Imm, immune, system of immunity

Louise: Yeah, your immune system. Some people have a very weak immune system

Henry: Vitamin C is very good for this

Louise: It is Henry. If you get everything, you know colds, coughs, sickness then maybe you have a weak immune system so what can you do to make it strong, stronger?

Adam: I have the multivitamins,

Henry: and garlic

Louise: Garlic? is it?

Ibo: for Corona?

Henry: No for your healthy.

While they are arguing about whether cheese can give you a headache, I ask Henry to come and sort out the PPT for our introduction to Excel. Henry has produced an instruction booklet for creating a pie chart in Excel and next week we will use this for my lesson observation. He is aware that we will have visitors, but he doesn't know who they are and he doesn't ask. I just tell him they are interested in how our team teach teaching will work because they are trying to set up this volunteer scheme and would like to see how a learner can assist a tutor. This is partially true; while my manager has to be there as my mentor for the teaching qualification, she is also very keen to observe Henry at work as she has him earmarked for the marketing department. But for today, it's just a case of orientation so we go over the basics.

* * *

I'm talking and Henry is demonstrating. We show examples of what Excel is used for and Ibo comments that this will be very useful. Throughout the session, Henry looks comfortable in his role.

Louise: all cells have names so what do you think the name of this cell is? *(No one answers and Henry who is now perched on the edge of the teacher's table, folds his arms smiling)*

Louise: Is it called Peter? Or Ibo? or Abby? *(Henry gives a quick burst of laughter)*

Marcus: No no, is maybe H7

Louise: Brilliant yes. Have you used this before?

Marcus: Long long time ago but I don't remember well. it's very useful for my job so I need to remember

Louise: What job was that?

Marcus: I had my own company, construction company.

Well, Marcus has never mentioned this before.

Excel is a resounding success. Who knew. As we are discussing next steps at the end of the session I remember to ask about the volunteer application form.

"Did you send it?"

"No" Head down, he busies himself shutting down Sheena's computer as she has forgotten to log herself out again. I wait a couple of seconds and not to be deterred,

"Are you going to send it?"

"I don't where to send?"

"Give it me and I'll give it to the manager."

"Louise can I print one thing?"

Thinking it's his application I say there's no need to print, he can just email it.

"No, not for this, for me"

"Yeah sure, you'll need to email it to yourself first."

He taps a few keys and bounces over to the printer to retrieve his papers. "I have it!" he declares.

"In my country, this is my wish, wishes to give certificate about this software". Beaming from ear to ear, he hands over the certificate for his exam. I congratulate him, fuss over the information on the papers and tell him how proud I am of him.

"In my country we haven't place for give this exam." He asks for a plastic wallet and puts them carefully inside. "And today I talk with Marcus and he tell me he wants to learn this software"

"Is this the kind of thing you could teach him? He's clever and fairly literate on the computer."

"He's clever yes. But I don't know." I leave it there. He packs up his bag and I get the feeling he hasn't finished yet.

"First time, when I arrive, examiner come and see my English speaking no good, examiner told me 'this exam is very difficult I know so er maybe you can't pass erm this exam. But you can try for next time' and he tell me 'I can't help you but if you can't understand question, you can't use phone and things. You can have just one paper and one pencil. If you have a problem, call me I come to you.'"

At this point his mouth, indeed his whole face breaks into the biggest Cheshire cat of a grin as he finishes the story almost laughing.

"After start, I am going very very quickly, going going going and finish quickly. After I say finish, examiner come and see my score and he confused".

He makes a confused face and laughs.

"He check again and again and he understand my score and he say 'well done well done, it's very good'. Then he tell me I can apply for next level and maybe I can find good job in Jaguar"

"Oh wow! That is something."

"But my English good you know. If I can speaking, I can apply for Jaguar Land Rover and Rolls Royce!

What a difference a piece of paper can make.

“I think we need to think about future. For example, now I have a little money, in outside I want to drink a coffee and say to myself ‘Henry no please save your money because you need money’ ok? And every time I save my money, money, money for future...for what?”

“Good question – for what?”

“I need to live I need to have life”

“Enjoy your coffee, absolutely, I agree”

“To travel for example, you can everyday stay in UK and haven’t any travel ok? But you need to travel”

“Yes that’s what I think. I want to travel”.

“Louise, I think you need to travel to Iran”

“Now, no!” He laughs and says of course not now

“No but after finish Corona in summer”

“Yeah, maybe next year”. He leaves the room with spring in his step saying he will write me a plan.

Priorities

Wednesday 11th March

Henry and I team teach the Excel activity: Create a pie chart. The observer showed her appreciation for Henry's role in sections of her feedback. But our Excel achievements take a back seat in class today because we find out at break time that Nancy's brother-in-law in Tehran has contracted Covid 19.

Creating pie charts in Excel doesn't seem to matter much after that.

I learn in April that he didn't make it.

"A good range of learning opportunities with a variety of tasks planned and delivered. Using pie chart with ethnicity supports learners as it is related to form filling and gives them opportunity to share their own with peers. You have enabled a peer to help you provide details of how to use excel. This gives the learners opportunity to value their peers and gives the individual a boost."

"Learners are motivated by the resources and activities which assists with positive attitude towards learning".

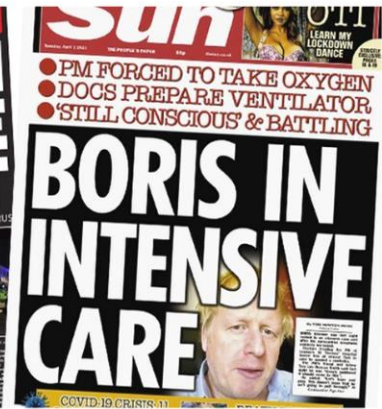
"A learner has created an Excel sheet which you team teach. Learners are highly engaged in this activity. They appreciate the information you and your learner are sharing."

"Both you and your digital learner support individuals as they try to create a pie chart. Those learners who have difficulty are encouraged to try and help is provided. This **links well with employability** as the digital skills are highly appropriate. I liked the fact that you challenge yourself and your learners in class."

In the papers - March 2020



In the Papers - April 2020



How does this work?

April 13th

ZOOM

Our first Zoom class together. It's like a pantomime.

Louise: Marcus, turn your microphone on, no that's off, I can't hear you. I. can't. hear. you. ...have you checked the sound on your laptop...oh he's gone again...Marcus can you hear me?...turn your camera on if you can hear me...No?

Louise: Who is the telephone number?...Speak to me! Turn your camera on, I don't know who you are... You need to write your name so every time you connect I know it's you

Louise: Sheena turn your microphone on. I can see you talking but I can't hear you at all. Henry tell her please, tell her to turn her microphone on.

Henry: She don't know. You need a paper to show how they turn the microphone.

Louise: There is one. It's on your course page. Everything you need is on the course page but some people are finding it difficult to actually get to the course page so I'm gonna show you today.

Louise: Who is this coming now?

Fay: Hello! How are you my Louise!

Louise: Fay hello! I'm very well turn your camera on!

Fay: Wait a minute

Louise: Yes I'm waiting! We're all waiting...ok that's better. I need to see that happy face. We're waiting for one more face...come on Ibo...

Louise: Who's got their tele on? I can hear ... if anyone has the tv on in their room ...or is it the radio...if anyone is listening to the radio turn it off, or turn your microphone off

Louise: Is that a cat? Did I just hear a cat? Oh no it's a baby, is that your baby Flora?

Flora: Yes, sorry, she's hungry and it's difficult because my husband sleeping

Louise: Oh ok, no don't apologise, just mute, you know turn off your microphone...you can type your answers and questions in the chat...have you done that with Gary?

Flora: Yes, I know. I turn off my camera.

Louise: No not the camera just the mic, the microphone

Flora: I feed my baby

Louise: Oh yes I see ok... no not the rest of you! Keep your cameras on...I need to see you are here, not making dinner!

Louise: Have you all accessed the online course?

Jo: Yes my course but I don't know how to open Padlet

Louise: Ok 'll show you in a minute...Oh hello Ibo and here comes Ruth...Ruth? Turn your camera on Ruth ...yes that's it. And your mic...say something...no I can't hear you.

Louise: Oh fantastic! Hi Marie and is that Maisie? Yes hello! You both need to turn your mic on to speak or press the space bar – Marie are you on a laptop there? That's not your name so I nearly didn't let you in.

Marie: Yes, good morning, yes my son's laptop.

Louise: Ok, well let me note that down then...Marcus you're back!... Marie you need to change your name ok? OK? Your sound? Ask the kids to show you.

Louise: I can hear children ...who is that? Fay is that coming from your house?

Fay: Yes my grandson.

A cheeky face pops into to the screen sideways and then disappears just as quickly. It's like the blind leading the blind. The only one who appears to be unfazed by this mode of communication is Henry. But still, he is not participating in this bitty conversation. He's tapping away engaged in something on another screen.

Welcome to Zoom!

No one mentions Coronavirus at all.

We continue with the same kind of difficulties until the end of term. Attendance is erratic and it is often due to students' having a room full of people all trying to use the same device.

Interaction takes a different turn as we negotiate the art of waiting turns and raising digital hands.

That's a whole new story for another time.

Final Revelation

May 15th

Zoom Room



Against the backdrop of lockdown headlines ESOL continues dribbling along online. I offer the students time for a one-to-one tutorial and Henry and Maisie are the only students who entertain the idea. Henry is delighted and he brings his own agenda: his application for Glasgow University.

He thanks me for the time and proceeds to show me around his room.

“I have a whiteboard, I have a computer everything, here is professional. Last time Gary saw that and say this is NASA room, no house”

“Why have you got 2 computers?”

“Because one day before erm before the erm the lockdown, very quickly every people erm in the UK buy for example food and tuna fish and everything, now I buy second monitor...because second monitor help me because now I’m working in erm new coding program.”

Tuna fish. Hilarious. He continues explaining something technical and covers the reason for his 2 monitors. He has diagrams on the whiteboard that he talks me through. When I’ve heard enough about the 2 graphics cards with 2 outputs, I ask about the coding. He tells me about Python and er C sharp, C++. He is engaging in online groups, writing problems to solve in English. He tells me this would be much more useful for ESOL students than the ICT Award. Again, I have to agree with him.

I am struck by how happy Henry seems locked in his busy ‘control room’. I am speaking to colleagues and students on a daily basis who bemoan the predicament we are in and here he seemed to be thriving – maybe not. But the conversation takes a turn for the worst when I ask him what he’s missed during lockdown. He mentions speaking practice.

I make several suggestions which he cuts down in flames and he tells me he has stopped trying to strike up a conversation with strangers, like the lady at the bus stop and the old man on the park bench who inched away from him when he sat down. He goes on to tell me about trying to contact a personal trainer on Instagram. Apparently, the response was: ‘I’m just for professional not for you...you are baby’.

This seems to have really upset him.

“I say ‘your conversation er no good’ because just I ask her one question you know, after one minute attack to you.”

I ask could he have made more of the opportunities to speak to classmates in English?

“I’m very quiet. I don’t like talking in the class for example before some time I was talking about mechanical engineering and erm about my skill ...ok?”

“Mmm”

“But in the class things are different, for example Fay no thinking about maybe university and others are thinking about learning for child, care for child and I think if I talking about my experience and other things...no good in this class”

“Why?”

“Because other students thinking about ...for example thinking I’m clever because I’m not clever, I know, I know I’m not clever and they think I’m clever and my life is good”

“What would make it better Henry? Would you like to teach again in the future?”

“In the UK?”

“Yeh or anywhere..., would you like to teach anywhere?”

“In the university ok I like teach about mathematic and about fluid dynamic but erm in the UK now I’m different thinking because now I’m in the pressure you know. I coming in the UK, I haven’t any job and in pressure, my English slowly maybe improve but I’m in pressure ok?”

“I think you would be a good teacher, Henry.”

He looks right at me and frowns.

Silence.

This time I don’t break it.

“No good. Because this, Louise, this is a bad. The first time for me I don’t like talking about this because maybe crying. I had a student in Iran ok? And this student every time in the university, because university different to school and everything, ok in the university for example in the middle of my teach, ok? The student tell me ‘my teacher, where you buy your shoes?’”

I laugh. He doesn’t.

“In middle of class you know and erm I was very crazy ok because just this guy, just this guy every time make problem for me and for other teachers and next time erm, because I’m writing in the whiteboard, and *he* make voice of sheep.”

“Like mbaaaaa, like that”

“Yeh that...after I turn and I say ‘*who is this?*’ and nothing ...nothing because I was very crazy, I say ‘if this guy now not stand up and say who was’...”

“Mmm”

“after I try to save the voice of every student in my head and one time more I find this guy and after I say ‘go outside of my class’. And he say ‘why?’ and I say ‘go outside I don’t like you sit down in my class. Go outside’. I fail this course for this guy ok?

He tells me other teachers also failed this student and because of the system in Iran, he failed the year and had to leave. Fast forward to his first year in the UK when he receives a picture of this student with a significant symbol from his friend and co-teacher.

“Ok. What does that mean?”

“This means this people die.”

He takes a deep breath in, holds it... and breathes out. He looks as if he is doing his best not to cry.

“Very bad time for me you know. After listen, I cry about...why he did this thing.”

“You never know what’s going on in people’s lives Henry...maybe he had many problems, maybe he was struggling”.

“Yeh, I think about this, if one people make every time a problem I can’t teach and other people learn erm other students and make voice and I can’t manage class and I should, I need to manage class ok? And this guy no change, every time make problem, so now is die.”

I’m not laughing now.

Adieu Henry

July 22nd

Zoom Room

Since 15th May I have only had email correspondence with Henry and that petered out at the beginning of June. I hear from his Progress Coach that he has been very ill and naturally I have been worried that he had Covid. I was then delighted when he eventually responds to

one of my weekly messages to ask for a Zoom meeting. It is good to see him looking so spritely in his ‘control room’ and he answers that he’s very well.

He steers the conversation to his resume and the letter he is going to send to a potential supervisor at the University of Glasgow. He usually waits for me to offer but today he ploughs straight in with:

“If you have er enough time, please I send to you to check it”.

His target was to build confidence and it seems he is on his way with that. The rest of our conversation moves through familiar territory as he looks for further reassurance and pushes to talk about what he declares is the passion of his life – all things aerospace. In envisaging his future life in Glasgow, we take a stroll through our past year together, revisiting his favourite topics and baffling me with more science.

Aerospace engineering, his PhD

Commercial planes, fighter planes, drones

Jaguar Land Rover, Rolls Royce

Nose cones, sheet metal, rudder, radome, electromagnetic waves

Cities with life, Glasgow, Edinburgh, the castle, the temperature

Danger, Iran, tapping phones.

Biased judges,

being made to confess

Nazarin

Dangers for Maisie returning to Iran.

His best friend and fellow uni teacher who is planning to join him in the UK

The work they plan to do together,

The shares I will buy in their company.

Losing touch with the friend he was thrown out the boat with

Loss.

Trust.

Stress.

Family.

His mother's white hair

His Speaking (again)

Teachers as role models

Teachers as friends.

That is last time I saw or heard from Henry.

Epilogue

Louise Dearden
To: [redacted]
Thu 2022-03-10 18:24

[redacted] @yahoo.com >
To: You
Thu 2022-03-10 11:20

Dear Louise,

First of all, accept my apology because I have not been in contact with you for a long time. I did not have your e-mail address because I lost my previous e-mail and tried to receive your e-mail from the reception of the [redacted] but they said they are not allowed. Today, I found your e-mail address in my Google account, and I hope this email address is active. I'm here with the good news that I was able to get an offer from the University of Glasgow.

And I'm currently applying for a PhD at the University of Southampton and if I can get the offer, I will definitely choose this position.

I will be happy to know about you, please and hope to see you again.

Best regards,
H

Windows taskbar icons: Start, Search, Task View, Teams, Edge, File Explorer, Mail, Chrome, Task View, S, [redacted], P, W, T.

Chapter 7

Discussion:

Ethical encounters in ESOL

7 Ethical encounters in ESOL

This study concerns my lived experience in a dual role of educator and researcher in the context of ESOL education in the UK. It has explored the nature and range of encounters that make up the ESOL landscape and brought these to life in *The Novel*. These encounters are bound up with the ideological landscape in which ESOL spaces are situated; consequently, this shapes and limits identities and positions from which people are expected or allowed to speak.

This discussion outlines the key findings following my participation in classroom life with Henry and his classmates. In line with the study's theoretical and methodological frameworks, I offer impressions of ESOL encounters through my eyes. Using the previously presented data I adopt a phenomenological lens to discuss specific themes that collectively build a set of answers and propositions in relation to the research questions. I reflect on the way identity is enacted in an ESOL classroom that is unavoidably subject to ideological discourse and the labels this imposes on migrant learners and myself. I discuss how such identities are resisted and how alternative identities are (re)claimed. I look at languaging practices in classroom interaction and how meaning-making takes priority over the learning of functional structures. I tune into ethical moments and suggest what it is that signals them as ethical. Following this, I turn attention to ESOL pedagogy; I discuss the value of working towards a pedagogy of encounter. I conclude with my reflections on the research experience, and I suggest implications for the ESOL sector and researchers working within the sociolinguistic domain.

As a reminder, the classroom comprises an eclectic group of individuals who feature as supporting actors in *The Novel*, but it is my encounters with Henry that take centre stage. The focus on Henry in this discussion reflects the key concern: ethical encounters between human beings and the potential for a pedagogy which pays attention to this.

7.1 ESOL identities: investments in social encounters

7.1.1 Ideological identity impositions: limiting investment in community relations and in educational and professional opportunity

Political and media discourse continues to frame migrant newcomers as a homogenous group who are a potential threat to the cultural stability, national security and unity of the country (Cooper et al., 2021). In 2004, the International Policy Institute claimed migrants were portrayed as 'dangerous criminals' with media reports suggesting 'Britain is under attack from migrants, particularly asylum

seekers and refugees' (p.42); political rhetoric suggests little has improved since then (Bulman, 2020). When public perception continues to be mediated by political rhetoric and persistent media scaremongering, it is unsurprising that migrants bear the brunt of community frustration, experienced as social prejudice, discrimination, verbal abuse and at the extreme end of the spectrum, racially motivated hate crime (GOV.UK, 2022; Cooke & Peutrell, 2019). This kind of discourse reinforces particular identities for refugees, particularly in light of the fact that migrant voices are occluded in media reports. This kind of occlusion results in a skewed portrayal of migrant identities swaying public sympathy and opinion in specific directions thus affecting the way newcomers are received in local communities.

The first problem this provokes for ESOL learners (mostly with migration histories) is that they are often positioned negatively by local English-speaking residents who may then be reluctant to engage in conversation. This not only reduces opportunities to use and practice English for routine interactions, but it also removes the chance to build relationships, with neighbours for example. As Court (2017) has observed, if ESOL education is preparing learners to integrate and contribute to community life, there seems little point if that same community do not open their doors.

Encounters with Henry demonstrated that he was attuned to these political and media representations of migrants. He attributed people's less than welcoming attitudes, to news reports which he felt misrepresented the reality of migration experiences as well as manipulating the way Iranians in particular are perceived. He felt the media present 'Iran' and 'Iranians' as one and the same, united in supporting the ideals of the current regime. Not only was he conscious of his position as an illegal channel-crosser, but he was also sensible to connotations attached to the label 'Iranian'. He had several awkward moments with members of the community who, he tells me, based their approach to him on such media representation. His engagement with a woman at the bus stop is cut short when she learns he is Iranian (*The Lorry*, p. 148).

"Finish together. Just look me like this" he obliges with *the look*, "don't speak with me after".

"Why do you think she did that?"

"I don't know, because News every time speak about Iran, Iran. *Iran*, one word, one word you know. BUT Iran name, country, people, country different to people.

There may be any number of reasons for the woman closing down the conversation, but this is how Henry perceives it. Flam and Beauzamy (2008, p. 221) investigated non-physical hurt experienced by migrants who routinely 'confront different forms of rejection that can be intimidating, humiliating and incapacitating'. They suggest that repeated rejection through hostile non-verbal communication, particularly a powerful human gaze, leads to identities of inferiority and a fear of never being

accepted. Henry demonstrating the woman's *look* suggests he was affected. It is highly likely that Henry is being positioned in a restrictive way before the conversation begins. For example, the invigilator of his software exam presumes he will have difficulty reading the exam; when enquiring about joining a gym over the phone, the instructor calls him 'a baby' because he can't speak properly; a man on a park bench blatantly ignores his attempts to make small talk.

The second issue created for ESOL learners concerns the implications inherent in the political rationale for insisting on the learning and use of English to promote integration. The assumption underpinning this line of argument is that migrants are resisting this obligation. Consistent with findings from multiple studies in the literature (Cooke, 2006; Court, 2017; Macdonald, 2019; Peutrell, 2019; Sidaway, 2021; Simpson, 2011) I observed how, rather than resisting the 'obligation' to learn the national dominant language and integrate into local communities, the students in this study welcomed the classes and were disappointed to be limited to just 9 hours per week. Students' reasons for investing in learning included their desire to join local and imagined communities (Maisie joins Birmingham Opera Company; Emma is trying to build enough confidence to join the parents' club at her children's primary school; Jasmine wants to sing with an English-speaking choir). Seemingly in agreement with ESOL policy objectives, Henry is acutely aware of the necessity to improve his competence in speaking, not only to carry out routine living but also to build relationships at his church and to ensure his progress to higher education. He tells me at any opportunity how his poor speaking hampers his ability to function as an independent adult in all areas of life.

What students *did* resist were the identity impositions that ensued as a result of being labelled deficit speakers and therefore not able to participate meaningfully in UK life, including community groups and the workplace. Their view of the situation was seen through a different lens as they reported difficulties maintaining, even beginning, social relations within the community. Language learning through immersion in a country where it is spoken is frequently posited as being the best way to develop communicative competence due to the rich linguistic affordances available in local communities. However, ESOL research points to the contrary (Simpson, 2015). Benefitting from these linguistic affordances relies on two givens: firstly, that it is the responsibility of migrants to instigate contact; secondly, that locals are accepting of these unfamiliar identities in their communities of practice.

As with Henry's example of the woman at the bus stop, many students explained frustration at trying to communicate socially, for example with neighbours or other parents from school. Macdonald (2019, p. 185) recognises the paucity of positive encounters learners have with English-speaking locals

but at the same time she challenges 'the naïve concept' that social relations can be improved only through increased fluency and social capital. Joanne provides an example of this when she brings an iPad showing photos of her neighbour parking in her space. It is a constant source of upset for her and has little to do with her ability to communicate in English. Positive neighbourly relations are thought to help relieve some of the post-migration stress that newcomers arrive with. Court's (2017) study highlights how a lack of contact with neighbours leads to a sense of isolation particularly for those whose cultures (African countries in her study) depend on a support network of family and a close-knit neighbourhood. In the interests of civic responsibility, Macdonald (2019) argues, locals should then perhaps be the ones to reach out rather than assuming newcomers have sole responsibility.

Embedded in the ideological assumption that migrants and refugees are reluctant to learn English or integrate is the notion that they are content to claim benefit rather than work. Being unemployed and therefore dependent on benefit is an identity that is strongly resisted by the students in this study. As widely reported in the literature, finding employment is essential for promoting wellbeing and moving from dependence to autonomy (Salvo & de C Williams, 2017). Students frequently expressed their desire to learn English and gain employment, meaningful or otherwise. Nigel for example is desperate for 'just any job'. Marie was a chef but would do any job to be back in the kitchen where she can work her way up. Although Henry resists the option of taking any job if it means settling for underemployment, he dislikes taking benefits and is adamant he will offer free computer classes in future to give back to the community.

Structural barriers, imposed identities and general consequences of post-migration stress are what trouble ESOL students, not having to learn the national language and integrate. Research in ESOL contexts consistently highlights the barriers that limit access to language education. There are also hurdles that prohibit regular attendance once assigned a course: travel costs, childcare, physical and mental health issues, lack of permanent accommodation (Simpson, 2015, 2019). Housing and home-life also hinder further engagement with studies beyond the classroom. Besides these concrete obstacles, ideological discourse encourages students to limit their own identities and options. Constant foregrounding of the fact that they lack the most necessary skill (English language) to lead a meaningful social, personal and professional life overlooks the skills that migrants bring to their host country. This was the case for many students in this study who discounted previous education and work experience. Flora, for example, was a nurse which only came to light in a lesson on health and sickness added to the schedule in response to the Covid-19 outbreak. This was not mentioned in her tutorial and when I questioned her about this, she said the job centre had told her she could not do that job here.

As ESOL for Work students, Flora and her classmates were claiming benefits and had been referred by their case workers at the job centre. However, these case workers operate within the same ideological landscape and had their own limits and impositions so were not at liberty to indulge students' future identities. A priority at the time was to move those claiming Job Seekers Allowance (later Universal Credit) into employment as soon as possible rather than offering retraining or further study. This required an English level of Entry 3 or above which meant learners were urged to progress rapidly through the ESOL Entry levels or risk losing both their funded course and their benefits. For this reason, attendance was strictly monitored and red lights on their eTrackr signalling poor attendance and engagement were a real concern when we checked this weekly in IT sessions.

However, despite mandating attendance, case workers would still send students for job interviews (usually cleaning or picking and packing) during lesson hours thus sending contradictory messages. The result was that students tended to foreground learner identity above all others labelling themselves as 'Entry 2' and positioning themselves reflexively (Davies & Harre, 1990) in terms of traditional conceptions of identity. These are often seen in terms of dichotomies: good/bad, confident/anxious, motivated/unmotivated, autonomous/dependent, active/passive. While these binary labels have been persistently challenged in applied linguistics (e.g. Darwin & Norton, 2017), Braden and Leone-Pizzighella (2022, p. 2) suggest they are 'often invoked in moment-to-moment discourse in learning contexts'. Students have their own ideas of what it means to be a 'good student' for example, as will their tutors. Gee (2001) suggests that receiving a positive identification like *punctual student* gives students options to take on additional available identities such as *conscientious learner, good student, teamplayer*. But by the same token, once labelled in negative terms, it is difficult to shake an unwelcome identity. This kind of message has been delivered to teachers to ensure they do not cast students in a particular light but in Henry's case, he assigns his own label.

"I am very bad student I know. If, when someone come late to me, in class or or anywhere erm like if someone half hour late it er make me very angry. And now I come late, and I leave early. I am very bad student."

I witnessed how Henry was adversely affected by the limitations of imposed deficit identities, and how they restricted a wider range of identity options he was seeking to (re)inhabit. As a refugee, he was not entitled to apply for university scholarships or student loans, yet his passion to pursue doctoral research in the field of aerospace engineering was intrinsic to his identity as an academic and a professional. Henry is not unique in outlining strong aspirations to enrol in higher education (Mangan & Winter, 2017) Around the globe, newcomer refugees frequently turn to education to counter distressing experiences of forced migration and career disruption, with varying degrees of success

(Baker et al., 2019; Shakya et al., 2010; Stevenson & Willott, 2007). Restoring a sense of 'self-continuity and self-sameness' is vital for self-worth (Lin, 2008, p. 202).

Operating within this ideological landscape sketched out by media and political discourse, ESOL spaces at meso and micro levels tend to perpetuate the imposition of deficit and restrictive identities through institutional policy and practice (Court, 2014). For example, students become potential employees, test-takers, scholars of British citizenship (Simpson, 2011). These positions are also reinforced by teachers, often unwittingly, who endorse these dominant ideologies and reproduce othering (Cooke, 2008). Peutrell (2019) reported that ESOL teachers thought low proficiency in English leads to vulnerability and 'the stigmatising association of poor speech with stupidity' (ibid, p. 54). This may be a valid concern considering Henry's experience of being called a baby over the phone. However, other views were unexpected.

For example, some teachers saw the wearing of the niqab as a symbol of students' desire to shun British society while others were wary of the students' multiculturalism and agreed with political rhetoric that their learners self-segregated in 'ghettos' and 'comfort zones' (ibid). Perhaps, yet more concerning was the claim that migrants cannot be 'valuable members of society' if they cannot communicate in English (ibid, p. 53). Peutrell's (2019) study does not appear to be representative of ESOL teacher views or experience in the literature where the overriding sentiment is frustration at having to follow a prescriptive curriculum that limits students' options and treats them as victims (Chamorro et al., 2021). Nonetheless, there is no assurance that the students have not met with such attitudes in previous classes and may be coming with preconceptions of my identity as a teacher that will enforce monolingual, neoliberal ideologies thereby downplaying their multilingual, multicultural identities. On meeting Henry and his classmates, I have no idea whether this is an identity I am being ascribed. Thus, students' experience of past social encounters in the community, including adult education, will mean they too will impose identities on those they meet in new social relationships. I am conscious of this and try to counter any potential impositions by presenting myself as a teacher, but also fellow human being, who values our differences rather than someone who tries to reduce them.

ESOL Teachers, who are co-opted into the act of delivering neoliberally informed curriculums are then also subject to imposed identities. As agents carrying out national policy and facilitating learner progression, they are positioned variously as gatekeepers, holders of knowledge, speakers of the 'required' language, professionals, experts. They are brokers of citizenship charged with promoting 'British values' and they are also trainers in employability (Peutrell, 2019). These identities are

enforced at the institutional level through accountability regimes which hold tutors responsible for attendance, punctuality, setting and achieving of targets as well as student success in the relative assessment models. Teachers are not always content to be positioned so and are often conflicted in how they prioritise tasks and what they find suitable ESOL activities. For example, although Sarah is a tutor who draws on her arts background to add creativity to our curriculum, she too felt the pressure to 'finish the past tense' rather than take her learners to the BOC workshop in January, as did her colleague who told me his students preferred to do 'some real work'.

In this study, I weave among a range of subjectivities - my responsibility as an ESOL professional to uphold institute rules and regulations, my identity as an "emancipatory authority" (Giroux, 1988, cited by Norton, 2000, p. 145) with the power to legitimise marginalised learners (Morita, 2004) or those who struggle to participate in discussions and my identity as a caring, understanding human being who can see that rules sometimes need bending. I am also conscious of my position as a white, English-speaking female with privilege. Speaking from this position, I cannot begin to know what migrant learners encounter on a daily basis, yet part of my job description is to advise and prepare them for a future life. However, although cognisant of my position as the person with the most difference in the room, it in no way prepares me for the honest positioning I receive in encounters with Henry.

7.1.2 Imposing identities

The relationship built between Henry and myself is set within the ideological landscape of the ESOL classroom which forces specific identity positions on us both. We also have our own definite ideas of what the roles of teacher and student entail as well as the kinds of activity and materials we expect to engage with in the classroom to help maintain these identities. When we meet, we are encountering a stranger to whom we unavoidably attach certain positions associated with these standard roles in an educational context, a context which also embodies expected rules, rituals and artefacts. We enter a figured world 'in which particular characters and actors are recognised, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others' (Holland et al., 1998). It is therefore a space that we both assume we understand.

For Henry it might be a familiarity that he is craving in the wake of huge upheaval in his life from every angle. He has spent his life in education in teacher and student roles. We are both aware of how we are positioned ideologically and socially so we expect certain power dynamics to be in play. However, neither of us fully meet the other's expectations; our storylines conflict (Davies & Harré, 1990). This is due to the personal identity projects we are both pursuing that may deviate from 'the norm'.

Therefore, we both need to deal with ideological impositions and expectations but also figure who we are in relation to one another as our relationship develops.

Meeting as strangers we recognise the face of other (Goffman, 1967) and play the game, performing identities that seem congruous with our roles. At least that is how I saw it at the time. For my part, I make reference to his diagnostic test, assign him to a group and suggest we discuss his goals later. In subsequent sessions, I continue to organise collaborative tasks, I ask students to share life experiences related to class topics and to share future goals and aspirations as well as short-term targets. This is all fairly predictable behaviour for an ESOL instructor and cited as 'good practice' within the adult education centre observation team, although I do note at this point that language education research would suggest a critical approach be adopted when citing best practice (Mayne, 2015; Shepherd, 2017). Best practice in one situation is not necessarily best practice in a different context or even within the same group on a different day.

Perhaps not so well endorsed is how I indulge their going off topic, use of first languages and contributing to class discussion without hand-raising. Henry appears to take issue with my tolerance of random personal anecdotes from his peers and will often get out his grammar book in protest. This is a book he bought himself when he realised that explicit grammar lessons were not part of the curriculum. This fact along with his discomfort with most of my methods suggests a collision in our expectations of tutor and student roles. I expect students to take up identities as keen participators and hopefully collaborative learners, especially when self-chosen targets focus on communicative competence. As I engaged reflexively with the data and my journal entries, I was able to see how I impose my ideas of what that looks like in practice through management of tasks. In the classroom, Henry resists whatever is not in alignment with his expectations, and this provokes my irritation on numerous occasions. But it is in our after-class chats that he is able to voice his objections to the way I am foisting learner identities on him; I flesh this out in following sections.

For Henry's part, he manages initial impressions of himself in terms of behaviour and appearance when he arrives. Helping me to 'recognise' him as he wishes to be seen, he performs desirable image using front stage behaviour (Goffman, 1959). I had made assumptions about this late arrival joining the class three weeks into the term and my exasperation was tangible. However, Henry counters my expectations of a tardy newcomer, presenting himself as a suit-wearing professional carrying a briefcase that has seen some use. I am not expecting the formal handshake or business-like greeting. Bucholtz and Hall's (2005, p. 599) relational principle posits that for individuals to be positioned as alike, they 'must merely be understood as sufficiently similar for current interactional purposes'. Thus,

differences are downplayed while similarities viewed as salient to the current project of identity work will be foregrounded.

Despite the abundant differences between us and our circumstances, at our first meeting, Henry foregrounds a similarity: that we are both teachers, although he repeatedly describes his profession in the past tense. It is likely that Henry sees me as a member of the wider community of educators to which he once belonged and this is perhaps why he strives to create such an impression, to claim some kind of 'sameness'. This might also explain why he jumps at the chance to assist with IT on that first day, showing his support of a colleague in need but at the same time firmly establishing himself a capable assistant, thereby aligning his teaching skills with my own (in terms of IT, far superior to my own). In our after-class chat, there is a frame change (Goffman, 1974) and with this comes a change in tone and manner as Henry seems to relax and smile for the first time in 3 hours. He seems pleased that I acknowledge his IT skills and even jokes that I need him. Despite acknowledging that he has been placed in an Entry 2 class with students who have much weaker literacy skills, Henry refuses to be moved to a higher level. This act of agency suggests that he has experienced something within this new *frame or figured world* which will allow him to figure his identity differently and bring him closer to what Lederach and Lederach (2010, p. 63) call *at-homeness*. This relational metaphor encapsulates the sense of care, love, wellbeing, acceptance, familiarity and security that human beings feel when they are at peace. The capacity to feel *at home* is lost in the wake of violence which destroys a home, in some cases both literally and figuratively. The authors argue that for people who have suffered trauma and loss, regaining the feeling of *at-homeness* symbolises renewed trust and hope. In further intimate encounters with Henry, I believe I am establishing myself as a teacher who has his best interests at heart, reiterating that I will do my best to help him achieve his ultimate goal of entering higher education. However, Henry surprises and upsets me a little by imposing alternative identities on me.

Returning to the example of the woman at the bus stop, it seems Henry includes me in the people that would be swayed by these media reports and suggests that having a relationship with Iranian people helps to re-write the narrative (*The Lorry*, p.148)

“...news, every time speak about Iran, Iran. *Iran*, one word, one word you know. BUT Iran name, country, people, country different to people. You now erm Iranian student, you have Iranian students, now maybe you think good about Iran”.

At the time, I am a little offended by this as I have spent my working life cultivating an identity of a teacher who is caring, critically aware and not susceptible to media sensationalism and stereotyping. I tell Henry I have *never not* thought 'good about Iran', but it seems he has labelled me. Over the

course of our ESOL lessons he maximises any opportunity to reshape my inferred impressions, showing me all things positive related to his beloved Shiraz in a bid to help me reimagine the media narrative: places, maps, stories, people. The fact that Henry makes assumptions about me based on broad social categorising and that he takes steps to resist categories foisted on him, shows that he has *some* power in this educational context and his life in general.

Henry imposes identities on others which often surprises me. Although he can describe the negative impact that identity impositions have on *his* life, i.e., loss of status, professional identity and sense of social belonging, I find myself seeing Henry as a little judgmental in his victimising of others. In the exchange below there is an awkward tension between Henry's provision of tea and coffee as a well-meaning act to engage and offer support for the local homeless, and on the other hand his positioning of them as solely responsible for their situation due to addiction. In the same way that people make generalised assumptions about *his* life, being a refugee, he voices stereotypical notions about being homeless suggesting he has little idea of the complex histories of people who find themselves on the street. He juxtaposes this with what it means to be *normal*, an identity which he imposes on me (*The Pandemic*, p.178).

"Sunday me and my friend and 3 person of church outside help to homeless, tea coffee ... I think this persons can change but need clever person speak with them about god about life because these people can change to normal person"

"What's normal Henry? Are you normal? Am I normal?"

"Yes, because you have a good life".

"Is that normal? Is it? ...ok"

"Yes, because you sleep in your home and you have a child and you have a goal and you try to reach erm...erm ok...but these people don't think about anything appointment, don't think about anything...every time drinking alcohol and erm erm ...drug and you know".

I find this quite disturbing at the time and resist this positioning on their behalf. I challenge his sweeping generalisations, but I am equally affronted about his comment on my 'normal' life. This toing and froing of imposition and resistance is a fundamental aspect of our relationship which warrants further exploration in the section that follows. However, Henry is not the only student pursuing an identity project. Other students also claim space to negotiate and resist certain identities and this becomes apparent as I highlight Henry's behaviour.

7.1.3 Acts of negotiation and resistance

Despite the ideological impositions outlined in the previous sections, ESOL classes and relationships built as part of them can become spaces in which participants resist such imposed identities. I witnessed students constantly engaged in resisting, correcting, even re-writing their identities through classroom interaction. Rather than vulnerable victims, I observed autonomy and agency in the way students invested in certain tasks depending on their perceptions of usefulness. The ICT Award from February 12th is an example where students perceived the action of copying and pasting a URL to be of little significance if they did not take note of the information available to them on the web page. As Maisie points out she is very self-sufficient searching with her mobile; the issue is with trying to locate the document on OneDrive where she is to paste the URL. Students resisted the task in interaction with both Henry and I and we both had to agree that there were more useful lessons to be learnt in IT. This points to the pedagogical worth of such box ticking as well as the presumption that students with low proficiency in English cannot navigate the internet. There is also an assumption, perpetuated within the institute, that ESOL learners are oblivious to the world outside. This is an imposition that is fiercely resisted.

Political discourse persists in framing migrants as outsiders, without the 'correct' language or knowledge to be British citizens. Citizenship teaching and learning material then becomes a feature of ESOL. In addition, as part of the policy to improve community relations and social cohesion, 'British Values' are promoted in schools and the FE sector as guiding principles to live by; ESOL curriculums are deemed ideal spaces to deliver the message. In our institute these are not only taught explicitly (as is the rationale behind the Prevent Duty), but they are displayed in every classroom. Consistent with views in ESOL research (Court, 2017; Salvo & De C Williams, 2018), in this study implied identities are resisted in relation to these policy initiatives. First there is an implication that ESOL learners do not have 'the right' values since they are not British. This is regularly challenged by learners as exemplified by Fay: *'These are not just for British; these are for every people'*. The second presumes learners do not know what it means to be a citizen. In fact, students in this study frequently demonstrate identities of competence as citizens of the world. They are not only aware of news stories within the country, but their interest in worldly affairs also has a greater reach, greater than mine in many cases. There are many examples of their interest in belonging to a world beyond the UK: Fay knew the number of people who perished in the lorry; Adam had heard about Kobe Bryant's helicopter crash; Joanne reads about a Covid case in the area and challenges me when I think she is mistaken – she is not; Ibo is buying masks and hand sanitiser before I even consider the option; Ibo also explains the current government's controversial decision to allow Huawei to build part of the UK's 5G network; they all

debate the source of the virus – Sheena has used Youtube to extend her search for information and thinks it might be man-made; Ibo and Marcus explain the situation in Gaza.

Henry and I were no exception resisting and negotiating imposed identities in classroom interaction but also in our private chats. The way this was managed in each of those spaces is different and I return to more intimate encounters in the following section. In the classroom and beyond, Henry exercised his agency and resisted unwelcome identities a) by reclaiming cherished identities through counter-narratives b) by negotiating and performing alternative identities c) through participation in classroom activities.

Research has shown how the loss of cherished identities can lead to damage in one's self-concept and self-confidence (Wehrle et al., 2018). Henry spoke nostalgically about the life and status he had lost, which appeared to have significant effects on his self-worth. He seems determined to reclaim past identities which, if not lost, are at least seriously under threat. He seeks to establish himself as an educated professional and he sets out to forge an identity of competence in his field. He outlines this clearly on arrival at the institute when he completes a diagnostic writing test. He wants the reader to know 3 things about his professional status: that he had been a teacher in an Iranian university, that he was educated, that he had aspirations to continue his academic career in the field of aerospace engineering. Dissatisfaction with his current position was also made clear in the line, 'I'm not happy now because I can't go to university'.

These agentive moves come to be a signature of Henry's resourceful behaviour in pursuit of his ambition to complete a PhD and restore his sense of self. To reclaim past identities, he takes control of his life outside the classroom in a way that political discourse suggests migrants cannot. He makes sacrifices by prioritising the purchase of computer equipment and a software exam over the purchase of food. Twice he names different food he lives on rice, cucumber, bread and tuna fish. He trains himself for vocational qualifications that his current immigration status will not allow him to study in FE colleges, he enrolls himself for a software exam in an unknown place and makes travel arrangements, all at a cost he can barely afford. When Covid strikes, he sets up an impressive workstation at home and when we meet on Zoom, I am treated to a tour of his newly purchased equipment and devices, which Gary has noted looks like something from NASA.

Paradoxically, Henry seems to thrive during lockdown; while most students and teachers are struggling to adapt across the entire education sector, he is able to bring his imagined future firmly into focus with activities he chooses to focus on. He continues to take up the offer of tutorials and claims our private chats for furthering his own agenda. He steers conversations in directions that will answer his questions in relation to his goals, questions concerning procedures for applying to university,

contacting potential supervisors, choosing a high-ranking university. He also enlists my help to proof his CV as well as a journal article he has written. However, while these moments of agency move him in noticeably positive directions towards an ultimate future goal, they manifested quite differently inside the classroom where, exercising his agency for another effect entirely, his decisions and resulting behaviour stand in stark contrast to the identity of motivated professional he has sought to present in our private world.

Norton's (2001) research showed how student resistance manifested as non-participation. Three students were pushed to the extreme of withdrawing from their course. In two cases, this was attributed to the teacher's failure to validate identities (national and professional) in which these students were wholly invested. However, in the third case, it is precisely because the teacher *did* validate students' life histories that she dropped out. The student's investment was in an imagined community outside the classroom rather than the existing classroom community, so she showed little interest in the personal lives of her peers. This shows the complex nature of investment, and I witnessed similar complexity in Henry's participation and engagement.

Student engagement is a ubiquitous term in education models such as ESOL, that seek to promote neoliberal values. Gourlay (2015, p. 404) argues that it can be considered an ideology on its own, able to 'coerce individuals into subject positions in service of the ideologies of the more powerful'. It is a concept that embodies process, activity, interaction and collaboration and is a key marker in predicting student success. Signs of engagement are usually taken to include contribution to class discussion, participation in collaborative learning, displaying open body language, making eye-contact etc. Given that his chosen SMART targets are always related to improving speaking, building communicative competence and confidence, Henry provides little evidence of this in classroom life which is consequential for evidencing progress. He is often silent when there are opportunities to involve himself in group interaction. This silence is accompanied by body language that would suggest passivity, withdrawal, even apathy. For example, he removes himself physically from the group while they discuss the lorry, hunches his body, withdraws eye-contact and busies himself with his grammar book. He offers nothing to the group conversation about what kind of things they have lost. He also avoids the discussion about future goals with his 'talk partner', Nigel.

Interestingly, Nigel also resists being positioned in terms of goals and has his own way of rejecting the idea that an ESOL class is the place to map out an imaginary future trajectory. This can be seen through attention to the group's languaging practices as Nigel unwittingly finds himself at the centre of an interrogation. Like Henry he speaks in the past tense about his career in construction (*The Lorry*, p. 136).

Marcus: What you mean you don't have future goals?

Nigel: I never think where I see myself

Marcus: Don't you think where you be in future?

Nigel: No, I never think

Marcus: What about for your children?

Nigel: No

Marcus: Or for yourself, you know, your career, your life with family, healthy?

Nigel: No, I never (*he is smiling and shaking his head now because he has the attention of the room*)

Joanne: What about for your childs? You don't think?

Emma: (*from the next table*) Where you want to be in 3 years? you don't have wish

Nigel: Anywhere

Joanne: What here? London? And what job you do?

Nigel: Yeah I want job but just any job.

Jasmine: (*From another table*) Any job is not goal.

Marcus: You *have* career I think?

Nigel: Yeah I had. Just I want to working and I want to, to be... ALIVE!

Marcus: What about you?

Henry: Me? for what?

Marcus: (*reading from the board*) Where do you see yourself in 3 years?

Henry: I don't know, maybe here

Joanne: In Entry 2? still? Ha!

For Henry this open space where students can assume control from the usual conductor, asking questions and taking conversation in any unplanned, personal direction, is not a freedom he appreciates. While freedom to exercise agency in classroom interaction is often promoted as positive, affording opportunities for learning (Lytra & Møller, 2011), this freedom can also be feared as it represents chaos and uncharted territory. As evidenced by his behaviour, Henry does not respond positively, and this suggests that he has different expectations for the structure and content of this space.

Analysing a snapshot of a lesson like this, Henry's behaviour would suggest disengagement and by consequence the identity of unmotivated, non-invested student. However, as becomes clear in our after-class chats, there is more going on here than meets the eye. As Gourlay (2015, p. 410) points out, mainstream conceptions of student engagement prioritise the observable dimensions of participation while dismissing the 'private, silent, unobserved and solitary practices' that are rendered invisible in current observation models. She argues that the theorising of engagement should extend to sociomaterial understandings, with an acknowledgement of the presence of non-human actors in the flow of classroom practice. Through this lens, engagement could be understood as a situated practice within which a network of interacting materials and interactions give meaning to the figured world (Holland et. al, 1998). Recognition of these material assemblages would give meaning to Henry's silence during the lorry conversation as well as the conversation about loss. Without our after-class chats and the interview I would be oblivious to his investment in The Lorry after spending the previous evening praying for the victims in church. I would therefore continue misinterpreting his apparently disinterested demeanour.

In most cases when Henry displays what looks like disinterest, there is a reason that comes to light. In our interviews and after class chats, he volunteers all kinds of information related to his future goals and field of expertise and he does so with passion and excitement. Drawing diagrams, gesticulating and demonstrating, he tries to fill huge gaps in my scientific knowledge. However, he makes it clear that this is not an identity he wishes to project for his classmates. How and when he makes this clear is wholly relevant. He does not communicate this in front of the full classroom audience, neither does he drop this into conversation after class. He chooses to inform me in the slightly more formal domain of our first tutorial/interview when he announces: "I *don't like* speak about my target in class." During the same conversation, he reprimands me for the way I focused unwelcome attention on him for reading a book on fluid dynamics. In the classroom, he pretends he has not completed a reading log, keeping it hidden until the end of the lesson when he can show me in private how he has read a number of user guides. So keen is he to mask his professional, educated identities that he is prepared to tolerate my irritation with him rather than betray himself to his classmates. His reason: "Because my goal and my target is different with another people".

Despite being conscious of labels referencing his status as 'refugee' and 'ESOL Entry 2', he does not align himself with his classmates. In a sense he is limiting this group of ESOL learners assuming they cannot share his ambitions to pursue an academic career. However, when it comes to speaking, he ranks their skills as more developed than his own. This is made clear from the outset when, on his first day after raising my expectations of his abilities with his diagnostic writing and pleasant introduction,

he joins a group for a collaborative writing task and does not offer any contributions at all. The confidence of his formal handshake and professional person's briefcase is juxtaposed with a scrunched body, detached from the group, averting eye-contact lest he should be asked for an idea. He later remarks how their conversation was moving rapidly positions himself reflexively as less capable than his group in terms of fluency and confidence. He labels himself as a poor speaker, a self-imposed identity that he retains throughout our relationship, although whether this just becomes part of the performance for me is unclear.

In terms of Henry's participation, my own teacher identity is in question and subjectivities are in conflict. He often prevents me from doing my job and presenting myself as a professional who has a measure of control over her students and their outcomes. ESOL provision is inspected by Ofsted and therefore regular observations of staff are built into the termly schedule. Student engagement is a top priority and is measured in terms of the four components outlined in Anderson et al. (2004): behavioural (e.g. attendance, punctuality, classroom participation in classroom, extracurricular activities); academic (e.g. time-on-task, achievement in Milestones); cognitive (e.g. use of learning strategies, self-regulated learning); social and psychological (e.g. relationships with teachers and peers, sense of belonging in the institute as a whole). For two of my lesson observations, the observer noted punctuality and engagement issues with Henry which I was forced to try and justify. This pushes me to demand tasks from him that are needed for his progression within the institute.

The saga of him writing (or not) his story is a prime example of the ebbs and flows that characterise the negotiation of the steps towards writing the story. Although he does finally email a complex story, the road to completion is littered with resistance and consequently a subversion of power dynamics that limit my agency to respond, as portrayed in the following excerpt (*The Story*, p.166):

Henry has no story.

I ask where it is and he tells me he doesn't like it. He is going to change it to a story about Shiraz.

I ask to see the original and he says no.

I ask him to tell me something about his new story and he says no.

I ask if he has a plan and he says no.

I ask if he's going to write one and he says no.

I feel helpless. I do nothing. I let him do his own thing.

My teacher identity learns to make peace with such resistance as I tune in to Henry, the person.

7.2 Ethical Encounters

The previous section showed how identities are performed within a broad ideological landscape that imposes particular roles and identities. Henry and I shuttle across impositions, imposing and resisting, in the community and the ESOL classroom. There are frequent episodes in the classroom where Henry is silent, absent from recordings and only visible through my field notes. However, Henry sought time to communicate one-to-one and it is during these episodes that interaction took on a different quality. This section is concerned with the way that our interpersonal performances created openings for ethical encounters. In addition, the section also asks whether ethical encounters can be identified in classroom interaction with larger groups. One of the obstacles to researching Levinas' notion of ethical face-to-face encounters is that it is difficult to capture empirically (Todd, 2014). I briefly review the main facets of his philosophy to ascertain what might signal such an encounter.

In this study, there are moments which I can identify as ethical by relating events to the principles of Levinasian protoethics. First, ethical encountering is not planned or anticipated. Secondly, it is undemocratic and asymmetrical. Thirdly, it does not result in the subject 'knowing' the Other as this would result in ethical failure. In addition, an opening for the encounter is marked by an aesthetic 'shudder' (Adorno, 2004) which is destabilising for the listening subject.

The opening of *The Novel* highlights an ethical moment when Henry demanded that I now attend:

CAME BY BOAT, OK?

It is not merely the disclosure itself but the build up to it that makes it so significant. I had missed clues in classroom sessions that were pointing to his discomfort bringing journey narratives into the classroom. The first of these were the newspapers with headlines and images of the lorry that were presented as materials for our portrait collage. While this presented an opportunity for discussion about world events that students made connections with, for Henry this was an intrusive artefact. I was not aware of what he thinks at the time. I perceived his behaviour as disengagement both from the horror of the event and from his classmates' discussion as they try to make sense of this tragedy. Secondly, I was baffled that he made this news story the only subject of his portrait collage, in effect pushing the images back in my face. Thirdly, when he discarded his collage, I retrieved it from the bin, an action to which he signalled his disapproval by turning it upside down. It was only in the chat after class that I realise how insensitive my actions had been. He had already engaged with the plight of those in the lorry at his church where they prayed for the victims, and he too has navigated a perilous journey. When his disclosure erupts into the silent room at volume, I can describe the impact in

Levinasian terms: I am arrested and disarmed by the face of this human being who stands before me, beyond ideology, doctrine, category and who is summoning me to respond. Child et al. (1995) describe an educational encounter where the teacher as listening subject opened herself to the opinion of a student she had misunderstood:

he stole a couple of quick glances at my eyes. He was checking my sincerity. I could see it in his eyes. I felt the impact. His look ...shot a wave of guilt through my body (p.178)

I am similarly confronted with my own guilt as I relive those actions which I could have played differently, had I been attuned. Levinas's idea of ethical responsibility is often mistakenly assumed to be an obligation prompted by pity towards human beings in a state of deprivation, destitution or trauma. However, this is to misinterpret the essence of his thinking. In pitying rather than listening to the Other, the response is to offer help - when we do, it is often not that helpful (Child et al., 1995). On the other hand, an ethical encounter requires the subject to confront their own reaction as they find themselves 'fundamentally questioned' (ibid, p. 177) by the gaze of the face. They have a choice either to refuse the responsibility, thereby committing an act of violence in silencing the face that speaks (Carriere, 2007), or to open themselves to that call with vulnerability. As Davis (2007, p. 46) explains, the face is 'an epiphany or revelation rather than an object of perception or knowledge' and is experienced sensorially, I would characterise this 'epiphany' as an ethical encounter because of Henry's unequivocal demand that I attend, and my aesthetic attunement to this demand. This is registered by the physical symptoms I experienced before turning round, the guilt I felt as I met his gaze and the invitation to expand on his story in the conversation which follows. It had nothing to do with my power to legitimise his speaking voice; it was a wholly different kind of power where the Other held the reins in an asymmetrical relationship. Responsibility is not an imposition, however; it is an aesthetic response which has to be acted upon by showing care in the moment if it is to be truly ethical in Levinas' terms.

These ethical moments were scattered through three terms and each one brought some conversational discomfort as Henry 'showed his face'. He confronted me with grievances related to my teaching. For example, after sitting on his argument for 21 days, Henry reprimanded me for drawing attention to his reading material (fluid dynamics) and he also confronted me for continually asking him to talk about goals in front of classmates. He challenged my assumptions more indirectly with his actions. When for instance, I was ready to castigate him for the lack of reading log, he produced a detailed document showing evidence of some considerable work. I also felt guilt chastising him for lack of homework when he was worried after having a biopsy. Henry's calls did not always

result in guilt, but they still proved disorienting. As noted in the previous section, I am upset by his assumption that I, like others in the UK (including the lady at the bus stop), am swayed by negative news about Iran. However, mostly I am just moved by his story. He conveys his worries about his mother's white hair, and he shares moving reflections on the life he has lost. Two examples are heart-wrenching. During our first interview, at the age of just 33, he pours out a sense of utter loss in a stream of consciousness that ends: 'life is finished for me' (*The Lorry*, 28.10.19). During the classroom conversation following the report of the lost violin, Henry said he had lost nothing; he waits till the class is empty to join the conversation in retrospect (*The Story*, p.162):

"My mother lose, er, she lose ME and now, now with white hair"

He pauses and I don't know what to say. He has told me this several times before, but it seems much more poignant now. He half smiles and continues.

"And me, for me, Louise, what I lose? I lose er *lost* my life".

Initially I feel such communicative events will allow me to know more about Henry, to understand his disengaged behaviour in class. While I do get more insight into his past history, I do not, *cannot*, get to know Henry. According to Levinas (1998) believing one can get to know someone better does not result in an ethical relationship. The Other is beyond comprehension and any attempt to claim otherwise is an ethical failure. In fact, claiming that I have come to know Henry would focus on *my* autonomy; it would be an attempt to bring Henry into my possession, containing or grasping him within a category, theme, definition or concept, which is a form of symbolic violence (Child et al., 1995). 'Knowing Henry' would also suggest that I could predict with an amount of certainty what his next move might be. However, as is clear from the Novel, Henry did not behave in predictable ways. For instance, I presumed that after the ethical moments we shared in our first interview and more intimate chats, Henry would be encouraged to maintain positive teacher-student relations by behaving differently in class i.e. joining in group discussion, completing his targets, arriving on time, staying for a full session. This did not happen. The following six weeks was a committed avoidance of the story-writing Milestone with abject refusal to engage in every stage of the process in the way I ask. This raises important questions about the ethical nature of ESOL pedagogical tasks that require students to tell their story and I return to this in the following section. In terms of the encounter, it confirms the asymmetrical nature of ethical relationships and the fact that receiving or welcoming the call does not (should not) result in an act of reciprocity.

Neither does it result in the incremental forging of a strong relationship with each meeting. Along with *Getting to know your students*, another common trope in ESOL education (indeed, all sectors of education) is *Establishing rapport to build supportive relationships*. Confiding personal trauma to a

conversational partner would be taken as an indication that a meaningful relationship is developing through trust (Palanac et al., 2023). I believed that Henry had positioned me as confidante after the disclosure of his arrival by boat and the divulging of personal information in his first interview. This view was cemented for me by moments when he felt confident enough to challenge my pedagogical decision-making. I thought he felt safe enough, empowered even, to make his point. However, ethical moments are just that – moments. They do not guarantee the building of relationships as Levinas (1969, p. 77) insists:

The relationship between the same and the other, my welcoming of the other, is the ultimate fact, and in it the things figure not as what one builds but as what one gives.

This was made clear when Henry chose to make the second of three personal revelations, not to me, but to Marie. In the Speaking Milestone Henry changed the topic of conversation from ‘the neighbourhood’ to the situation in Iran following the Iranian government’s ruthless response to those protesting the increase in fuel prices. In the previous IT session, Henry had shown images of people being killed on the streets and his agenda was now to disseminate this information to people in the UK who he said, will listen. In conversation with Marie, he revealed his reason for having to leave Iran (*The Story*, p.185):

Marie: Ok why did you coming for England?

Henry: Erm...because, this is very good questions because before, my brother died. Family after my brother is very bad, erm very bad condition

WHAT? He never gave me a clue to this in an hour-long interview, or our chats since then. Why is this just tripping out of his mouth to Marie?.

Henry: And after this problem, I forget my religion, Islam, because I think this problem makes from my religion and I decide to change my religion to Christian

Marie: Christian ok the same me

Henry: Because God in Christian is very good. I change to erm Christian and after government know about this, this is very dangerous for me, and I leave my country and come to UK.

Marie: Ok that’s why you coming to England because you brother’s died and so you change your religion, so you come here that’s the point you come here or...?

I was left bemused and disappointed, and I had to make peace with the fact that this ethical moment was not mine. My reaction, from the position of a self who is almost wounded by the rejection, is an unethical one. However, I witnessed Marie, in her generosity, opening herself to Henry and, seemingly unphased by such a revelation, she engaged with him on his chosen topic. This was a Milestone activity which is a significant assessment in the ESOL for work calendar. Yet Marie followed Henry's lead and stopped trying to follow the instructions for completion. On the other hand, witnessing the encounter from outside, I see Henry leading Marie to deviate from the rubric, even though this might risk them both losing marks. This would call his behaviour into question as her listening subject. This example shows some potential for intimate ethical encounters which do not involve only teacher-student relationships. However, it also demonstrates the complexity of writing about the experience from a third person perspective. As has been reiterated I cannot presume to know what Marie's affective response was and her reason for welcoming Henry's call, if indeed that is what was happening.

Apart from encounters between pairs, there are episodes within stretches of classroom interaction that could also be identified as ethical moments. The conversation that ensues from the intrusive images of the lorry (*The Lorry*, 24.10.19) is an example of communal life-in-motion, where the students react spontaneously and with a kind of collective affect to the plight of the Vietnamese immigrants. This unexpected intrusion into our space, disrupts the orderliness of the lesson and triggers a series of affective responses. My initial urge is to mitigate and control (Chamorro et al., 2021). But despite my efforts to do so, the students claimed the interactive space, allowing the aesthetic artefact – a newspaper front page headline with images - to hijack our collage making activity. In Levinasian terms, as listening subjects we have no choice but to respond to the call of this worldly disaster, regardless of the potential for ensuing chaos.

In ESOL, 'Bringing the outside in' is often framed as a way to acknowledge students' agency, engage them in solving real-life problems and encourage discussion on wider global issues. Baynham (2006) suggests that, provided the teacher responds contingently, these interruptions may be re-contextualised to offer possibilities for learning. This episode shows that possibilities extend far beyond learning opportunities in an instrumental sense. As an example of languaging in action, this episode shows how an affective experience is lived through a host of semiotic resources: gasps, whispers, translations, embodied movement, a gruesome headline, the face of a young man in a cowboy hat, the bare minimum of key words *truck, no open, no air, no windows, without oxygen, they die*. The aesthetic power of Jasmine's interjection silences us all:

He's boy!

The dramatic and highly charged impact this has in the room as we sit in silence is wholly meaningful as it makes space for Tandy to make his address:

Tandy: I came by train!

* * *

Tandy: I know this freezing truck. It's no good, some people they doesn't know it, getting in, open truck and come inside, they don't know it's freezing, so dangerous for people.

Louise: Do they pay money to the driver?

Tandy: Yes some.

Marie: Ogghh, pay for die!

Louise: How many people were in your truck Tandy?

Tandy: Only me.

Louise: Only you? Just you, oh ...

Tandy: In the train many people, 30, 40, just for chance, people get chance, get chance and policethey catch you, just chance...chance...

This plays to my imagination and I am lost for words. Viewed through a diachronic lens, this excerpt demonstrates students' histories bound up with the language they produce. Most of the students have concrete experience and therefore memories of this kind of journey. Coupled with the images and headlines, it casts a sombre veil over the collage-making activity. Child et al. (1995) argue that being 'fundamentally questioned out of ourselves' in such a way is when we are taught. However, if the subject cannot comprehend the Other then where does the potential for education lie? I now explore who and what is taught from the perspective of an ethical encounter.

7.3 The pedagogical potential of ethical encounters

In this section I explore the potential of viewing ESOL pedagogy through the prism of 'being taught' as opposed to 'learning from' (Biesta, 2013), following Levinas. First, I examine pedagogy from my perspective as one who is taught. I consider the 'gift' I received from a combination of reflective teaching and research practice from a phenomenological perspective. This was made possible due to the creative approach to analysis which afforded deep engagement with the data, allowing me to relive aesthetic moments. Second, I consider what promises such insight might hold for an ESOL pedagogy based on the notion of encounter. I delve into past pedagogical debates in ESOL and discuss how well-intentioned recommendations for 'bringing the outside in' (Baynham, 2006) have been

challenged. With reference to the data in this study and other suggestions for more holistic pedagogies in the literature (e.g. Frimberger, 2016; Kelly, 2023; Palanac, 2019), I question how, indeed *whether*, Levinas' notion of relational ethics can inform a pedagogy of ethical encounter.

7.3.1 Ethical encounter as pedagogy

In encounters with Henry, I do not learn in the sense that a mistake is made and then forever rectified. On the contrary, 'being taught' often involves the same lesson being repeated for me. While I presume at first that any kind of bonding will result in a changed behaviour in the classroom on Henry's part, there is every likelihood that in encountering me Henry is also expecting the same, as I am *his* Other. However, one ethical encounter does not mean that the subject will always respond justly. The opportunity may be afforded but the call may not be heard. There are episodes in the later part of *The Novel* when, despite having built a more rounded picture of Henry's past and future aspirations, I am confronted with the reality that I do not know him at all. I still cause him some discomfort and miss clues, possibly missing his call.

An illuminating example is related to his profession as a teacher and provides the third of Henry's *revelations*, and therefore mine too. From our first meeting he presents himself as an educator. He points to his experience teaching in university on his diagnostic writing form and proceeds to make a role for himself as my IT assistant for the following terms. He tells me he has lost everything when he says, 'life is finished for me'. I infer from this that he would like to reclaim certain professional identities linked to status. I frequently comment how he could pursue teaching as a career in the UK and gloss over his resistance thinking it is only due to lack of confidence in speaking ability. I push him towards this in various ways, thinking it is meeting his needs. For example, I suggest he adds this profession to his long-term goals; in group work I make him team leader (eg. the holiday destination research); I suggest he teaches Marcus how to use Excel; I coax him into delivering an IT session with me during an inspection to show his skills, which he does (although I later question whose benefit this was for). However, during our second interview Henry finds the space to disarm me with his third major revelation when I suggest he would be a good teacher (*The Pandemic*, p.236).

"I don't like talking about this because maybe crying. I had a student in Iran, ok?"

He describes a student who persistently disrupted his class with unwelcome questions and noises. The student finally fails the course. Sometime later the student takes his own life.

"Very bad time for me you know. After listen, I cry about... why he did this thing."

“You never know what’s going on in people’s lives Henry...maybe he had many problems, maybe he was struggling”.

“Yeh, I think about this. If one people make every time a problem I can’t teach and other people learn erm other students and make voice and I can’t manage class and I should, I need to manage class, ok? And this guy no change, every time make problem. So now is die.”

Consequently, I am confronted with my naivety, lack of awareness and a resurgence of emotion in remembering Jenny. This prompts further reflection after the event as I attempt to situate this information in the wider context to make sense of it. Although entirely different circumstances, Kallio-Tavin (2013) describes similar feelings in her relationship with an autistic student in their collaborative art project. As their time ‘being-aside’ travels on and she begins to tune into ethical moments, her focus transfers to what she is being taught rather than what her student is learning. She argues that to do so means stepping outside the relationship of two, to acknowledge the world beyond the bubble. Drawing on Levinas’ ethics of the ‘Third’ (Lingis, 1981) allows her to reflect critically on the politics of their relationship in the larger context. Child (1995, p. 182) suggests that teaching *received* from the Other can only be comprehended from a position outside the ethical moment. This is when the subject comes to *know* that they do not know the Other: ‘This student is simply not what I thought’. There lies the irreducible *gift* (Biesta, 2013) which emerges from a face-to-face encounter, a gift because it can never be anticipated.

Through a phenomenological lens it is evident that I can engage with my lived experience, describe the affective impact and suggest what I was taught. However, how this can inform a pedagogy of encounter for the classroom is less obvious since committing to encounter means committing to not knowing the Other and by consequence, not knowing what the Other knows. This would trouble such measuring and accountability regimes that are the foundation of ESOL education. Nevertheless, Biesta (2003) claims that everything about Levinas’ work points to pedagogy so in the following section I aim to interrogate this possibility.

7.3.2 Towards a pedagogy of encountering the Other

ESOL pedagogy has been heavily influenced by the three agendas which dominate its policy and practice: a foregrounding of ‘skills’ for employability, an enactment of citizenship and a culture of measuring and assessment. This means that in many ESOL classrooms, pedagogical tasks cater to the instrumental demands of the language syllabus and the preparation for examination (Simpson, 2011). Outcomes are described in the language of ‘learnification’ (Biesta, 2003), and ‘learning from’ is prioritised in line with constructivist approaches that emphasise teaching as ‘the creation of learning

environments and as facilitating, supporting or scaffolding' student activity and achievement of goals. (Biesta, 2013, p. 3). In this study it has been demonstrated that such policy and practice encourage a narrowing of identity options for ESOL teachers and their students (many of whom are migrants and refugees) as well limited conceptions of what it means to use a language.

Over the past 20 years, there have been calls for ESOL pedagogy to look upon classes not just as spaces for rehearsing functional language but as a dialogic space where students can attempt to make sense of circumstances through participating in conversations with peers, building feelings of integration and critically reflecting on their lives and their identities within new spaces (Court, 2017). The premise is that spaces which focus on meaning-making as opposed to performing language competencies, can offer opportunities for students to claim a wider range of subjectivities and encourage intercultural exchange. To this end, those working in the field have sought pedagogies that can offer such affordances while working alongside prescriptive curriculums.

With a view to lessening the barriers between the classroom and the outside world the idea of 'bringing the outside in' is at the root of many pedagogical proposals and interventions in ESOL (e.g. Cooke & Roberts, 2007). The trope has been widely adopted to explore a range of options that might be brought in; for example, materials (Frimberger et al., 2018), transnational identities (Santos et al., 2011) languages (Cox & Phipps, 2022), folk tales (Simpson, 2011), personal narratives (Cooke & Wallace, 2004) as well as questions about bureaucratic procedures and references to wider global issues. Positive outcomes overlap in such studies and comprise valuable language learning opportunities, widening the range of subjectivities available, improved confidence and feelings of empowerment, improved wellbeing, supportive social relations, and concrete support for solving life problems. However, while freedom to 'bring the outside in' is often framed in ESOL as a way to acknowledge students' agency and engage them in solving real-life problems, in practice this may not meet students' expectations of what should be happening in the classroom space. Henry's responses testify to this so should be kept in mind while reading on.

'Bringing the outside in' was originally conceived as a way of harnessing the pedagogic potential of the 'urgent issues and crises' that unavoidably accompany migrants and refugees into their ESOL classrooms (Baynham, 2006, p. 25). Baynham recognises that while spontaneously 'bringing the outside in' risks disrupting the orderliness of a lesson, triggering a range of responses and transforming the ecology of the space, provided the teacher responds contingently, these interruptions may be re-contextualised to offer possibilities for learning. Bringing in personal narratives is also thought to be means of making sense 'not only of "trouble" but of significant life change' (Menard-Warwick, 2004, p. 297). Apart from responding contingently, Simpson (2011) suggests that teachers can actively

create conditions that encourage students to claim interactive space to bring in alternative identity positions to those offered by adult migrant English language policy and practice. From an ethical standpoint, it would then seem helpful to give migrant and refugee learners a safe interactional space to retell stories that are meaningful to them and allow them to evaluate their experiences. However, this notion has been misinterpreted in many ESOL curriculums which embed 'bringing the outside in' into pedagogical tasks as opposed to seeing it as a contingent response to spontaneous interaction. Both Simpson (2011) and Wallace, (2006) note that planning to use students' stories as the basis for classroom tasks rarely works. The data I present below confirms their views and highlights a question that should be borne in mind when working with human beings: What exactly are we doing when asking students to tell their stories and should this form the basis of any pedagogical task? On the other hand, as a seemingly contradictory proposal, this example illuminates storytelling as a potential space for ethical encounter.

The *My Voice* project, which provides the backdrop for *The Story*, was a service-wide initiative to involve ESOL learners across the city in telling their stories, thereby conveying a sense of inclusion but also empowerment to tell their story as they know it. Giving voice to marginalised and often silent/silenced members of the community is often championed as means to achieving equality, expanding subjectivities, and improving self-concept (Stewart, 2010). This suggests from the outset that the well-meaning purposes and principles behind this initiative will collide with notions of ethical encounters; through a Levinasian lens, foregrounding autonomy, empowerment and agency is projecting the desire of the self on to the Other (Child et al., 1995). The data in this study also challenge the idea that students want their voices to be heard on these terms. Neither were they convinced that story-writing/telling was a task that would further their language skills. This is evident in the contrast between the 3 phases of the lesson beginning the second half of the term: *The Build-up*, *The Business*, *The Rescue* (*The Story*, Week 1).

The Build-up showed how students had engaged with stories over the half term break. Reading for pleasure is seldom mentioned in the ESOL literature which is unsurprising considering the neoliberal drives underpinning the policy. However, there was an eclectic mix of examples students seemed to have enjoyed and this prompted a discussion which culminated in my dramatised rendition of Hamlet, again an unlikely topic for ESOL. In contrast, *The Business* is a sobering juxtaposition of affect that highlights a collective apprehension for telling their *own* story, especially in relation to the prompts they had been offered in the instructions: a happy memory, an important moment in your life, your journey to the UK. The fact that this story would form the basis of two assessed Milestones introduces further complication since any kind of test is viewed as high stakes for learners who stand to lose

benefits and the language classes deemed so necessary for their contribution to UK life. It was also framed as a competition as the best stories would appear on the website. Thus, this simply worded printed artefact and accompanying oral explanation collapsed the momentum in the room. Coffey (2022, p. 160) notes how objects are 'depositories of meaning' but this meaning for each individual is dependent on affective associations with the object in question. It was clearly having an impact on the students' mood. For the institute, it was an innocent instruction sheet with a seemingly inclusive invitation to join a wider group of similarly positioned students, a chance to belong to something greater than our room. For me, it spoke to conflicted identities. On the one hand, I was challenged to support a city-wide initiative and prepare students for assessment, while on the other, I could not ignore the silence in the room. This makes an important point about pulling stories from people in the name of inclusivity and equality or as a means of getting to know more. From a Levinasian perspective, this is merely applauding ego as it makes a bid to demonstrate fairness. Worse still is using someone's story as an assessment tool. There is tension all round so what is interesting about the phase that follows is that it is Jasmine, who restores peace. In *The Rescue* she claims the floor, choosing stories she finds relevant to this space. It is something of this spirit of generosity and the opening created for it that is promising for a pedagogy of encounter.

There is a strong argument for *leaving the outside out* in ESOL and other literature pertaining to RAS education. Some teachers prefer to insulate classrooms from potentially stressful intrusions so purposefully constrain opportunities to 'bring the outside in'. They suggest an ESOL classroom can provide a safe haven with familiar stability in the unstable life of a refugee (Baynham, 2006; Hepworth, 2019; Hodge, 2004). However, there are times when the outside refuses to stay out. This creates tensions for an educator who needs to balance the job of ESOL teaching with managing real lives of the learners (Chamorro et al., 2021). In light of recent national and global news items which have incited racial attacks, Graham-Brown (2020, n.d) suggests that ignoring monumental events like Black Lives Matter, for example, 'places our teaching in a vacuum ... and gives the impression that we do not value the issues that are often really important to our learners'. Hepworth (2019, p. 106) agrees debating controversial issues is central to the enactment of citizenship in ESOL classrooms and deliberately avoiding controversial topics is counter-productive, however well-intentioned. Yet, this stands in stark contrast to an ESOL curriculum which prioritises employability skills and shies away from difficult conversations, preferring to deal with citizenship through the delivery (not debate) of British Values. In addition, in this study it was presumed within the institute that learners were not aware of world events because their language skills prevented reading or listening to news on English language platforms. For example, staff were advised to teach students about fake news with the

outbreak of Covid-19, but Sheena was already wise to this term without my mentioning it. In discussing the origin of the virus, she questioned whether it could be man-made:

Sheena: It was doctor saying but I don't know, could be fake, yes? fake news?

The data strongly contest the assumption that students with low proficiency are ignorant to world events with difficult conversations cropping up in quotidian routine and more intimate dialogue. It follows that a pedagogy of encounter should not be prescribing either the bringing in or the leaving out of the outside. Rather space should be created for options to do either.

Taking the inside out is a third option which would address the issues that Henry names in trying to make connections with communities and individuals beyond the classroom. Although ESOL is a social and affective arena of its own, Macdonald (2019, p. 173) argues there are benefits for making connections with local organisations which may be students' imagined communities and where they might be sitting on the 'borderline of belonging'. She maintains that most ESOL programmes 'are not designed for flexibility, nor for integrated outreach with English-speaking locals' and this is necessary because proficiency in the English language is not enough to ensure a welcome when political and media rhetoric position migrants in negative terms. However, Macdonald also notes that this is a long-term project which cannot be achieved by simply taking students on trips. Consistent with Macdonald's observations, the students in this study were not encouraged to enter into relations with locals during the museum trip. They asked a few questions and were interested in knowing more about the artefact from their own regions. Neither were they sold on the idea of joining the BOC community following the workshop that brought the outside in. Maisie was the sole student to join the production but when I was there observing, she found me in her breaks rather than engaging with other members. Clearly more needs to be done. This brings me back to my initial starting point of, wondering of the affordances of a pedagogy that brokers meaningful partnerships local communities. As part of a broader package, this would also have potential for a pedagogy of encounter.

Apart from notions concerned with connecting inside-outside, specific pedagogies have been proposed relevant to adult language education which build on notions of bringing the outside in while also describing their approach as ethical in some way. In the current climate of mass migration due to war and persecution, the potential for trauma-related issues entering the classroom is heightened. This is certainly the case for Henry and Tandy who have both fled danger and made difficult journeys to reach UK shores; Tandy 'lost' his shoes and slid through the border in a goods truck while Henry had to exit his boat in The Channel although he was unable to swim. Since trauma is thought to impair cognitive functioning, disrupt language learning and limit post-traumatic growth it must be addressed,

but sensitively so (Hunter, 2022; Palanac et al., 2023). Various approaches to pedagogy have been advocated; as noted above, some educators create a safe context where students can zone out of life problems to focus on learning while others insist encounters with difficult experiences of trauma and injustice are ‘ingredients for transformative learning’ (Kelly, 2023, p. 120).

Troubled by the misuse of such pedagogical tasks as autobiographical storytelling and dominant neoliberal approaches that appear to ignore, trivialise or misunderstand complex migrant histories, Palanac (2019) proposes a *trauma-informed pedagogy* for ESOL that focuses on methods for creating safe spaces, reducing post-migration stressors and reducing trauma symptoms. It also pays attention to teachers’ emotional labour by pinpointing symptoms resulting from compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma (Palanac, 2022; Vee, 2021), such as the guilt one experiences at not being able to do enough, or at misreading a situation and risking potential emotional harm. Similarly, Clinician, academic and educator Josalin Hunter stresses that ‘preparing’ teachers for dealing with any kind of mental scarring, is wholly unethical outside of clinical relationships. Rather, she advocates ‘the promotion of healing and avoidance of re-traumatization’ by approaching teaching and learning through a trauma-informed, social-emotional lens. Hunter’s study (2022) offers practical information and suggestions for dealing with manifestations of trauma in instructional settings and aims to develop educators’ capacity to recognise trauma, identify potential triggers, be mindful of cultural implications in dealing with traumatic experiences, build resilience and create safe spaces. While this offers potential for a pedagogy of encounter in terms of promoting care for fellow human beings, its title inadvertently labels and draws attention to a limiting factor for a student and by default an identity of carer, even therapist for a teacher; thus, it may perpetuate the narrowing of identity options.

On the other hand, there is much in the literature to advocate the affordances of dealing with difficult conversations head on. Writing from the field of peace education, Kelly (2023, p. 124) acknowledges that pedagogies that take us into discomfort are persuasive since they open doors to exploring social (in)justice, ‘force us to test messy emotions, that shatter worldviews, that interrogate problematic assumptions’. Yet she finds it difficult to embed discomforting pedagogies (e.g. Zembylas, 2020) in educational spaces that she hosts for others because of issues of power and care. In attempting to balance these facets, she proposes a *pedagogy of vulnerability* which she defines as ‘a way of teaching and learning that brings more of ourselves into the classroom, that encourages us to teach and learn with depth, meaning and connection across differences of all sorts’ (Kelly, 2023, p. 124).

At first sight, the title would again infer a deficit labelling. However, Kelly (2023) is mindful of the fact that vulnerability is a matter of identity positioning within wider structures. It is not just the student

who is potentially vulnerable; it is also the teacher. Those who are more secure risk less and they also get 'more credit for performing vulnerability than those positions which are precarious or subject to questioning' (Ibid). This emphasises the point that in shared spaces some will always feel more 'at home' than others regardless of the lengths people go to make them hospitable. My students are vulnerable in that I have the potential to abuse my position of power over them (Joldersma, 2008). By consequence, in my classroom, I should feel 'at home', secure in my position. Nevertheless, as Kelly (2023) notes, this means little without taking the wider context into account. In this study, I wrestle with my position as a white, privileged educator and researcher with the national dominant language as my mother-tongue. I question what right I have to be advising migrant learners on their futures and more pertinent, what right I have to ask for and then retell their stories. I find myself vulnerable in conversation with Henry but also in classroom encounters with groups, as seen on collage-making day. Foregrounding such vulnerability in the position of listening subject does offer potential for ethical teacher positions in a pedagogy of encounter as well in research.

An ethical educational approach would, therefore, encourage a susceptibility to otherness rather than a desire to gain knowledge about the Other; as this study has stressed the Other is infinitely unknowable. Is it possible to teach a responsibility for the other or to educate for vulnerability? As noted in this study, Levinas's philosophy is not something to be applied or operationalised; however, what it does offer is an 'invitation to think alongside it in open communication' (Todd, 2001). With this in mind, Todd proposes three principles that hold promises for a pedagogy of ethical encounter. First, she suggests *education as implied ethics* (rather than *applied*) working with the premise that all educational relationships and discourses 'exist and operate in a field of ethicality' (p.71), a domain where non-violent relations to the Other are a possibility. From this perspective, working across difference prioritises classroom relationships as opposed to learning *about* the Other. It explores ways in which engagements across difference promote conditions for enacted responsibility for the Other. Second, she proposes *quality of relationality* which challenges the types of relations (and therefore the types of communication), that institutional descriptions of teacher-student roles generate. Focusing on the quality of relationality prioritises 'utterances and deeds' that help to create and sustain the Otherness of the Other (p.72). Thus, maintaining alterity is a distinctive mark of relationality. Third, Todd advocates *teaching with ignorance* which acknowledges the infinite unknowability of the Other. As she explains, knowing about the Other is not what stands us on ethical ground; it is the capacity to enter into 'veritable conversation' or the 'fine risk' (Levinas, 1998, p. 120) of conversation. In a position of susceptibility, as an attentive, listening subject, it is possible to be taught by the Other but there is risk involved.

Biesta (2006, p. 25) observes that education is all about risk.

Not only is there a risk that you do not learn what you wanted to learn...There is also the risk that you will learn things that you couldn't have imagined...the risk that you will learn something that you didn't want to learn – something about yourself for example.

Risk rejects accountability, measurability and evaluation of commercial transaction. Teaching and being taught with risk is entirely different to *learning about* or even *from* the Other/the world in order to claim that other can be known and explained. Rather, and returning to the link with aesthetics, a moment of being taught is a moment of being touched. And this Biesta (2022) argues, is what education should be about. Both teacher and student are subject to risk; both may be disarmed at what they are taught but this can only be expressed by the one whose lived experience is being discussed. In this study I am taught, disarmed, disoriented and on occasions disempowered but what I have learnt about myself has changed the way I teach. Risk brings unpredictability but this might be the very point as Todd argues (2014, p. 71), 'not understanding our pedagogical experiences might just be the very life-affirming and risky stuff out of which education can be made'.

The troubling undertone in interrogating a proposal for ethical pedagogy in ESOL is that it seems all rests on the teacher to create the conditions, the space, and to be the model by demonstrating their vulnerability and openness to their students. Thus, the teacher can lead by example and voice what they have been taught. However, this is hardly likely to satisfy systems that rely on demonstrating learning, learner satisfaction and learner progression. If knowing what the student knows means 'shrouding the Other in my own totality' (Todd, 2003, p. 73), then asking for a demonstration of knowledge is unethical by such logic. Where does that place the institute in a potential pedagogy and more importantly what does it offer the student? This leaves us at an impasse with more questions than answers. This is exactly how I left my relationship with Henry.

At this point in the thesis, it might be expected that a pedagogy of encounter would be outlined but following such a discussion, it seems this is not a straightforward task. Following Biesta (2003), I can summarise with some confidence what a pedagogy of ethical encounter cannot offer: It cannot be based on knowledge because the first relationship with the Other is one with ethics, not knowledge; it cannot be a technique because that would imply its own success; it cannot see student subjectivity as inherently motivated and self-directing as this makes unethical demands on students to self-objectify and removes the need for teaching; it cannot create responsible or response-able students because that would imply the teacher had the ability to transform students and predict their actions both in and beyond the classroom. Coming from a Western tradition of education this paints a

daunting picture as it removes everything that is familiar in ESOL. In fact, it undoes education as we know it.

If Levinas' ethics refuses methods, techniques and process what does it offer to pedagogy? Todd (2003, p. 1) suggests replacing certain terms for describing human relationality is a good place to begin:

Proximity, openness, passivity, response, vulnerability, glory, the face, and alterity are only some of the terms which supplant the good, virtue, rationality, agency and moral reasoning as conditions of the ethical.

Beyond that, what I have to draw on is my lived experience and my understandings of what this project has taught me. I offer a collection of imaginings from an educator's perspective, a reminder, if you will, to adopt an ethical attitude. My lack of consistency in relating to Henry is evidence that an ethical attitude is difficult to sustain so perhaps such a pedagogy should be viewed as an event rather than a process. The events in this discussion suggest ethical moments can be encouraged by:

- Creating and opening discursive space to allow students to explore aspects of their identities that do not surface when classroom talk is focused on instrumental understandings of language education.
- Situating the classroom in a wider sociolinguistic space rather than insulating it from the multitude of encounters and interactions its participants engage in every day.
- Entering relationships with people - not categories nor victims but unique individuals with irreducible difference.
- Remembering that singular individuals are beyond comprehension as well as classification.
- Being mindful of unquestionable responsibility for each student independently, not as a group, for this is how their worth is conveyed.
- Embracing the risk and learning to live with unpredictability in the classroom.
- Being attentive to hear the call and pay attention to 'epiphanies'.
- Thinking in terms of generosity rather than reciprocity.
- Opening yourself to the possibility of being touched.
- Being at peace despite the aesthetic discomfort or the undeniable state of not knowing.
- Being mindful of the agency embedded in materials as they are others in the world.
- Pointing to the world.

I have followed examples (e.g. Kubanyiova, 2023; Kelly, 2023) and begun to ask questions and think differently about my teaching and research practice. It is a first step on which to build.

Chapter 8

Conclusion and final reflections

“No face can be approached with empty hands and closed home.”

Emmanuel Levinas

8 Conclusion and final reflections

This thesis has explored the nature of teacher-student encounters in an ESOL classroom, which has emerged as a social and affective arena offering potential for students to inhabit a range of identities and experience moments of ethical welcoming in their daily relations. Creative Nonfiction has allowed scenes to be brought to life to be experienced afresh with each new reading. Highlighting affective moments in student-teacher interactions, I stress the fact that ESOL students are already deeply engaged in the very practices and communal relationships for which they are deemed unprepared by policy discourses.

Viewing adult language education as a social and affective arena rather than an instrumental means to an end is closely aligned with existing research (Baynham, 2006; Roberts & Cooke, 2011; Simpson & Whiteside, 2015). The data in this study portray students as they engage in languaging, drawing on an array of semiotic resources to perform a range of communicative purposes: to make sense of moment-by-moment interaction, to take control of classroom talk, to link their understandings of this micro-society to the larger structures beyond, to place their experience in the context of national and global events, to construct, resist or disavow certain identities, to develop connections with diverse others. This all happens alongside and sometimes in spite of an overarching curriculum which is geared towards developing employability skills and knowledge of the linguistic code in order to equip learners with tools to integrate into British society and contribute to community life.

By making these practices visible, my aim is not to question the value of ESOL, quite the opposite. I rather suggest that paying attention to what goes on in ESOL affective languaging spaces allows for an enlarged instead of reduced view of their educational affordances. I have brought a particular teacher-student relationship to life, which points to possibilities of ethical encounters; those that do not impose, categorise, analyse or attempt to “know” the Other through pre-assigned labels. Such a stance, in turn, affords a wider range of options to come to surface that teacher and students might desire for themselves, including university education in Henry’s case.

It is worth noting that educators working with migrants in further/higher education settings recognise how current resettlement policies and gatekeeping practices prevent migrants from reclaiming past, and pursuing imagined future identities, which further exacerbates post-migration stress (Palanac, 2019). This affects students in significant ways, but it also has an emotional impact on teachers who

feel ill-equipped to manage such affective responses. In order for ESOL programmes to become more responsive to these challenges, their political vision requires ongoing scrutiny and critique, coupled with more practical changes to curriculums as well as rejuvenated teacher training programmes.

One programme that is grounded in trauma-informed pedagogy (Palanac et al., 2023) and pays attention to both student and teacher concerns is that being pioneered at the University of Leicester's English Language Teaching Unit. This Unit facilitates the admission of refugees and asylum seekers to a programme which supports them in attaining their educational goals (Palanac, 2019). The programme pays attention to migrants' complex affective histories and educational aspirations and advocates methods of self-care for teachers. This pioneering approach offers inspiration for the redesign of future teacher training courses which need to prepare educators for the reality of dealing with migrant trauma in a range of language education settings. However, as mentioned earlier, the name rather in potentially limiting in that it signals the students as migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. This may be difficult to rectify but perhaps future lines of research might investigate the potential value of adopting an ethically informed lens in such programmes.

More generally, educational discourses commonly assume that building rapport and 'getting to know' students pave the way for motivating classroom experiences, which not only result in positive attainment outcomes but also encourage students to invest in cherished identities and desired life trajectories. This somewhat romantic notion ignores the unsettling affective discomforts that accompany ethical human entanglements in classrooms educating migrant students just as they do in life. Henry's apparent uncooperative behaviour in class was a source of immense frustration: his silence, his lack of participation, his reticence to collaborate with peers, his refusal to play by the rules. It subverted teacher-student roles, re-shaped power dynamics in the room and, ultimately, prevented me from doing my "ESOL job." In contrast, the more intimate encounters in this study's account had a different quality. With each meeting documented in the Novel, we witness layers of Henry's performative mask being shed as I gradually attune to his call, allowing us both a fleeting glimpse of each other's story, of each other's face (Levinas, 1998).

I do not get to know Henry. There is no resolution, no ultimate affective attunement that leads to positive change in classroom participation. The relationship is one of peaks and troughs, celebrations and frustrations, unpredictability and discomfort, traumas and becomings. This, I argue along with others (Biesta, 2022; Erasmus, 2018; Kubanyiova, 2023; Phipps, 2019), is the nature of ethical encounters in education and in society: they do not lead to outcomes, educational or otherwise, but

create moments of porosity, vulnerability and connection. The value of such moments may not be easily (if at all) graspable in ESOL curricular discourse. Becoming response-able towards them, however, is what living ethically in the world of diverse others, in classrooms and outside of them, demands.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Comparison of ethnography and phenomenology
(See table on following page)

	Ethnography	Phenomenology
	A method, methodology, philosophical paradigm	A Philosophy and a methodology
Origins	Roots in anthropology	Roots in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Husserl’s intersubjective nature of perception (transcendental) Heidegger’s hermeneutics - no bracketing, understanding of <i>being</i> guides all steps of the research process
	In general both:	
Commonalities	Aim to understand human behaviour. Deal with unquantifiable social issues. Agree social ‘reality’ cannot be observed objectively. Agree Reality is mediated by perception – seek people’s own understanding. Are exploratory. Researcher is instrument of data collection, but data ‘made’ collaboratively. Researcher reflexivity is foregrounded.	
	Where they differ:	
Whose experience?	Collective experience of a community	Individual lived experiences
Time frame	Long engagement in the field – labour intensive	Variable
What is it?	Systematic study of people and cultures/small societies to gain knowledge about representative group of a whole, universal elements, holistic explanations	Study of unique experience to locate meanings concealed within. The study of the lifeworld as we immediately experience it, pre-reflectively, rather than as we conceptualize, theorize, categorize, or reflect on it.
Overall Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe from point of view of subject. Shed light on what it is that makes a specific culture or group distinctive. Understand how the cultural inventions of this group of people function within that group to keep the society functioning. Describe cultural knowledge of participants - language, rituals, relationships etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‘Unearthing of phenomena from the perspective of how people interpret and attribute meaning to their existence.’ (Frechette et al., 2020) Gain deeper insights into human nature/ human consciousness by focusing on the world that the study participants subjectively experience. Describe subjective experience
Characteristics of studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studies concentrate on the descriptions people give to their routine, daily lives, enabling the ethnographer to explore a number of views at the same time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studies concentrate on the phenomenon under review through the discovery and interpretation by the researcher of concealed meaning embedded in the words of participant narrative Studies embodiment - ‘body’s sentiments provide a window into human understanding
Worldview/ Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is cultural looks beyond what people say to find shared meanings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is what the researcher understands it to be (Intended as a rejection of the sort of philosophy of historically and culturally relative ‘worldviews’ that ethnography tends towards)
Researcher identity/stance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ethnographer is seen as observer – not interested in being empowered by new meanings they uncover Seen as friendly and with honest interest – can be a deceptive ‘participant front’, not communicating aims to participants for fear of skewed responses/behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The phenomenologist is seen as the data interpreter, empowered or affected in some way by their understanding of participant experience Researcher cannot avoid their own social background influencing their judgement when it comes to interpreting data Interpreter never totally dissociates with his/her own subjectivity Understandings are created through the bridging of the researcher’s and the participant’s ‘horizons of significance’ bridging requires self-knowledge on the part of the researcher as well as an openness to others—elements that can be cultivated through reflexivity.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> human understanding requires a relationship of openness, participation and empathy (link CNF)
Perspective	3rd person	1 st person
How Subject conceived	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowing subject is always situated in the world So subject inseparable from 'being-with-other subjects implies ethical responsibility towards the world
Object of study	Culture, behaviour, attitudes, beliefs from perspective of the study's topic	Subjective lived experience with understanding that same experience can be interpreted/perceived in multiple ways
Data collection methods and tools	<p>Fieldwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant observation – immersed in context for extended periods. Interviews Fieldnotes Memos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long and intensive personal interviews Data emerge from response to appearance of things and how the subject experiences them no hypotheses are presented in the methods, as these "anticipations" are part of the researcher's horizon of significance and ongoing reflexivity. reflective journal to reflect on one's own humanity, or <i>being-in-the-world</i>, provides a safe and private place to dialogue with self
Data	Records of observation and interaction: interviews/interactions in the context/artifacts/documents /field notes/recordings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records of interaction, complex
Data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content and thematic - researcher looks for some sort of order/pattern in the organization of the topics under study Data broken down into manageable sections or 'basic descriptive units'- concentrating on commonality of theme and pattern - categorized – sifted Emic and etic taken into account (but emic at heart) Low inference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlike the ethnographer, the researcher tries to interpret the situation, presenting texts as fully as possible whilst pointing out where their understanding has been confirmed or negated by the participant's comments. 3 distinctive stages: fore-understanding, interrogation and reflection.
Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purposeful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purposeful Richness of the data collected takes precedence over the actual size of the sample.
Ensuring Validity/credibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation = credibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sense for subject. Not looking for a universal/generalisable truths
Truth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports often presented as claims of 'fact' or 'reality' <p>[what is depicted in ethnography can never be the whole picture – R not omniscient. Closest can ever really get to reality is an approximate truth.]</p>	Phen asks, "What makes you believe so?" True for the subject - aligns with principles of CNF.

Appendix 2: Participant information

Participants from Entry 2 and Entry 3 ESOL classes over the period September 2019 – July 2020							
Pseudonym	Country	Languages (other than English)	Entry Level	Terms completed	Consent Form completed	Consent to photos	Consent to audio recordings
Henry	Iran	Persian/ a little Arabic	E2/E3	1-2-3	✓	✓	✓
Maisie	Iran	Persian	E2/E3	1-2-3	✓	✓	✓
Fay	Somalia	Arabic	E2/E3	1-2-3	✓	✓	✓
Jasmine	Afghanistan	Punjabi/Pashto	E2/E3	1-2	✓	✓	✓
Jo	Hong Kong	Cantonese/Mandarin	E2/E3	1-2-3	✓	✓	✓
Marie	Brazil	Portuguese	E2/E3	1-2	✓	✓	✓
Tandy	Sudan	Arabic	E2/E3	1-2-3	✓	✓	✓
Dotty	Angola	Portuguese/Arabic	E2	1-2-3	✓	✓	✓
Nigel	Cameroon	French	E2	1-2	✓	✓	✓
Nina	Bangladesh	Bengali/ Punjabi	E2	1-2	✓	✓	✓
Emma	Yemen	Arabic	E2	1-2-3	✓	✓	✓
Ollie	Eritrea	Tigrinya, Arabic	E2	-2-	✓	✓	✓
Izzy	Iraq	Arabic	E3	1	✓	✗	✓
Ellie	Eritrea	Tigrinya/Tigre/Arabic	E3	1-2	✓	✓	✓
Ibo	Kurdistan	Persian	E3	1-2	✓	✓	✓
Flora	Syria	Arabic	E3	1-2-3	✓	✓	✓
Abby	Egypt	Arabic	E3	1-2	✓	✓	✓
Marcus	Libya	Arabic	E3	1-2-3	✓	✓	✓
Adam	Syria	Arabic	E3	1-2	✓	✓	✓
Nancy	Iran	Persian	E3	1-2-3	✓	✓	✓
Sheena	Iran	Persian	E3	1-2-3	✓	✓	✓

Appendix 3: E2 Recordings catalogue term 1

Month	Date	Participants (focus)	Description	Time	Tran/Sum	Field notes
Oct	17.10.19	All class	IT set up – password problems. frustration of all.	10:52	√	√
	17:10.19	Hen, Dot, Mai, Jas	homework – views on its worth	11:00	√	√
	24.10.19	Hen, Tan, Mai, Jas, Fay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lorry, newspaper - Ls reaction to news story of Vietnamese Making collage in prep for interviews and tutorials Tan telling his story 	55:16	√	√
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> H Chat after class – Iran, identity, church, LORRY 	20:67)	√	√
Nov	04.11.19	Jas/Mar/T/Mai/Hen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reactions to story project ‘My Voice’ - losing a class talking about stories digressions, religion, Hamlet 	26:50	√	√
	05.11.19 (1)	Mai/Jas/Fay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Past Simple pron & spelling of ed (Mai & rules, H not joining in the drilling, Jas asking Qs & digressing with other pron eg Birmingham/birthday, Fay using what we’ve covered) 	10:04	√ ex	√
	05.11.09 (2)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> choose a class reader – White Fang 	26:32	√	√
	07.11.19	Jas Mai Hen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lost violin story from Metro – reading and discussion sentence work inc connectors 	30:15	√ ex	√
	11.11.19	Tan, Jas, Hen, Nina H absent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comments on room layout changed -Nina morning routine White Fang comp and PW – corrupted recording 	13:24	-	-
	11.11.19	Nina	After class more about her day – challenges H for time, he walks off	6:07	-	√
	13.11.19(1) (Wed)	Mai/Jas/Em/Nar/Nig H absent	room change – discussion about being comfortable in class feedback from writing (Jas Qs) (Mai supplying rules)	17:46	-	√
	13.11.19 (2) (Wed)	Em/Jas/Mai/Nina/Nig H absent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> different room – Ls reactions Spelling – Em Responding to feedback 	47:04	√	√
	14.11.19 (1)	Jas,Marc,Nar, Em		1:35:08	√	√

		H absent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children in Need/charity/homelessness /disability 		ex	
14.11.19 (2)	Mai/Nar/Jas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digressions – clothes/music/driving in Sparkhill/ positive stories about chn birthday cake, photos 	29:49	√	√
18.11.19	All class contribute		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Money – follow on from Pudsey, embedding maths into activities 	58:00		√
19.11.19 (1)	All (Fay +Marc absent)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build another step into story writing – adding feelings (presentation & me questioning WG and G) feelings – H volunteered into the general conversation (first time) Jas Qs and her own examples visitor in class. H from BOC – for CELTA not BOC related – comments on fact that whole lesson without IT nina and Hayley 	1:39:40	√ ex	√
19.11.19 (2)	Me & Jas		No recording of session as writing – see field notes	5:02	-	√
			post writing instructions – just me but Jas wants me to check it – not happy that I say just write, get off your phone, don't worry about mistakes, her explaining to me - interesting			
19.11.19 (3)	Peer tutor's class Mai/Hen/Jas		I observe them in R's 'prepare for teaching assistant' course	1:02:14	√	√
21.11.19 (1)	jas/Mai/Jo/Marc		installing Outlook for Jas/group feedback from 1 st draft story/spelling interspersed with stories (mine) and digressions/questions from Marc, Jas, Nina, Jo. Mai only heard answering Grammar Qs again. Pair work 5 minute oral storytelling (Mus & salt)	1:31:46	√	√
21.11.19 (2)	Mai & Jas		Mai and Jas 5 min story but difficult to hear because Mus picked up on this recording as well	1:15:14		√
21.11.19 (3)	Marc/Hen		IT reply to museum email – issues with tech – At end of recording Hen buying laptops and what to do about my issue with mine, Hen and Mai speaking Persian and Mus tells me about his absence	23.19	√	√

	25.11.19	Jo/ (Em absent)	Review feelings – “what makes me happy is” /childhood story with guided imagery/Jo parking	39:12	√	√
	26.11.19 (1)	Jo	Jo parking pics brought to continue yesterday’s chat H no story	1:32:37	√	√
	26.11.19 (2a)	Fay/Jas/me/Mais (all in) background, Marc can be heard)	pair work feelings/arranged marriage/ their families – their chn at uni/parking fines – digression I make mistake on board and Mais spots it/ writing and I circulate Ls ask Qs	41:41	√	√ covers all below
	26.11.19(2b)		simultaneous recording of pair work	41:41	√	
	26.11.19(2c)		simultaneous recording on different table	41:41	√	
	26.11.19 (3a)		fay	3:49	√	
	26.11.19 (3b)		Jas and Fay	4:24	√	
	26.11.19 (3c)		Jas	3:49	√	
	26.11.19 (3d)		Mais	13:49	√	
	26.11.19 (3e)		Marc and T	0:13	√	
	26.11.19 (3f)		Nou and Mar	16:15	√	
	26.11.19 (3g)		Marc and T	8:17	√	
	26.11.19 (3h)		Marc and T	9:07	√	
	26.11.19 (3i)		Jo	3:33	√	
	28.11.19 (1)	Jo/Jas	morning chat, Jo traffic/ Thanksgiving/news Trump and HK/Jas playing music from Temple live stream from India/shows images/email conventions/ listening to their own recordings sent by email/Fay and her mistakes/ IT issues now no USBs allowed	1:24:44	√	
	28.11.19 (2)	Hen/Jas/Fay/Mar i/	Ta visits to see IT problems/creating own instructions for accessing One Drive me QS confusing Word,One Drive,Outlook /continuing their story writing/ Hen talks about Iranian govt. and other personal stuff after class (last 20 mins redundant)	1:46:53	√	
Dec	02.12.19 (1)	Fay/Mai /Jas	Fay attendance discussion making apps in lesson time/me losing it ! writing poems/ word order/parts of speech – ‘ blood from stone lesson’, Mais providing answers	32:36	√	
	02.12.19 (2)		feelings poems from models – similes/class composition/	48:31	√	
	03.12.19		Speaking Milestone – simultaneous recordings	20:51	√	

	03.12.19		"	55:25	√	
			"	24:29	√	
			dor and Fad	16:27	√	
	"		Hoss and Mar	16:18	√	
	"		Nou and Wai	13:33	√	
	"		Em and T	1:17:08	√	
	"		Jas and Mas	12:17	√	
	"		Homeless nou ad Wai	8:04	√	
			" Jas and Mas	8:28	√	
	"		" fad and dor	8:19	√	
	"		" Em and T	8:31	√	
	"		Feelings circle 1	31:33	√	
	"		" 2	36:38	√	
	"		" 3	31:31	√	
			" 4	31:44	√	
			" 5	31:47	√	
	10.12.19 (1)	Fay/Hen	talking about her progress – persuades me she needs to go to next level before class/Hen went home when late	8:05	√	
	10.12.19 (2)	Fay	discussion about their progression to next course - & writing about their future plans (just for me not to share) /coffee from H& M	28:43	-	
	10.12.19 (3)	Mai/Hen/Jas/Nina/Em	talking about 1 st drafts – don't like it because I won't correct everything and I say it doesn't matter about spelling etc, preferences in book Hen and his whiteboard/Em and her abaya	29:13	√	√
	10.12.19 (4)	Fay/Jas/Marc/Mari/Nina	F asking grammar Qs - will going to/talking about future, talking about end of term party digression about my lack of cooking ability/H and Marc showing how to keep laptop from switching off	1:22:26	√	√
	16.12.19	Jo/Dor/Jas/Mai/	Jo brings books she bought from a sale – interrupts class, digress with knitting/Chinese cookery/ Reading pt 1 – team read	33:33	√	√
	16.12.19 (2)	Mari/Jas/	(branch/chain) Reading for detail– hotel me losing it again when they don't read carefully esp with Nina	16:08	-	√

	17.12.19 (1)	Izzy/Fay/Marc/Jo /Dot/	Iz drops in before her class – talks about her problems and her kids doing nothing at school except colouring/more about levels / advert for LinkedIn in form of profession wordsearch	24:46	-	-
	17.12.19 (2)	Jo/Marc/Mari/E m/Fay	pairs profession abc/digression about bills and changing providers/using a dictionary – ‘what for teacher ...I got mobile’?? Saying goodbye to Ls not coming to party	2:45:03	√	√

Appendix 4: E3 Recordings catalogue term 1

Month	Date	Participants	Description	Time	Field notes	Transcribed
Oct	11.10.19	Ibo	Turkish into Syria	07:36	√	√
		Ibo, Oll	Iphone – Ls persuade me I need a new phone!	2:08	√	
	18.10.19	Az	After jobs fair – not useful	3:07	√	
		Ibo	Questions – Ibo can't hear word order- others' reactions	10:48	√	✓
		Sh/Nan/Iz	After class – cooking 'way to a man's heart/dress	6:01	√	✓
	25.10.19	Iz/Nan	End of class – Iz talking constantly over everyone trying to talk to me	5:53	√	
			Izzy languages –	1:27	√	
			Lost key for cupboard – me owning up to mistakes	12:40	√	
			Group writing	52:24	√	
		Iz, Nan, Ibo, Sh,	Feelings I feel...when - situations eg. jobseekers, gender, home life neighbours, dirty neighbourhood – lots of digression – widening conversation with Qs	2:00:04	√	
Nov	08.11.19 (1)		Violin (in Room 17)	20:33	√	
	08.11.19 (2)		Rice pudding Nancy	2:54	-	
	08.11.19 (3)		Opinions on new room/Lesson – irregular verbs	6:33	-	
	08.11.19 (4)		Lesson cont	28:54	-	
	15.11.19		Children in Need	1:02:42	√	√
	15.11.19		Children in need cont.	2:15:43	√	√
	22.11.19	Iz, Ibo, Adam	Free tickets to Symphony hall – only Sh Iz's son 11+ /homeless Iz digressing IT task with laptops – editing in Word Lots of questioning (me)	1:29:05	√	√
	22.11.19		Iz speaking for Sherry Discussing opportunities for speaking – addressing the issue because Ls are visibly annoyed with Iz.	1:05:00	√	√
	29.11.19		Iz about her son, Black Friday	1:40:10	√	-
Dec	03.12.19	E2 break and Iz dropping in	Break - Iz ill but can still talk/Fay's story (Move to E2) Conversation starters - neighbourhood	13:55	√	-

Appendix 5: E3 Recordings catalogue term 2

Month	Date	Participants	Description	Time	Field notes	Transcribed
Jan						
	14.01.20	Hen	Cover for G future /1 st conditional Opening game, Henry ill	6:51	√	√
	14.01.20	hen	Advice on keeping well, needing mum when ill (to me)	4:39	√	
	15.01.20	Mas late	IT sessions using conditionals/more discussion about future/	1:15:04	√	-
	23.01.20	Mari	Advice on personal matter (after workshop)	15:59	-	-
	29.01.20	Ad/IboFay/Jo	Covid in China/depressing news-Dan Plan a trip/ IT -Create folder for One Drive/ gonna-Ghana (from G)/group trip group 1	1:40:35	-	-
	29.01.20	Ibo	Brexit discussion	10:09	√	√
			Group 1 part 1 Holiday group task	13:16	√	√
			Group 1 part 2	55:24	√	√
			Group 2 Part 1	12:49	√	√
			Group 2 Part 2	55:23	√	√
			Group 3 Part 1 and 2 ?	1:09:18	√	√
			Group 4	56:32	√	√
Feb	05.02.20 (1)		Preparing trip presentation	35:06	√	√
	05.02.20 (2)		"	1:58	√	√
	05.02.20 (3)		"	41:28	√	√
March	04.03.20		Hen exam results/ H &M speaking Persian/Excel – H my assistant/sickness - idioms ‘under the weather’ & symptoms – my chicken pox story Abby & Marie personal medical Qs after health lesson	1:52:45	√	√
	04.03.20		closing schools etc.	1:25:02	√	√
	11.03.20		Closing schools – Italian ski trips/ IT qual/Excel/Nancy Covid in Iran	03:00:04	√	√

Appendix 6: Field notes and recordings from BOC rehearsals and workshop

BOC Field Notes from Workshops and Rehearsals						
Pilot workshops and rehearsals with Jenny 2018/2019					Recorded	Book
Nov	2018		Workshop at institute		-	
Feb	14.02.19		Workshop at institute with G		-	4
	14.02.19	Full company	Rehearsal Tower Ballroom 6:30 -9:30 +hat with RW		√	4
	17.02.19	Full comp – soloists sent home	Rehearsal - change venue due to roof collapsing, went to a local church		√	4
	19.02.19	Full co.	Nancy turned up after workshop		√	4
	21.02.19	Full co.			√	4
Data collected after ethics completed						
Jan	23.01.20	E2/E3	Workshop 11:30 – 12:30	√	√	1
Feb	05.02.20		Taster session at Gas Hall x 6 pages	√	√	1
	09.02.20	full company	Rehearsal – (most mentors abs v bad weather)x 8 pages	√	√	1
	11.02.20	Sops, alts	Rehearsal x 6 pages	√	√	1
	16.02.20	Full company	Rehearsal x 7 pages		√	1
	23.02.20	Full company	Rehearsal x 6 pages		√	1
	25.02.20	Sops, alts	Rehearsal x 3 pages		-	1
March	01.03.20	Full company	Rehearsal x 7 pages	√	√	2
	03.03.20	Sops, alts	Rehearsal x 6 pages		-	2
	08.03.20	Full company	Rehearsal x7 pages		√	2
	10.03.20	E2/E3	Workshop at institute	√	√	2
	10.03.20	Sops alts	Rehearsal x 4 pages			2
	15.03.20	Full company Mas absent	Postponement of project – performed all songs as if for audience x 2pages			2

Appendix 7: Interview recordings October -July 2020

	Participant	Country	Interview 1 Face to face	Interview 2 Zoom	Interview 3 Zoom
E2/E3	Henry	Iran	28.10.19 (56:00)	15.05.20 (1:38:22)	22.07.20 (59:46)
E2/E3	Maisie	Iran	28.10.19 ((1:11:11)	20.05.20 (32:20)	22.07.20 59:46)
E2/E3	Marie	Brazil	28.10.19 (48:59)		
E2/E3	Jasmine	Afghanistan	12.11.19 (58:52)		
E2/E3	Jo	Hong Kong	04.11.19 (1:07:29)		
E2/E3	Marcus	Libya	26.11.19		
E2	Dotty	Angola	30.10.19 (22:46)		
E2/3	Tandy	Sudan	28.10.19 (34:29)		
E2	Nigel	Cameroon	07.11.19 (33.05)		
E2	Nina	Bangladesh	21.11.19 (50:39)		
E3	Izzy	Iraq	0811.19 (56:42)		
E3	Flora	Somalia	28.10.19 (59:59)		
E3	Nancy	Iran	28.10.19		
E3	Abby	Egyptian	30.10.19 (36:11)		
E3	Adam	Syrian	30.10.19 (23:32)		
E3	Sheena	Iran	29.11.19 (24:17)		

Appendix 8: Example of field notes following an E2 session

14.11.19 Room 14

1:35:09



Want Ls to focus on PPT and also share with whole class so moved tables (see photo).

Before lesson begins

00:00 – 08:54

Most Ls went to the larger table in front of the whiteboard but Jo immediately parked herself on the outside on the second table, this is consistent with her self-confessed preference for working alone. I don't move her today. Nina on time again and joined the big table today - started talking to Mais before class. First time I have seen her do this, in fact first time she has instigated a conversation with anyone unless doing GW/PW. Em joins them and they are more animated than usual for a miserable Thursday morning. They are looking in each others' bags and smiling. I'm curious but they don't involve me so I say nothing - later I discover they have made cakes for my birthday which they learnt about yesterday when I took in chocs. What I find interesting is that these 3 never usually sit in the same area never mind chat like friends as they are doing today. This may be as a result of the small group we had yesterday (see notes- they were on one table and Mas/Nina sat together). Jas always sits under my nose if she can. She's wearing a sari today – never worn before so I ask her about it. She gets up and gives me a guided tour of the material, the design and finishes with a twirl. She would wear it more often but it's too cold. She has full winter wardrobe underneath. She also says it's for special celebrations so I ask what's the occasion today and she just smiles at me. I ask if she's playing in the temple again and she says yes but that's not the reason. (Later she says now you know why I wear as she is lighting candles for the cake) . She says she does wear it at home all the time because it's comfortable and I tell her what I wear. I then ask Nina who also wears hers at home but not out in the cold. As I am asking her Marc comes in.

Marcus back today after a considerable absence. Support coach had to be involved because of absence but not sure how necessary that was. I've had email exchanges with him so I know his absence has not been down to ill health - he's just said accommodation problems. I plough in with a sarcastic overdramatic greeting which is intended to be funny (!) and I ask the Ls if they remember the face or have any idea who this is. I ask where's he's been and immediately think better of the public challenge saying 'no tell me later' - he laughs and gestures that it's fine and not a private matter and tells me he's been moved twice in 2 weeks by Midland Heart. We discuss where he is now I tell him there is a community Adult Ed centre there, which would be closer for English classes. We talk about the area and how noisy it is. I drive around there and people park all over pavement and there is always lots of traffic. He has a car so not bothered about distance and he wants to come to the centre. At this Nina opens eyes wide and turns to Mas to check if she heard correctly that Marc has a car - there's an exchange between them and they both turn back to Marc to listen to his story-telling. Marc commands an audience when he speaks - he speaks clearly and quite fluently and he engages with the room - even though talking to me, he makes eye contact with rest of the group to involve them. After he's finished Tandy quietly asks him Qs about his move and they continue a private conversation - I can hear T asking about how he managed this, sounds like he's asking for advice, Marc in role of expert now is explaining and jotting something down - I sneak a look and it's numbers, one phone number and what look like calculations. Meanwhile on same table Jo reading her paper as she does every morning. Not really sure if she reads anything or looks at pictures or if she brings it in because I've asked the Ls to be more proactive when it comes to reading. Several Ls have reading targets related to finding own material and completing various tasks - Jo chose to work on vocab. Will check in her tutorial. Just as we are about to start she says that nobody had been to the concert at the Symphony Hall last night. I had given tickets to everyone who asked for them but it seems they didn't use them so I overdo the indignation at their not taking up the opportunity. The room falls quiet so I don't pursue but I ask Jo if she enjoyed it and she says 'half and half'. She liked the singing but not the music - it was a Spanish composer. I ask what she would prefer and then ask the others what kind of music they all listen to or if they have a favourite singer. Marc likes pop and jazz. I ask if they listen to English songs and Marc likes Sam Smith, Michael Jackson and Adele. I ask who else knows her and most do - we talk about her weight loss and how it changed her appearance and Jo says it's because she wasn't happy because of her man.

Fay absent again as she is having treatment for her hips/legs.

Session 1

Day before Children in Need (CIN) so taking the opportunity to use materials to discuss issues related to CIN.

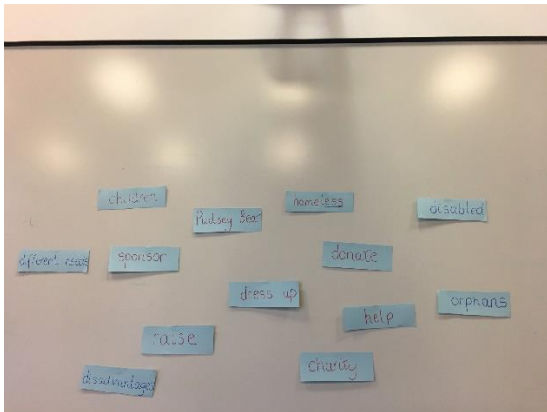
I direct them to the outcome board. it is vague because I don't want to give too much away. We discuss bullet one

- talk about an event

We discuss what *event* is and elicit examples. Nina says Christmas party - of all the events she could have chosen as a Muslim she chooses this - it surprises me. Jas says a big event was celebrated on Tuesday, the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Jas tells us how Pakistan opened its borders for 3 days for all to go to the big gurdwara without visa. I tell them how I saw the big temple in Wolverhampton

had been in the news for the celebration it had organised for this and we looked at some pics from online news as they were all interested to see the temple. Jas was over the moon with this. She tells us Muslims also celebrate this birth and Nina (from Bangladesh) confirms this. I say the event we are going to talk about is happening tomorrow but no one can guess what.

Began with words stuck to board connected with CIN – asked Ls if they could see a connection.



They read the words out and try to make a sentence out of them as we have done in the past. I repeat they have a connection and we are going to use them to talk about an event. Without the words it will be difficult to discuss the event. I ask about the words – are they singular or plural? are they adjectives, nouns etc? focus on less as suffix for adjectives and elicit useless – the elicit the opposite. I say it's helpful to know what part of speech and Jas says 'helpless!'

Nigel turns up at 15:50

Mari remembered the name and knew it was a bear and I saw her go for her phone to search it. I asked them to discuss the words they knew and find what they didn't. At beginning of class they are often slow to discuss – they went straight for mobiles to search for unknown words. Group discussion didn't happen – instructions not clear? Task too difficult? Task didn't require discussion to complete quickly? Gave time (5 mins) to look up words and discuss in pairs what connection might be. They need prompting to begin discussion today and soon they swap ideas and what words they have found. Jo comes to look at the words on the board. she is standing about 10 cm away. I laugh and her what she's doing and she has lost her glasses somewhere – maybe at the symphony hall last night but she's not sure. I tell her to take photo.

Mari found Pudsey online and she had seen stuff in Asda - Eman then made the connection. I showed the cartoon mascot but generally their faces told me there was no recognition. It is everywhere and I wonder how they can miss it. Jo remembers that she sees the bear in winter and it's to collect money for the children. The girls who did recognise both have children.

I put up Pudsey and they can say it's a teddy bear. When I Jas says the d is silent. Talk about why he has a patch and what he symbolises. I point out he is a happy bear. I explain about Children in Need – the dressing up, the Pudsey merchandise, the amount of money raised, the kind of children who are helped. I ask if those with children have had a letter from school about the event. Only Em's son and daughter has a non-uniform day for £1. I tell them it was a nightmare when my kids were little because they would spend hours deciding what to wear. Em says her kids have been to school with pyjamas and Christmas jumper last year.

I access the information from the Equality and Diversity folder on our shared folder and elicit ideas on why this lesson is filed here. Ls are to access the same info to read and answer some questions. We explain 'diverse' and what diverse populations can offer to a community. Jas asks about 'diversion' and I deal with it quickly. I show them 2 PPTs – they are to choose the easier or more difficult depending on how much of a challenge they want today. We look at some general info together first to give some more context. 'What is BBC Children in Need?' The pics match the words on the board. We elicit 'volunteer' and in our discussion all the words/collocations on board crop up eg. raise money, charity. We elicit other charities national and international: Unicef, for the earthquake, Red Cross, charity shops in the high street for Heart foundation, Cancer relief etc. Show pics of children who have been helped and we speculate what their problems could be. When Marc says homeless Jas says no and I say yes. She wants to know why children are homeless in the UK as she thinks the government here look after children.

40:00 homelessness to transcribe about 3 mins

try to elicit *mascot* for Pudsey by comparing to football animal characters. I ask what he does

Jas: he *increases* people to donate

I try to elicit *encourage* and she finds the word. Jas asks about the word *disadvantaged*. We look at the prefix. I ask them to predict what they do with the money. There is a slide showing what is done eg activity centres, charities looking after families, buying equipment like wheelchairs, help for carers so they can get a break, support families who need money for food and clothes. Show a map where this happens – only Marc can identify Wales and northern Ireland, others don't recognise the UK. Quick chat about Ireland being separate and having the Euro. Can hear Marc explain this to Tandy. Only Marc can explain which the cities are marked – London, Birmingham, Edinburgh. Mais knows as well which is London. On the interactive map we look at a centre for autistic children and we discuss this condition and how the centre helps them to make friends. I tell them about a centre where my sister worked for people with special needs. Walls were all padded. A centre in Sheffield helps children who are overweight – I ask why they might be overweight and elicit ideas. Clubs are expensive but we discussed that these are different times and when we were kids we played outside. Jas asks why not fat and discuss how the words make people feel. In Shropshire, a centre for children with life-limiting illnesses. A music and art activity centre for children who don't live with their own parents. Jo knows a family where the children are not cared for, somewhere in Devon and she is upset because she can't help; they don't have a hot meal. Mari knows a mum who is really stressed and struggling; her child was born without all fingers. Jas has a disabled child relative in her family. I ask about music and it makes them feel better. I ask them if they sing – I told them I used to get paid for singing and it was the best job ever. Nina sings while she's cooking. Jas puts god's music and she sings and dances. Mais when she's cooking she listens to the radio. Dotty was singing in the morning before she came. Mari sings in the toilet and her son tells her 'ok that's enough mum'. Nig sings on the bus but also at the protests. Jas says she can't understand him to me – she doesn't tell him directly. She says when I repeat back what he has said she understands it. I tell her it's because im a teacher and making a special effort! I say in a way that makes everyone laugh. But I tell them that I actually speak normally and don't slow my speech for them unless I'm giving instructions. Marc sings when he's driving and listening – so do I really loud. I do an impression of me arriving at the traffic lights. Tandy sings in a party and at home. I ask if anyone thinks they have a really good singing voice. Marc in bathroom my voice is always nice lol. I say the acoustics are better and explain. **Transcribe this later**

Go on to the art part and say how therapeutic it is to colour – books they sell now. Jas's daughter draws to calm nerves. Tell them about pottery classes etc at school. Move on to *fundraising* and us Em's

example of her daughter's non-uniform day. Elicit things people do to get sponsored Marc run, swimming the Channel, David Walliams swam the Thames, skydiving, parachuting. Marc would like to do the dangerous stuff because he's sacred. Jas says blood donations and many of them donate in New Street. I ask if they know their blood group and which are rare. Move on to what people are doing around the UK: climbing Kilimanjaro, skydiving, marathon. I ask how far they can run Marc 2k. I say it's great because it's a free activity. Marc feels better running in the gym – for me opposite. I don't like running and not going anywhere. Jas goes walking – all girls walk. Nig and Tandy play football. This year there is a Great Wall of China walk – tell them about my trip and Jas asks if it's a long walk lol. We discuss why it was built and Jas wants to know which country is on the other side Explain the bring and buy sale and say how we do this sometimes at BH. talent show – jas knows what this is. I ask what talents they have – none. make spotty cakes for Pudsey. Dress up compare with get dressed. Show pic of dan with goose costume on and they think it's hilarious. Show how much has been raised since it started and it's an astonishing figure. tell them what they might see tomorrow – people jingling pots for coins in the street. Jas wants to know if all the money goes to help. I say it's a very good point and she says yes it is. She wants to know if the celebrities get paid. I tell them they can watch it on BBC. tell them I wanted them to know so they would understand. I say break because I need coffee and ask if anyone else drinks as much coffee as I do. Marc says Tandy does and he makes a joke that he could be my coffee-mate . Ha.

Session 2

8:54

After break they have a surprise for me which I absolutely did not guess – made cakes for my birthday which has passed. Strange that when it was break time they didn't say anything. They waited till we came back from break to get the bags open light candles (was waiting for smoke alarm to go off but didn't intervene as they were so excited.) They said I need my coffee and Marc had bought me one from the machine. He also had one as did Tandy. They all sang (except T who stood with both hands round his coffee, not sure he knew what to sing but he was smiling at me dancing about) – started by Jas and Marcus. I danced around and Mais started clapping. Marcus took my phone to take photos of me and my cakes – others took photos as well. This is odd because when I ask them about taking photos they'd usually rather not bother but now everyone except Tandy has their phone out. After the singing Jas takes opportunity to take several photos of me and her. Of course, I don't mind but interesting that no one asked if I did consider their objections. Nig asked several times about my age and even sang it as an extra verse when everyone else stopped. Jas played mum. After I cut the cake and had the obligatory cake cutting photos she plated for everyone and she cleaned up afterwards while I continued with the lesson - I had left it and was teaching around it!



June.com.pk/story/2095689/1-celebrating-sikhism-doors-largest-gurdwara-open-soon

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Punjab > Celebrating Sikhism: Doors To The Largest Gurdwara To Open Soon

Celebrating Sikhism: Doors to the largest gurdwara to open soon

Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur to welcome thousands as community marks 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak

Asif Mehmood | November 08, 2019



Kartarpur Gurdwara Sahib. PHOTO: AFP

LAHORE: Pakistan is set to open the largest gurdwara this month, just in time for the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism.

Built on the site where the first Sikh Guru settled and died, the sprawling worship place sits a stone's throw from the heavily armed India-Pakistan border.

After months of restoration, Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, the second holiest site for followers of the Guru Nanak, is finally ready to welcome thousands of pilgrims.

Notable for its location, the temple has made headlines since Islamabad proposed visa-free entry for followers of Sikhism, allowing them to visit the holy sites in Pakistan.

The monotheistic religion hails from the Punjab region, but since independence from the British rule in 1947, the followers of Sikhism and its holiest sites have been scattered on both sides of the border. Guru Nanak, the revered saint, himself spent the final 18 years of his life at Kartarpur Sahib, now situated in Pakistan, making it one of the most important places for followers of the faith.

['Will go to Kartarpur even without permission', Sidhu warns Modi govt](#)

With the sides fenced off, the Kartarpur corridor will now lead from Indian Punjab's Gurdaspur district straight to in Narowal district where the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib is situated, enabling thousands of Sikh



Appendix 9: Example of my reflection: How engaging with the data has an impact

This follows the first lockdown. I lose touch with Henry.

This is my stream of consciousness in response to a question from my supervisor about what I want to focus on.

But I'm not sure what that is. What is meaningful to me is that I was touched by Henry and the way our relationship developed. He learned to trust me with parts of his life that were excruciatingly painful - I couldn't do anything about his problems, but I think from the way he pursued moments to have private chats, he valued my interest and care. I will never know if I made a difference. Probably not. I have been more reflective on my position of responsibility since Jenny and Henry, I've re-evaluated the way I view engagement and participation and it has made me quite militant with policies I'm supposed to implement in the name of inclusion. I am also left with a feeling that no matter how much we give of ourselves, the ultimate responsibility for the changing of a life does not, cannot, lie with us. To what extent can educational policies and practices keep holding teachers accountable for the actions of others? A conscientious teacher feels enough responsibility anyway without the added pressure; they hold themselves accountable in my experience. There is no time to care, to listen to stories, no time to ask 'how are you?'

And I did start by looking at how certain pedagogies might broaden the range of identity positions open to adult learners so that they might participate more fully in their social worlds... but in my heart, I'm not really sure they can. For all the work we did trying to engage with areas of the wider community, bringing artists and speakers in, organising workshops, taking learners out etc. etc. I didn't hear any students telling me what a difference it made. On the contrary, they told me they couldn't join various groups because they couldn't afford the time or the bus fare. After the opera visit a couple of them asked me if they could do some 'real work now'. The only student who was brave enough to take advantage of an opportunity to join a community was Jenny and look what happened there.

And I don't know how to theorise any of that. So this is where I am.

Appendix 10: Ethical approval

The Secretariat
University of Leeds
Leeds, LS2 9JT
Tel: 0113 343 4873
Email: ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Louise Dearden
School of Education
University of Leeds
Leeds, LS2 9JT

**Social Sciences, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee
University of Leeds**

26 February 2024

Dear Louise

Title of study: Understanding the role of a creative pedagogy in language learning as a means to widen identity options available to ESOL learners: A linguistic ethnography

Ethics reference: AREA 18-152

Grant reference: 201264702

I am pleased to inform you that the above research application has been reviewed by the Social Sciences, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee and I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion as of the date of this letter. The following documentation was considered:

Document	Version	Date
AREA 18-152 Louise Dearden Ethical Review .pdf	1	20/05/2019
AREA 18-152 Appendix 1 ESOL learner participant information and consent form.pdf	1	20/05/2019
AREA 18-152 Appendix 2 Additional participant information sheet and consent form.pdf	1	20/05/2019

Committee members made the following comments about your application:

Application section	Comment	Response required/ amended application required/ for consideration
C18	A low risk assessment is likely to be required, as the research is to be conducted away from the University: https://essl-staff.leeds.ac.uk/services/health-safety-and-wellbeing .	For consideration and completion if required.
Participant info sheets	The supervisors' contact details should also be provided	Please amend

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the information in your ethics application as submitted at date of this approval as all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAmendment>.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation and other documents relating to the study, including any risk assessments. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited. There is a checklist listing examples of documents to be kept which is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAudits>.

We welcome feedback on your experience of the ethical review process and suggestions for improvement. Please email any comments to ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Blaikie

Senior Research Ethics Administrator, the Secretariat

On behalf of Dr Kahryn Hughes, Chair, [AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee](#)

Appendix 11: Information sheet and consent form for ESOL learners

Title of research Project:

Understanding the role of a creative pedagogy in language learning as a means to widen identity options available to ESOL learners: A linguistic ethnography

Invitation

I am inviting you to take part in a research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand what this will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear. Ask me if you would like more information. Take time to decide if you want to take part or not. You can talk to friends and family about this if you want to.

What is the purpose of the research?

My project looks at how ESOL students participate in different language learning activities at the college and at Birmingham Opera workshops and rehearsals.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are an ESOL learner at this college. You might decide to take part in The Birmingham Opera Company show in March as a volunteer. This is your choice and not part of your ESOL course.

What do I have to do?

You will take part in 3 interviews with me which will last about one hour each time. I will ask you some questions about your life in the UK, your learning here at the institute and your goals for the future. The interviews will be informal and will take place after class here at college.

If you join the Birmingham Opera show, I will ask you about experiences during workshops and rehearsals. During workshops and rehearsals, I will take notes about what I see happening. In the interviews I will ask you about what I think is interesting in my notes. You do not have to answer a question if you do not want to.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

I will audio-record the interview so that I can remember your words accurately and I can play the recording many times.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

The interview recordings will be confidential and not shared with anyone. To protect your privacy and your identity, your real name will not appear in any reports or articles. You will have a pseudonym (like a nickname) which you can choose yourself. All the information I collect will be password protected, encrypted and stored on a secure server at the University of Leeds.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The anonymised results of the study will appear in my PhD thesis. In future, the results might appear in research-based literature, such as journal articles. I will also share the results of this research project at academic conferences.

Withdrawing

You can withdraw from the project at any time between 01/10/19 and 30/04/20. You do not have to give me a reason and this will not affect your ESOL course in any way.

Louise Dearden
 Birmingham Adult Education Service
 Library of Birmingham, Centenary Sq.
 B1 2ND
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Professor M. Kubanyiova
 School of Education
 University of Leeds
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Consent to take part in research project:

Understanding the role of a creative pedagogy in language learning as a means to widen identity options available to ESOL learners: A linguistic ethnography

Add your initials next to the statement if you agree

<p>I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated explaining my role in research project. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.</p>	
<p>I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time before 30/04/20. I do not need to give a reason. I understand that I do not have to answer any question if I do not want to.</p>	

<p>If I withdraw before 30/04/20 recordings of my interviews will be deleted and information in observation notes will not be used.</p>	
<p>I give permission for the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be used in the research materials, or reports that result from the research.</p> <p>I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential.</p>	
<p>I agree for the information collected from me to be stored securely and used in relevant future research in an anonymised form.</p>	
<p>I understand that other researchers will have access to this information only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.</p>	
<p>I understand that other researchers may use my words in publications only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.</p>	
<p>I understand that relevant sections of the information collected during the study, may be looked at by auditors from the University of Leeds where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records.</p>	
<p>I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher if my contact details change during the project and, if necessary, afterwards.</p>	
Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	Louise Dearden
Signature	
Date*	

*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant.

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/ pre-written script/ information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be kept with the project's main documents which must be kept in a secure location.