

Mixed nationality relationships in the adult ESOL classroom

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For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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February 2004

Abstract

This thesis, by examining the action that was taking place 'below the surface', attempted to investigate what was happening in an adult, mixed-nationality English class, and particularly how the relationships and interaction between learners contributed to their learning experience. Set against a context of class dynamics, social relationships and affective factors in language learning, the thesis addresses whether having a mixture of different nationalities in the class led the learners to form relationships which furthered their social, emotional and learning experiences, and to find out what effect the mix of nationalities and cultures had on communication between learners. It also examines how important the relationships between learners were to the learning process, and whether individuals learnt from each other in a way that included personal culture as well as subject development. The research strategy employed was ethnomethodological and ethnographic, involving a case study of one class of 55 adult learners, over one academic term, carried out by the class teacher, acting as participant observer. Specifically, the thesis took account of the learners' views of mixed-nationality learning, through a series of interviews, and it recorded and analysed the relationship patterns formed in a mixed nationality class. Data was collected from the learners, the class teacher, an independent observer, and a teacher who taught the group after the main study had been completed. The classroom culture and activity was thus examined from different perspectives. A qualitative approach to the analysis of the data was adopted, although some quantitative devices and measures were used when appropriate. The thesis contributes to and extends current knowledge on the development of mixed-nationality classroom culture, the benefits and disadvantages of such culture for the use of co-operative and communicative language learning, and the impact of the relationships formed within such a culture on the individuals' learning experiences.

Key words and phrases

adult learners
ESOL
language classroom
learner relationships
mixed-nationality groups

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr Graham Low and Professor Richard Andrews, and the observer, Andrew Jackson, for their help throughout.

I also wish to acknowledge the co-operation and support of all the learners involved in both the pilot and the main studies, and to thank the replacement teacher [Susan] for her contribution.

Author's declaration

I confirm that this thesis is an original piece of work. No part of it has been published previously, and no other author has been involved in writing it.

Introduction

(1) Overview

In introducing the small-scale study of one English class, I hope to communicate the principles within it that are applicable to many other learning situations worldwide. Given the diversity of English teaching contexts across the world, it is perhaps inevitable that much practitioner research relates to methods of teaching and learning, rather than to a critical examination of class culture. What point is there in studying one class, microcosm that it is, and being unable to deduce any finding of universal application that is not already self-evident? The argument of this thesis is that by examining the action that is taking place 'below the surface' of one classroom, one can begin to establish principles of universal application regarding the appropriate conduct of such research, its strengths and weaknesses, and the sensitivities that a teacher-researcher needs to be aware of. In addition it is to be hoped that the present study will help to inform best practice in ESOL teaching in its current context.

This introductory chapter outlines the main aim of the study, and explains how that aim arose. It includes a brief description of the research strategy employed and the research techniques used; explains how the thesis makes a substantial and original contribution to the understanding of this research topic, and identifies the nature and purpose of each of the chapters of the thesis.

(2) The main aim of the study

In constructing the study, my main aim was to investigate what was happening in an adult, mixed-nationality English as an Additional Language (EAL) class that I was teaching¹. My interest was in the way that the relationships and interaction between learners contributed to their life and learning experience. I was interested to find out whether the class made a difference to them, and to investigate the nature and impact of the relationships that were formed between the learners with a specific focus on nationality as a factor in those relationships. The context of such a study extended to class dynamics, social relationships and language learning.

(3) The origins of the main aim

When the thesis was conceived I had been for some years the teacher of an English as an Additional Language class for adults, in which there was a wide range of different nationalities and national backgrounds among the learners. I was

interested in exploring whether the mixed nationality nature of the class contributed to the events in the classroom, and to the culture that was formed in the class, and if so, whether that contribution was positive or negative for the learners' experiences, both educational and social.

From a pedagogical viewpoint, I was interested in exploring the efficacy of the communicative approach to language teaching. My hypothesis was that the communicative methods practised in the class were made more efficacious by placing learners in an environment where they had to speak the target language to communicate with each other or with the teacher at all.

From a social and affective perspective, as well as taking into account the pedagogical implications, I also wished to address whether having a mixture of different nationalities in the class led the learners to form relationships which furthered their social, emotional and learning experiences, and to find out whether the mix of nationalities and cultures hindered communication.

Finally, I was interested in how important the relationships between learners were to the learning process, and whether individuals learnt from each other in a way that included personal culture as well as subject development.

(4) A brief description of the research strategy

There has been little previous work in the field studied, and I therefore had to devise an exploratory methodology that would be appropriate in the context in which I was working. The research strategy was ethnomethodological and ethnographic, involving a case study of one class, carried out by the class teacher, acting as participant observer. The class was also observed by the classroom assistant, and was later taught by another teacher, who has added her comments. Much of the data derives from the views of the learner participants. The broad approach to the analysis of the data that was collected was qualitative, although some quantitative devices and measures were used when appropriate.

(5) A brief description of the research techniques

The methods used to gather the data derived directly from the events that were occurring in the classroom. In order to make it possible to triangulate the research findings to some degree, data was collected in a number of different ways, from the perspectives of different participants. Both the teacher and the classroom assistant

observed the classes and made notes on them, while the learners in the class were asked to provide information about themselves, about their views on language learning, about what they perceived was happening in the classroom, and about who they were friendly with throughout the term. Samples of learners were interviewed on two occasions during the term and again at the end of the academic year. Interviews were also conducted with the classroom assistant observer, and with the teacher who had taken over the class after the term during which the main study was conducted.

(6) How the thesis makes a substantial and original contribution to our understanding of this research topic

The thesis contributes to and extends current knowledge on the development of mixed nationality classroom culture, for example, by exploring the different levels on which the learners' relationships operated; the benefits and disadvantages of such culture for the use of co-operative and communicative language learning, in particular the influence of nationality-related factors on learner relationships; the impact of the relationships formed on the individual's learning experiences, and specifically, the importance of social relationships within a Further Educational context. The thesis takes account of the learners' views of mixed nationality learning, through a series of interviews, and it records and analyses the relationship patterns formed in a mixed nationality class. The influence of the relationship patterns on the value of the class to the learners is explored, both from a language learning and a social aspect. The links between social and learning goals, for example in enhancing motivation, are considered. The work also contributes to an understanding of how to research the topic, as well as our understanding of the topic itself.

The present study addresses learner relationships within an ESOL class, that is, a class provided specifically for long-term residents in the U.K. ESOL provision is an expanding and developing area, and very little research has been carried out into the implications of learner relationships in this type of learning environment.

The focus of the present study is on learner-learner relationships, which is relatively unusual in practitioner research, although there have been studies of peer relationships between children which have implications for adult learners (see 2.6.6 below). The present study arose from the principle that teachers can inform their own teaching practice by reflecting on how learners behave together. Starting from

the position that learners can extend their learning by working together, the present study explores how willingly learners work together, and their perceptions of the benefits of doing so. It also explores what learners feel they gain from, or lose by, working with learners of other nationalities, and whether a form of common culture develops in the classroom. Thus the thesis identifies positive and negative facets of mixed nationality learner relationships, both with regard to the affective factors that influence learning, and to the group dynamics of the classroom. The data analysed below has been used not only to address the research questions, but also to explore related teaching and learning issues, and research methods.

(7) The nature and purpose of each of the chapters in the thesis

Chapter 1: The background of and context to the study

The first chapter explains the English teaching practices that were current at the time of the study and which formed a background to the research. It also sets out the conceptual and theoretical ideas from which the aim and purpose of the study arose. These include issues relating to second language learning and acquisition; the role of affect in language learning; group theory and its effect on roles and relationships within the classroom, and the links between nationality, culture, identity and language.

The chapter also describes and evaluates the context of the thesis, and discusses the ideas and events that generated the project.

Chapter 2: The literature review

The literature review examines and discusses the literature that exists about the teaching of English as an additional language; nationality, and related issues of identity, language and culture; linguistic and cultural imperialism; group formation and group culture; affect in language teaching; learning theory relating to language acquisition, motivation, different learning and teaching styles and group dynamics, and the social function of the classroom.

The chapter explains which definitions of nationality and culture, and which models of group dynamics, have been applied in the subsequent data analysis, contained in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

The aims of the chapter are, firstly, to introduce the key research questions, and to demonstrate how they arise from the relevant literature, and, secondly, to identify areas of interest to this thesis where little has been written.

Chapter 3: The methodology

The methodology chapter is concerned with the methods used for collecting and analysing the data, and discusses the theoretical principles underlying those methods. The chapter attempts to describe and explain the overall strategy adopted, the project design, and the methods used to conduct the project.

The chapter discusses the literature that relates to the methodology and outlines the key research questions and how they are to be addressed. It chapter also discusses subjectivity and bias; addresses the reliability and validity of the data collected; discusses the methods used for recording and presenting the data, and evaluates the data analysis. Finally, there is a discussion of the ethical considerations that affect the thesis.

Chapter 4: The pilot study

The pilot study chapter contains a complete appraisal of the pilot study, which was carried out during the academic year 2000 - 2001, to test the data collection methods before I embarked on the main study. The chapter accounts for what was done, and gives a critical review of the methods used, with suggestions for their revision in the main study.

Chapter 5: An account of the main study

This chapter gives an account of the main study, which arose from the pilot study and addressed broadly the same sources of data, although for the main study the data was collected during the academic year 2001 - 2002. The chapter describes the procedure for each method of data collection, and summarises the results.

Chapter 6: Learner relationships and class dynamics

This chapter addresses research question 1, 'What impact do the relationships that learners form have on class dynamics?', by considering what indicators there are from the data about the cohesiveness of the class group, and the affective factors, that is, the effects of the group on the emotions and feelings of the individual group members.

Chapter 7: Classroom culture

This chapter discusses the data about the classroom culture. Research question 2, 'Does the formation of mixed nationality relationships in the ESOL classroom affect the classroom culture?', builds on the first research question by introducing nationality as a factor in learner relationships. The second research question is addressed by examining the data that reveals what the learners perceive about nationality and identity, and the data that indicates whether or not cultural change is possible or probable.

Discussion of research question 3, 'Does working in mixed nationality groups appear to further the social success of the class?', gives rise to an examination of the data on the groups and friendships formed in the class. Research questions 1, 2 and 3 link together in their exploration of learner relationships, involving the different facets of group dynamics, classroom culture and social friendships.

Chapter 8: The impact of mixed nationality groups on learning in the classroom

This chapter examines the impact of mixed nationality groups on learning. Research question 4, 'Does mixed nationality group work affect the learning in the classroom?', is answered from the data on group learning, with particular reference to scaffolding, motivation and anxiety. This question extends the investigation of learner relationships to include their impact on learning.

Finally, in order to present a more complete examination of the impact of learner relationships, data from across the study are used to address research question 5, 'Are there ways in which mixed nationality learning relationships affect the class adversely?'

Chapter 9: Conclusions

Broadly, the conclusions that could be drawn from the present study provided partial but not complete answers to the research questions, and therefore, as well as setting out the conclusions of the study, Chapter 9 contains suggestions for further research. Analysis of the relevant data concerning the impact of learner relationships on classroom dynamics (research question 1) showed a high incidence of the factors that tend towards group cohesion according to the model used (DOUGLAS 1995). Significant dislikes by the learners related to problems they experienced in communicating with each other. This research question could be

explored further by a detailed examination of the feedback provided by learners to each other, and the effects of this feedback on the cohesiveness of the group.

In examining the impact of the learner relationships on the class culture (research question 2), I concluded that the class had its own culture, with strong communication between learners of different nationalities, tending towards a shifting of the learners' own cultural identities, at least for the duration of their time in the class. To develop the study, it would be useful to gather data that dealt explicitly with the formation of cultural assumptions by the learners, and their perceptions of personal cultural change over time.

The data suggested that the social success of the class was enhanced by the mixed nationality relationships within it (research question 3), and that the class had a distinct social function. To explore this theme further it would be interesting to trace the development of relationships between learners, following their having worked together for the first time.

From the data relevant to the effect of the group work on the learning that was taking place (research question 4), it appeared that, in general, the learners found that working in mixed nationality group was motivating. Mixed nationality group work also helped to advance group accountability and encouraged the giving of feedback. However, as well as benefits, some detriments were noted, particularly communication problems. One area where the study could be extended would be the inclusion of attempts to measure what the learners were learning, and to what extent learning was taking place. A further study could measure learning attainment against aims, identifying the role played by the group process in the learning that was taking place.

Finally, there were some limited signs that mixed nationality group work had an adverse effect on the class (research question 5). These included stultification, anxiety, racial or national prejudice, and rejection, although the data were not conclusive. In a further study, the data collection instruments should be modified to address, explicitly, the factors in such a class that may deter groups from working together effectively.

Having introduced the aim of the thesis and the specific research questions, and having summarised the contents and conclusions, I now proceed, in Chapter 1, to explain the background to and context of the study.

Footnotes:

1 Throughout the study, the term 'ESOL class' has been used to describe the English as an Additional Language class studied, for reasons explained in section 1.2 below.

Chapter 1: The background to and context of the study

1.1 Overview

The aim of this chapter is to give an account of the background to the present study, in order to clarify the issues from which the research questions arose, and to explain its context, which will serve to underpin the broad approach and the methodology adopted. To this end, the chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section explains the English teaching practices that were current at the time of the study, out of which the research aim developed. It also sets out the conceptual and theoretical ideas that prompted an exploration of this particular field. The second section describes and evaluates the context of the thesis and the third section discusses the ideas and events that generated the specific research project that forms the subject of the thesis.

1.2 The English teaching practices that were current at the time of the study

1.2.1 English teaching in the UK in the early twenty-first century

The teaching of English as a non-native language is an industry that has expanded greatly in the last decade. Unsurprisingly, to a large extent its practices are market driven. The present study was carried out in the period from 2000-2002, and the practices current at the time and relevant to its context are these:

(a) English as a world language

English has attained the status of a world language through factors that affect the lives of residents in the UK as well as abroad. These factors include commercial colonisation by the United States, the internet, commercial modern music, academic publication and international tourism, and have contributed to the an incentive for foreign nationals in the UK to take the opportunity to increase their English skills. Thus English learned in the UK is not necessarily purely for communication within the local community, but also provides a means by which the speaker has access to wider resources.

(b) Demographic movement

Migration into the UK has been prompted though past colonial links, European Union policies and the needs of refugees. For example, statistics for asylum seekers in the UK show that in 2002 the number of applicants (not counting dependants) rose

from 71,025 in 2001 to 84,130 in 2002. The majority of applicants were from Iraq, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Somalia and China, with an estimated 42% of applications being successful, in that the applicants were given conditional or unconditional leave to remain [HEATH JEFFRIES & LLOYD 2003]. It is estimated that migrants form almost 10% of the working population of the UK; 23% of these people come from elsewhere in the European Union and are thus not subject to immigration controls [KEMPTON 2002]. These statistics make it unsurprising that the British government is willing to fund English classes for European Union citizens, and others who have settled permanently in the UK.

(c) Cognitive methods of language teaching

Since Chomsky's promotion of the theory of language acquisition by immersion [CHOMSKY 1968], language teachers have been trained not to put total faith in behaviourism, but to trust that language might be acquired through use as well as (or instead of) conscious learning.

As a result of these three factors, when the topic of this thesis was devised, publicly funded classes of the type studied (and described in more detail in section 1.4 below) were offered by colleges of further education. Many of these classes had developed in an *ad hoc* way and had not been the subject of much coherent research into their uses and effectiveness.

1.2.2 Definition of key terms

This section defines some of the recurring terms ('ESOL', 'communicative language teaching', 'ZPD', 'scaffolding', and 'learners') used in the thesis.

(a) 'ESOL'

ESOL is given different meanings in different contexts. As it is a key term in this thesis it is important that the use applied to it here is specified. It may be used to mean 'English for speakers of other languages', that is, any kind of English used by an individual for whom it is not his or her first language, and it is used in this way, for example, by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. This is a broad definition, and is not the meaning given to the acronym here for reasons explained below. In the United Kingdom the teaching of English to those for whom it is not their native language can be divided into two broad categories. The first is 'English as a foreign language' (EFL), which is the teaching of English as an academic subject to those who wish to study it in a formal way and be assessed

within the academic exam system, who are not from countries where English is the first language or has special status. EFL can be learnt in any country, whether or not English is the national, official or native language of that country or not. Thus a group of French teenagers learning English in a summer school in Britain are studying EFL, as are students of English at a Czech university. The second category, which applies only to people learning English in a country where English is spoken as a first or national language, is 'English as an additional language' (EAL), for those whose primary need for English is in the context of their everyday life and work, because they live in a country where either English is the first language, or where it has special status. The governmental organisations that regulate and fund the state provision of education use the acronym ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) to denote what is more accurately described as EAL. This thesis is concerned with EAL rather than EFL, but although the term English as an Additional Language is more current and more politically correct at the time of writing, I have chosen to use 'ESOL' instead. The reason for the choice is that ESOL is the official name of the course that formed the focus of the present study, and is the term used by the government to describe this type of course.

(b) 'Communicative language teaching'

The term 'communicative' when applied to language teaching theory and strategies indicates an underlying belief that effective communication depends largely or wholly on subconscious, internal processes. It gives responsibility for learning to the learners, and encourages autonomy. Above all, it is practical.

Students are ... actively engaged in negotiating meaning – in trying to make themselves understood – even when their knowledge of the target language is incomplete. They learn to communicate by communicating" [LARSEN-FREEMAN 1986 p 131].

The use of communicative teaching strategies should arise from a clear understanding by the teacher as to theories of language acquisition, and a belief in communicative theories such as creative construction rather than behaviourism [see LITTLEWOOD 1998]. However, the degree to which behaviourist and communicative teaching strategies are 'mixed' in classrooms persuades the writer that many teachers do not have a definitive view on how language is learned, and are willing to be eclectic in their approach for reasons such as apparent effectiveness, learner enthusiasm or ease of use of a given activity.

(c) The 'ZPD'

The idea of the ZPD, that is, the Zone of Proximal Development, originates from a concept that Vygotsky used [VYGOTSKY 1987], to explain how learning involves social and participatory processes, and refers to the individual's potential for development if assisted by others. The ZPD refers to the area of achievement a learner can reach when learning with others, which they would have been unable to reach alone. Vygotsky formulated his theory in the context of child development, but subsequent writers have applied the principles to adult learning. This area of research is discussed in more depth in section 2.6.3.

(d) 'Scaffolding'

Linked to the concept of the ZPD, 'scaffolding' refers to the support given to a learner by another person or other people to increase their level of achievement. Although this idea was developed initially with the teacher doing the scaffolding, it developed into a model of learners supporting each other's learning in a cooperative way, and is thus a learning theory that seeks to promote both the empowerment of the individual, and a sense of mutual responsibility among learners. Developments in this field are discussed in section 2.6.3.

(e) 'Learners'

The term 'learners' has been used throughout the present study in place of 'students'. However, in class I used the term 'students' and this is reflected in the interview data and the written data collection instruments. All words are culturally loaded, and 'student', although referring to any person using educational resources, conveys an impression of an individual whose main purpose at that time in their life is the pursuit of a particular qualification by following a specific course of study. This impression was not an accurate portrayal of the students that I was studying. Firstly, my students were very part time, attending the class for only two hours a week. Secondly, the course they were following did not necessarily lead to any qualification. Thirdly, few if any of the cohort would have described their main occupation as that of a student. The term 'learner' is a more neutral reference to those taking part in the activities of the class, as it refers to their role in the class, rather than to their status in society. However, it is not a perfect descriptor either, as the term implies that, within the class, the learners were at least motivated to learn, if not actually learning anything, and this cannot be assumed.

1.2.3 Current conceptual and theoretical issues in language teaching

The current conceptual and theoretical issues in English teaching today that are relevant to the present study include the following:

- (a) issues relating to second language learning and acquisition;
- b) the role of affect in language learning;
- (c) group theory and its effect on roles and relationships within the classroom
- (d) the links between nationality, culture, identity and language, and
- (e) the relationships between language acquisition and learner motivation.

There are also the current theories and policy relating to the teaching of ESOL, discussed below. The purpose of the present study is to address the interface between these areas.

(a) The influence of theories of second language learning and acquisition on teaching practices

The practice of second language teaching develops from the teacher's personality and past educational experiences as well as his or her beliefs about how language learning occurs. Different traditions within language teaching have arisen from different language needs and language learning theories. For example, the grammar-translation method is derived from the need to read literature in the target language, and the deductive construction of correct language usage from rule systems. The audio-lingual method and the total physical response method stem from a need for accurate language comprehension and the theory of behaviourism.¹ The theoretical underpinning of the communicative method has been outlined above in section 1.2.2. Different learning and teaching styles will be present in most classrooms, formed in part by the personality characteristics of the individual participants, and in part to their previously learnt learning and teaching styles. In addition, the experiences, personal development and increased awareness of learners and teacher will construct a constant pattern of change to classroom behaviour.

(b) Affect in language learning

The term 'affect' in education has to do with the emotions, and may be defined broadly as "aspects of emotion, feeling, mood or attitude which condition behaviour". [ARNOLD & BROWN 1999 p1] or "by saying that one's 'affect' towards a particular thing or action or situation or experience is how that thing or that action or that situation or that experience fits in with one's needs or purposes, and its resulting effect on one's emotions" [STEVICK 1999 p44].

Affect is relevant to the present study, because it relates both to relationship building and language learning. It finds its place easily in communicative language teaching, which is broadly humanistic in its approach. Some aspects of affect that seem to be of particular importance for individuals in second language learning include anxiety, inhibition, extroversion-introversion, self-esteem and motivation, and affective factors also influence learning styles. Similarly, with regard to the relationships within the second language classroom, issues of particular interest to the present study are empathy, classroom transactions and cross-cultural processes [ARNOLD & BROWN 1999]. There is a significant overlap between recent research in aspects of affect and in the theory of teaching groups².

(c) Relationships in the classroom and group theory

The use of differing approaches, such as psychodynamics, psychoanalysis, behaviourism, systems theory and humanism, to evaluate group processes has given rise, inevitably, to conflicting theories. (See section 2.3.1 for a more detailed discussion of these approaches.) There is contention as to whether an individual acts differently as a group member, (and if so how), and as to whether the roles allocated in groups, consciously or unconsciously, affect behaviour, motivation and learning.

(d) The link between language, nationality and culture

The developing study of semiotics has emphasised the culturally embedded nature of language. The relationship between nationality and culture, and the role of language in the nation state are both politically controversial areas; an attempt to unravel some of the connections in these areas, in order to define what is meant by 'identity' for individuals, is set out in section 2.4.

(e) The relationships between language acquisition and learner motivation

Language acquisition theories differ, and fashions in English teaching change. Communicative language teaching theory is popular in the U.K. at present, but nevertheless language acquisition is still a thorny area for teachers attempting to devise syllabuses and methods to ensure good exam results. It now appears clear that there is a link between motivation and language acquisition, even though theories about motivation differ [SCHUMANN 1999]. The present study has been carried out against a background of the uncertainties in these areas.

1.2.4 Current English teaching practices

The thesis refers to a particular genre of language learning, that is, ESOL, and in the present case, English as a non-native language for those living in the UK. ESOL in Britain is part of the Further Education Basic Skills sector, along with numeracy, literacy and I.T. In theory, an ESOL programme is tailored to each individual learner's needs, with individual tuition and learning aims. Practice varies considerably according to which organisation is providing the programme. The Further Education sector into which the curriculum area known as Basic Skills fits is very different from the private language school sector. Tuition is state funded and there is now a national curriculum with competence based outcomes. Learners may gain National Vocational Qualifications in English, and they may study English skills in conjunction with other vocational courses, such as computing.

Although good practice favours an approach where the needs of learners are diagnosed and addressed individually, many colleges find it more economically productive to have a class style enrolment and delivery, rather than workshop-type support. In addition, many ESOL teachers are first and foremost EFL teachers, not all understand the conceptual distinction between EFL and ESOL teaching, and some teach ESOL and EFL in mixed groups. It should be noted in this study that [Susan], the teacher who took over the class, had not taught ESOL before, despite having wide experience of EFL teaching.

1.2.5 The interface between policy and language teaching and learning

It is undeniable that teachers in learning Institutions and government policy makers have different priorities and concerns when addressing language education. Funding-driven curriculum management means that the key targets for managers are recruitment, retention and achievement. In mainstream Further Education, where this study was based, this leads to large classes (high levels of recruitment), pressure on teachers to design courses that students stay on (providing a disincentive for teachers to encourage learners to improve to the extent that they no longer require the class) and the fixing of somewhat arbitrary assessment practices through which as many students as possible will be able to demonstrate attainment. Despite excellent intentions, in practice this may mean that the ESOL teacher, possibly more used to teaching English as a Foreign Language, will pay more attention to expediency and less to the individual learners' needs, which will, after all, be almost impossible to attempt to meet in a mixed group of twenty or more students, meeting for two hours a week.

Given the above constraints, it must be questionable whether the classes that are provided meet the optimum conditions for language learning, insofar as those conditions have been identified [SPOLSKY 1989]. However, the priorities of teachers tend towards meeting the learners' needs, and teachers may be ingenious and indeed devious in doing so. One further question is whether the design of the ESOL class has the learners' non-language learning motives in view. If the learners are drawn to classes because they perform a social function, should the education provider accommodate that need?

1.3 The context of the project

1.3.1 The geographical setting

The city in which the study is set has a population of 181,000 and is the main city in a predominately agricultural region, with a population of 747,500, and with a population density of less than 1 person per hectare. 65% of the region's population is of working age (16-64), with an equal percentage above and below those ages. The city has some small refugee groups, that include Turkish Kurds, Hong Kong Chinese, Iranians, Bosnians and Kosovans, among others. The University has nearly 10,000 students, 1,400 of whom are from overseas, from around 90 different countries.

1.3.2 The institutional setting

The class referred to as [X] throughout the present study was run by a publicly funded college, referred to as [X College]. It was a college of Arts and Technology which became a College of Further and Higher Education, and then merged with the city's Sixth Form College, to become the most significant provider of post-sixteen education in the city. Two other comparable classes have been referred to; [Y] was a free class offered by a private language school, and [Z] was a free class offered by a charitable foundation, both situated in the same city as [X].

1.3.3 The student population

As discussed in 1.2.2 above, 'ESOL' has a specific meaning in state funded further education; at the time of the main study those who were eligible for free language classes consisted of E.U. citizens and their spouses, those with refugee status, and those who had been resident in the E.U. for at least three years. The class that features in this study originated to provide tuition for these groups, but, by the time of the main study, the population from which the learners were drawn was more

extensive than the sector of the population defined by the Further Education Funding Council as needing, and eligible for, ESOL. The group of learners comprising the class at [X] also included the partners of university students from overseas, and people who were from outside the E.U. and who had been resident within the E.U. for less than three years. A full description of the learners' characteristics is set out in section 5.

1.3.4 The time of the project

At the time of devising the project the writer was employed by [X College] and had taught an ESOL class at [X] for the previous four years. This remained the case during the pilot study, which was carried out in the Autumn Term of 2000. The main study was carried out during the academic year 2001-2, when the writer was employed by the college on a part-time basis. Thus the thesis was originally a piece of practitioner research, from which the writer began to take a more objective view when independent of the college.

1.3.5 The global situation at the time of the project

Global events have influenced the learner cohort at [X] from year to year. Immediately after Hong Kong became governed by China, a greater number of refugees from Hong Kong began to attend. The crisis in the former Yugoslavia led first to a small group of Bosnian refugees appearing at classes, and later to a number of Kosovan refugees who had arrived in the city together and were being housed in a hostel.

In addition, the learners had opinions on world events, which they were encouraged to express in the course of class discussion. During the main study there were two particular items of interest in the news. The first was the destruction of the World Trade Centre in New York in September 2001. The other was the discovery of a woman's dead body in an abandoned suitcase, and the disappearance of another woman who was later found to have been murdered. Both women were Korean:

Police investigating the body found in a suitcase near York say a second missing Korean woman travelled to North Yorkshire before the first woman's body was found. The body of Hyo Jung Jin, 21, was found in a suitcase in the village of Askham Bryan on 18 November. Korean-born In Hea Song, 22, was reported missing from her home in London in December. [BBC NEWS ONLINE].

Both stories were discussed avidly, and were felt by the teacher to be subjects that the group needed to be sensitive to, given the number of Muslim and Korean learners in the class.

1.4 The ideas and events that generated the research project

During previous years of teaching mixed-nationality, adult, ESOL classes, I had developed an interest in the relationships within the classroom, and how they affected learning. In particular I had noted the greater popularity of classes in which the learners had positive relationships with each other and with the teacher, and had identified the area of relationship-based teaching and learning as having possible relevance to mixed-nationality learner groups. I had also become interested in the question of whether the learners felt they benefited from learning in a mixed-nationality and multi-cultural setting, and whether they perceived such a class to have any particular effect on their motivation or learning. This raised questions as to whether the relationships formed between learners affected their learning experiences, and whether a class containing learners from different cultures would cause them to adapt their own personal cultures.

1.5 Summary of the background to and context of the research idea

From the above discussion of the background to and context of the study, it can be seen that the areas of language learning or acquisition, affect in learning, group behaviour, classroom relationships and learner identity are beset with questions, evolving and disputed theories, and uncertainties. The aim of this study is to gather together the common threads that run through these rather difficult and uncertain areas, and to investigate whether teaching language in mixed nationality groups appears to have an effect on the classroom culture and on the learning that takes place there.

Footnotes:

1 See LARSEN-FREEMAN 1986 for a more detailed appraisal of these methods.

2 For a discussion of this see DÖRNYEI & MALDAREZ 1999.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Overview

In the literature review I address the literature that relates to the content of the thesis, discussing issues, findings, concepts and theoretical models raised by other writings that are relevant to this piece of work. The literature that relates to the methodology of the study is discussed in Chapter 3.

The aim of the present study was to investigate the impact that the relationships between learners had on an ESOL class, with a specific focus on nationality as a factor in those relationships. The literature that has informed this investigation has been drawn from the different disciplines of educational theory, linguistics, psychology and anthropology, and it falls into the following broad categories:

(a) The theory that underlies the teaching of ESOL in the UK

The focus of the present study was an ESOL class, and therefore at the outset there was a need to examine the nature of ESOL in the UK and identify how it differs from EFL. Clarifying this distinction makes it possible to clarify the factors affecting the aims, motivation and context of the ESOL learners that were the subject of the study. Thus the first main section of the literature review (section 2.2 below) addresses these definitions and distinctions, and takes account of the differences borne of the fact that the class studied contained learners from a range of national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, who spoke a variety of first languages. It also takes account of the fact that the teaching methods were informed by communicative theories of learning, enabling the learners to form mixed-nationality relationships whilst working together in pairs or groups.

(b) The ways in which groups behave, and the implications of group theory for the classroom

The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of learner relationships. Group theory is relevant, both because the class studied functioned as a group, and because within that class smaller groups existed; both informal friendship groups, and also more formal, but transient, working groups. I have investigated theories about the effects of groups on learning behaviour, with particular reference to ideas that suggest that being part of a group can affect what and how much an individual learns. I have also considered theories about group formation, and about how groups work in educational environments, particularly the effect of group culture

upon the culture and behaviour of individuals. The groups in the study were made up of learners of different nationalities and thus I have also explored what, if any, influence the mixed nationality nature of the groups had on the group dynamics, and considered whether there were any other factors arising from the nature of this ESOL class that had an effect on the group dynamics. The findings from the literature on these issues will be used in the main study to formulate theory, pose questions and measure the research data.

(c) The interrelationship between the concepts of nationality, culture, language and identity, the implications of these for language learners, and the dangers of linguistic and cultural imperialism in language teaching

In reviewing the literature that is relevant to the learners themselves, I have considered what can be said about the nature of identity, including what it draws from the related concepts of nationality, language and culture. Although this is not a study of culture *per se*, there are aspects of culture which need to be addressed in examining the nature of the relationships formed. The definition of culture used in the study, given below at 2.4.2, has been framed with particular reference to the scope of this study. Having sought to reach definitions of nationality and culture that are appropriate to the study, I have explored how these definitions are interlinked with identity and language, including discussing the relevance of the controversial area of linguistic and cultural imperialism. The nature of the learners' 'identity' then informs the interrelationships between learners, which in turn helps to determine the culture of the class, discussed in part (d) below.

(d) Factors affecting classroom culture

In order to ascertain which facets of educational theory specifically apply to the ESOL classroom, I have considered firstly factors which affect language learning, including language acquisition theory, and secondly factors affecting the culture of the classroom, including the influence of different learning and teaching styles on the learning process. What happens in the classroom is not purely educational, and for this reason I have also examined whether this class had a social function for these learners, and if so, how this was manifested, and what its implications were for the classroom culture, group dynamics and learning taking place.

(e) Affective influences on learner behaviour

Affective factors in education are those relating to the learners' emotions. The culture of the classroom and its social importance for the learners depends on the

nature of the relationships formed by the learners in the classroom. I have taken account of research that has been conducted on affect in language teaching, and theories about the importance of relationships in the classroom. Closely linked to the area of affect is the motivation of the learners in the classroom and I have considered differing perspectives on learner motivation, with a view to investigating how the relationships in the classroom in the present study affected motivation, and whether motivation itself affected these relationships.

In considering the literature relevant to the areas outlined above, I have attempted to highlight specific problems in the field, namely areas where there has been little research undertaken as yet, and areas where conflict exists.

2.2 The theory that underlies the teaching of ESOL in the U.K.

The class that formed the subject of the study was an ESOL class¹. The theory that underlies ESOL teaching has changed over the years, and there is some controversy over its political implications, summarised below.

A useful history of the British approach to the teaching of English as a Second Language is given in a study by Khanna and others [KHANNA 1998], charting the transition from English teaching as a (largely unsuccessful) post-colonial activity, with its goal the assimilation of migrants into the host culture in the 1950s and 60s, to ESL as a 'welfare' activity in the 1970s, promoting 'survival' in the host culture. Advocates of pluralism in culture moved towards an approach of bilingualism in the 1970s and 80s, with the aim of not subsuming the learners' mother tongue to English, the target language, but of promoting English as a language parallel to the mother tongue. However, critics argued that this approach too was racist, and promulgated an 'anti-racist' model.

An alleged trend in policy over three decades has been identified, from the desire in the 1960s for immigrants to be assimilated into British culture, through a more progressive and multicultural approach in the 1970s, to a, supposedly, more inclusive approach developing from the late 1970s onwards. This third phase included the integration of ESL into other learning, providing for ESL support in the classroom [MARTIN-JONES 1989]. In addition, 'English as a Second Language' (ESL) began to be replaced by 'English as a Second or Other Language' (ESOL) to reflect that for some learners it was the third or fourth language. Then in the 1990s, market forces in adult education became more openly and visibly predominant, and

it became prescribed that curriculum design had to reflect those educational outcomes for which government funding was available; this was most particularly the case for classes which were funded by the Further Education Funding Council. Thus the developing anti-racist ideology of the 1980s began to be replaced by overt political expediency. One positive outworking of this approach was the linkage of ESOL to the teaching of other vocational skills. Khanna points out that this promoted the practice of 'partnership' pedagogy, with ESOL teachers becoming aware of what their students were learning in their vocational classes, and supporting this in the ESOL classroom. Khanna et al. conclude that,

The teaching and learning of ESOL in Britain cannot be and should not be studied in isolation, divorced from the issues of minority mother tongues, bilingualism and English language proficiency dependent socioeconomic matters; nor can they be studied without reference to English colonialism and racism on the one hand and the contributions of liberal and philanthropic minded volunteer and professional ESOL teachers on the other. [KHANNA 1998 p.19].

The current position is that the British government is emphasising the need for higher levels of ability in English for refugees and other migrants to the U.K., linking language ability with employment potential. The main governmental voice in this has been that of David Blunkett, the Home Secretary. In December 2001, he wrote, defending a statement he had made previously about the need for immigrants to speak English that, "people who can't speak English are far less likely to get jobs, share in the education of their children and take part in the wider public culture. ... The crucial point is that we have to pursue integration with diversity" [BLUNKETT 2001]. In February 2002, writing in *The Sun* newspaper, he suggested that those wanting British citizenship should have to pass written and spoken English tests, and their spouses should also learn English, "to stop them being condemned to a life of domestic isolation." [WOMACK 2002]. In September 2002, in an essay for a book entitled *Reclaiming Britishness* he mentioned the need to, "strive to connect people from different backgrounds, tackle segregation and overcome mutual hostility and ignorance ... one factor in this is the ability of new migrants to speak English - otherwise they cannot get good jobs, or share in wider social debate." [OPERATION BLACK VOTE 2002]. It would seem from these comments that present government policy leans toward assimilation, rather than inclusion, emphasising the 'need' for migrants to change in order to fit in with the existing culture. Language is linked with employment, and the message is that competence in the use of language leads to empowerment in society.

In general, the government has avoided having an explicit language policy, although Wales is an exception. The United Kingdom as a whole does not have an official language. There are at least three indigenous languages, English, Gaelic and Welsh, and many others are spoken as first or second languages. It has been suggested that the absence of an official language policy "is itself an implicit policy insuring the dominance of English" [THOMPSON et al. 1996 p.100]. Certainly, in the school education system, English is a compulsory subject within the national curriculum, and the emphasis is on the acquisition of standard English. However, the present study is not concerned with ESOL in schools, which, although provided inadequately is at least prescribed (see THOMPSON et al. 1996), but with the provision of ESOL for adult learners, a much more piecemeal and random component of the post-16 education sector.

It has been seen that, in Britain, funding for adult ESOL teaching derives mainly from the state, and one would expect this factor to provide a degree of constraint on those who design and deliver the ESOL curriculum. Nevertheless, from my personal experience as a teacher in the state funded sector, and from informal discussions that I have held with ESOL teachers working in other parts of the U.K., I have reached the conclusion that a significant proportion of ESOL teachers are not fully aware of the distinction between ESOL and EFL, nor of how this should affect their syllabus design, lesson planning and achievement models. Officially, however, there is a theoretical distinction between ESOL and EFL, clarified by the Basic Skills Agency in the new ESOL curriculum, and previously encapsulated in fairly small scale models such as the English National Vocational Qualification syllabus. The recent report of the working group on ESOL noted that over 95,000 adults attended British ESOL programmes in 1997-8, which makes an interesting comparison with the 54,000 who were granted British citizenship in 1998. 56,415 of the ESOL learners were students at colleges of Further Education, and it is therefore saddening, although perhaps not surprising, to note the comments of the FE Inspectorate's report on Basic Education for 1998-99, to the effect that the standard of ESOL provision was "a cause for concern when compared with the standards in other programme areas" [cited in DFEE: ESOL WORKING GROUP 2000 p13, and see also MAGER 2003].

How, then, can ESOL and EFL learners be distinguished from each other and why is the provision for ESOL learners causing concern? One distinction, between the different profiles of the learners is by reference to the different contexts in which their learning is taking place, and another relates to differences in motivation. The

report of the working group on ESOL divides ESOL learners into four broad categories, namely: those from settled communities; refugees, either settled or seeking asylum; migrant workers and the partners and spouses of citizens. The class that was observed for the present study contained representatives of all these groups². However, the report goes on to define ESOL as "English for those whose first language is not English but who live in this country and intend to spend some or all of their working life here" [DFEE: ESOL WORKING GROUP 2000 part 1.2]. This is a very broad definition, incorporating into ESOL all who are not resident in the UK for the sole purpose of studying. The definition does not take account of the issue of motivation; the fact that a learner is working or intends to work in Britain is not necessarily an indication that their sole motivation for learning English is work related, but the report, perhaps for reasons of political expediency, seems to indicate that this is the crucial factor.

Far more has been written about EFL learners than those learning ESOL, although in EFL the distinction is not always made between those learning English in their home country, and those learning in an English-speaking country. A further area of confusion is that the term 'ESOL' is sometimes used to refer to any learning of English by non-native speakers in any context, and therefore some literature referring to ESOL does not relate specifically to those learning English as an additional language in an English-speaking country. As an example of the need for exactitude on context, research has found that the disadvantages of EFL settings include large classes, not enough contact hours, the compulsory nature of the subject, and the lack of availability of native speakers. Clearly, such disadvantages do not relate to the voluntary part-time EFL learner in the UK. Advantages of EFL contexts are said to include homogeneity, and non-native speaking teachers with a language and culture in common with the students [ROSE 1999]. Again, these are not advantages of the language classroom in most settings in the UK, and these examples illustrate the need to be wary of attempting to apply generalised research findings to any English teaching context.

In conclusion, from the scanty literature that addresses the subject of ESOL in the UK, ESOL could be seen to be an instrument of social control because its funding is closely politically driven. There may well be a conflict between the ideology of those who teach and the political ideology of the time. In addition, ESOL in the UK is inevitably inclusive of learners from very diverse backgrounds, and pedagogical approaches must be informed by this diversity. It is suggested that, without appropriate diagnosis of each learner's needs, ESOL courses will continue to offer an

approach to English learning that fails to equip or motivate the learners, resulting in apparently low standards of provision.

2.3 Learning in groups

Any examination of the learning that takes place in a classroom context must take account of the fact that each learner is operating not just as an individual but also as part of the group. Thus, in looking at learner relationships it is important to understand how groups form and operate, and how group members function, as this provides insights into the dynamics and content of individual relationships within the class. Groups are varied and complicated, and the class in the present study comprised not only one large group of learners with a supposedly common aim, but also a number of changeable sub groups within the group, some, in a social context, already in existence before the class started, and some, both friendship and work groups, having arisen from the class process.

In addition to questions relating to the formation of groups and their function, an additional area of interest in this field is the question of whether the group dynamics and the formation of relationships in a class is directly linked to the relationship between the learners and the teacher. It may be that classroom relationships develop differently with different teachers.

A review of the relevant literature on this field is set out below at 2.3.1, followed by an explanation of the research question that arises from it, at 2.3.2.

2.3.1 Group formation and group culture

It is a given, in group theory, that individuals may behave differently in conjunction with others from the way they behave on their own [DÖRNYEI & MALDEREZ 1999]. An extensive literature on group behaviour exists including research and discussion across a range of contexts, including business, therapeutic and educational situations. To establish the principles that underlie behaviour in the classroom I have considered a broad view of group theory, as well as its specific application to educational settings.

Models that attempt to explain the psychology of groups often encompass a psychoanalytical understanding of human behaviour and Ringer's critique of groups epitomises such an approach [RINGER 2002]. In contrast, whilst acknowledging the significance of the impact of psychoanalysis on current thought, Douglas provides

an overview from a range of widely differing perspectives [DOUGLAS 1995]. Jacques's more applied focus is on how such approaches affect the interpretation of relationships in the classroom [JACQUES 2000]. I have attempted to identify common elements from these theories against which to measure data.

Attachment theory seeks to explain how the ways in which individuals operate in relation to each other derive from their life experiences, and it is on attachment theory that Ringer bases his idea of 'models'. Attachment theory is often thought of as relating primarily to early life experiences, but Ringer believes that experiences throughout the whole of life are formative. His approach is that:

each person in a group relates to the group through their personal map of world, through his or her internal working model [RINGER 2002 p64].

The outworking of this principle in a classroom is that each individual learner would have an internal working model, script or schema for how teachers and learners relate, and how learners relate to each other, developed from the experiences they have had. Stressing that every person's working models are different, Ringer argues that those who adopt cognitive psychology can make similar use of an understanding of the unconscious process, although he himself developed his ideas from a Freudian view of the unconscious self. In contrast, Douglas discusses the fact that diverse approaches, applied to the evaluation of group processes give rise to conflicting theories. The approach that is adopted will depend on the researcher's view of several factors, namely, the freedom individuals hold to affect their own lives; the degree to which human development and behaviour are shaped by inherited factors; beliefs about sources of motivation, and beliefs about the similarities between animal and human behaviour. Thus, for example, a researcher who is persuaded by psychodynamic theory in relation to groups, or will believe that group behaviour is centred around the emotional relationships of the members towards the leader. A psychodynamic approach denotes the group as a context in which the individual member is the most important unit, eventually becoming part of a new entity, the group. The Freudian belief that adult personalities are basically fixed by the experiences in the first five years of life means that psychodynamic theory is deterministic as well as being individualistic. In contrast, a behaviouristic approach to group processes depicts the group as a social situation, the conditions of which produce the behaviour that the members demonstrate. The behaviour of individuals and groups themselves can thus be explained and predicted. However, as with psychodynamic theory, behaviourism presents a deterministic approach to

the analysis of group processes. Systems theory views a group as an organism using the resources and energies of its members to produce an end product; systems theory uses language such as 'throughput' and 'output' to describe the commitment of the group to its task and its achievements. Humanistic approaches, in contrast, see groups as societies in miniature, with their own particular structures, aimed at developing actualisation processes; such approaches regard the human members of groups as having a degree of freedom to make conscious choices about their actions. The researcher's view of the degree of freedom available to people affects their belief in how predictable is the achievement of groups and their effects on their members [DOUGLAS 1995]. In undertaking the present piece of research my approach to group dynamics has been derived from humanistic theories about behaviour, and for that reason it was assumed throughout the present study that the learners involved were capable of self determination.

Jacques's philosophy of how people learn in groups encompasses the following beliefs:

- (a) learners should be encouraged to learn as adults and it should be assumed that individuals relate to each other as adults in both the teacher-learner relationship and the learner-learner relationship;
- (b) co-operation is important in groups, but needs to be learnt by the participants;
- (c) all experiences are useful for learning;
- (d) "Despite the pre-eminence of intellectual aims in learning groups it is often the emotional needs and undercurrents which are most powerful yet most frequently neglected." [JACQUES 2000 p.xiii].

In attempting to define a group, Jacques includes the characteristics set out below in Figure 2(1). However, as well as examining such clear cut indicators of group identity, it is important to be mindful of the 'paradoxical realities' of groups, such as the fact that in a group each member is an individual but also part of a unit, and that a group is usually experienced as a place of safety, but it may also be a dangerous place where a group member may be attacked for being different, and their individual needs subsumed to those of the group. There is also the

consideration that in order for group tasks to be performed, relationships between group members may be overridden [RINGER 2002]. Evidence of such paradoxes from the data is discussed in Chapter 6 below.

<p>collective perception satisfaction of needs / giving of rewards shared aims interdependence social unit with shared norms and roles interaction between members cohesiveness membership</p>
--

Figure 2.1: The characteristics of a group [JACQUES 2000]

Douglas's brief definition of a 'group' as a number of people remaining in proximity to each other, created by choice or design, is supplemented by his definition of the characteristics of cohesion, one of Jacques's elements above. According to Douglas, the cohesiveness of a group is influenced by the factors set out in Figure 2.2 below.

A comparison of Figures 2.1 and 2.2 reveals that there is substantial overlap between Jacques' definition and Douglas's characteristics of cohesion. For the present study, Douglas's model has been selected, not only because of its coherence and its degree of ease of application to the context of the class being studied [DOUGLAS 1995], but also because it encompasses different philosophical explanations for human behaviour and adopts a pragmatic approach. In the present study the research instruments, particularly the interview questions, have been designed to attempt to elicit information about these areas. Different groups have varied characteristics, and in the present study, applying Douglas's classification, the class was 'artificial', 'created', 'open' and 'strong' [DOUGLAS 1995 p.16]. It was 'artificial' because the group itself is not crucial to the social structure; it was recent, that is without tradition, and not usually part of the everyday experience of members of the society in which the group is found. It was 'created' because it was not spontaneously occurring. It was 'open' because new members joined and others left; section 5.3.1 below gives a description of just how open the class was. It was 'strong' because the members were in close contact with each other, investing their energy in the group and gaining from their membership of it.

the shared experience of its members over time
 how good the communication patterns are within the group
 the nature and quality of the relationships between group members
 the degree of pride in the group and satisfaction with membership of it
 held by the group members
 the use of a common language
 a sense of obligation and responsibility
 the amount of positive feedback within the group
 the physical proximity of the members to each other
 the degree to which common interests and purposes are shared
 the degree of skill in the leadership of the group
 the absence of disruption
 the perception of protection
 the degree of intimacy between the members
 the members' perception of the efficacy of the group

Figure 2.2: The factors that influence group cohesiveness [DOUGLAS 1995]

Douglas has constructed a rationale of group structure and process, and depicts being a member of a group as having both costs and rewards. Costs in the language class may include stultification, reducing all group members to the same level of performance, thus restricting the more capable members. Stress is also a relevant cost in the classroom because it may be the result of increased anxiety due to the expectations of other group members. The other costs include reinforcement of prejudice; attacks against group members who appear to be different from the others, and rejection of some members by the rest of the group [DOUGLAS 1995].

In addition, some factors about groups may prevent or deter them from working effectively. These include the following:

1. Disagreement about ways to deal with the issues
 2. Unreasonable or excessive demands made by other groups
 3. Dominating or unpleasant members
 4. A high degree of self-oriented behaviour
 5. The group in some way is seen to be limiting the 'outside' satisfactions of its members
 6. The negative assessment of the value of membership made by significant people outside of the group
 7. Overt competition with other groups unless the group is in a winning position
 8. Other groups exist that are better able to meet the needs of members
- [DOUGLAS 1995 p.128]

The rewards available to group members include companionship; the experience of working with others; a sense of belonging; access to resources which individuals do not possess; help with difficulties and problems; and the chance of effecting personal change in a supportive environment [DOUGLAS 1995]. These rewards can be compared with Dörnyei & Malderez's conclusion that being part of a group in a language learning context is desirable because if it is cohesive it will allow for "unselfconscious, tolerant and safe" language practice; provide a comfortable environment derived from a sense of shared discipline and awareness of the group rules; will encourage positive feelings through the achievement of group and individual goals, and will acknowledge the resources brought by each of the members [DÖRNYEI & MALDEREZ 1999 pp168-9]. Chapter 3, section 3.4, explains how the data collection instruments have been designed to measure whether this theory about the factors that prevent groups from working effectively, and the rewards of groups, hold good in the present study.

Thus far I have briefly discussed other writers on groups but concentrated mainly on the psychology of group dynamics as depicted by Ringer, Douglas and Jacques, in the light of findings by Dörnyei & Maldarez [1999]. A different but complementary approach to the evaluation of language learning groups is that of regarding the classroom as a multiplicity of cultures, and addressing what is happening in terms of cultural analysis. This approach is described by Holliday, who discusses the need to carry out research into classroom dynamics and culture by observing both 'deep' and 'surface' action. Surface action is what is seen by an observer on the face of the action of the classroom, but deep action is opaque to outsiders; it may be tacit with hidden communication [HOLLIDAY 1994 p40]. He makes a distinction between the student group as a whole and the smaller groups present within it, and notes the existence of identities and agendas independent of the agenda of the lesson, commenting that,

whenever a teacher attempts to organise a grouping within the class for the transactional purpose of learning, he or she immediately interferes with a powerful existing milieu [HOLLIDAY 1994 p65].

Group behaviour will change over the course of time. There are inevitable uncertainties about the relationships of cause and effect when dealing with human behaviour, and the group context will in part be determined by learner hopes and expectations [JACQUES 2000]. The present study is peculiarly concerned with the ways in which the learners deal with each other in the classroom, and it seems vital

that an exploration of the learners' behaviour must involve the investigation of their attitudes and expectations.

2.3.2 The first research question

We have seen above that ESOL could be considered as an instrument of social control because its funding is political, that ESOL in the UK includes learners from diverse backgrounds, and that understanding groups requires knowledge of their context. Behaviour in a classroom can be analysed in terms of group dynamics and cultural undercurrents. The characteristics of the learners and the way that they interact in the classroom are relevant to the group culture that develops there. Both the factors influencing the character and composition of the ESOL classroom, and the approaches to interpretation of group behaviour outlined above, combine together to give rise to the first research question, which is 'What impact do the relationships that learners form have on classroom dynamics?'. This question is addressed in Chapter 6.

2.4 Nationality as a factor in learner relationships and the interrelationship between the concepts of nationality, culture, language and identity

The 55 learners who are the subjects of this study represent seventeen different nationalities and speak eighteen different first languages. However, nationality and language alone do not give a complete description of an individual's ethnic and cultural identity. The terms 'nationality', 'culture', 'language' and 'identity', although interrelated, need to be considered separately from each other before their connections can be explored. Below I discuss the relevant literature about each of these, and then I examine how the concepts 'nationality', 'culture', 'language' and 'identity' are interlinked. I have included some thoughts on the related problem of linguistic and cultural imperialism, and considered the implications for language learning in the context of the present study.

2.4.1 Nationality

Nationality can be defined as the fact of belonging to a particular nation, and also as a national quality or feeling. Whereas the holding of a passport denotes citizenship, it does not always reflect an individual's feeling of identity, and thus the term 'nationality' should be used to make demarcations cautiously and with care. Some groups, such as the Kurds, do not have a political state to be citizens of, and "stereotypical national definitions ... are often the basis of destructive ethnocentricity" [HOLLIDAY 1994 p6]. It may also be problematic to define nations themselves;

defining a political state is easier. Gellner suggests, as a provisional definition, that nationality is shared by two people if they also share the same culture (meaning "a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating"), and if and only if they recognise each other as being of the same nationality ("nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities") [GELLNER 1997 p.57]. This is an interesting definition, as it links the sharing of nationality to shared conscious perceptions, and suggests that nationality is a subjective and changeable human construct. This is clearly a controversial suggestion, but nationality by perception links naturally with ideas of self-given identity.

The present study addresses nationality as a factor in relationships between individuals, and it is therefore inevitable that the definition of the term must include a subjective element, reflecting the individual's perceptions about the way that their nationality pertains to their identity. Whatever nationality is, the same nationality may be experienced differently by different individuals who share it. In addition, the degree of nationalism that individuals experience is variable. It should not be forgotten that nationality can be both acquired and renounced, and this is relevant to the present study where some ESOL learners were migrants who had attained, or were seeking, British citizenship. It is controversial in itself to define learners by reference to their nationality, if such definitions appear to be linked to perceived shared national characteristics, opening the way to fears of racial stereotyping. That type of definition is not the intention of this study. The nationality of the learners is taken from their own self description, and is indicated because this is a label which, although not necessarily saying much about the characteristics of the learner, does say something about their perceived difference from the other learners in the group in their own minds and in the minds of other group members. Instead of nationality, the learners' first languages could have been used as a distinguishing factor. However, when the learners completed their Initial Information Forms, I took account of how they defined themselves, and noted that, for a few, their allegiance appeared to be to the national identity they gave themselves rather than to their first language (for example, [Andreas] and [Luigi], father and son, whose country of origin was Venezuela but whose nationality and allegiance were Italian).

It is important to distinguish the terms nationality, ethnicity and race. Although educational establishments such as the college in the study have equal opportunities policies safeguarding against racism, race itself is not a persuasive concept as a way of distinguishing between people. This is partly because it is often

difficult to assign a person to a particular race, and also because race is not a factor that determines human characteristics to any great degree; "there is often greater variation within a racial group than there is systematic variation between two groups" [ERIKSEN 1997 p34]. Ethnicity has become a more popular concept than race, embracing as it does racial descent but also some or all of a range of other factors such as having a shared history, a common language and cultural artefacts. Equal opportunities policies in education have tended to follow anti-discrimination legislation. A useful legal definition of 'ethnicity' was given in the case of Mandla v Dowell Lee [1983], which dealt with issues arising under the Race Relations Act 1976 and concerned discrimination in education. In his judgment Lord Fraser formulated the following definition of the elements comprising a distinct ethnic group identity:

The conditions which appear to me to be essential are these:

(1) a long shared history; ... (2) a cultural tradition of its own including family and social customs and manners ... the following characteristics are, in my opinion, relevant: (3) either a common geographical origin, or descent from a small number of common ancestors; (4) a common language ... (5) a common literature peculiar to the group; (6) a common religion; (7) being a minority or being an oppressed or dominant group within a larger community ...

This approach links ethnicity with factors that go beyond national origin. Nevertheless, it incorporates characteristics that are discernable to the observer; it is an objective rather than a subjective approach. It does not take account of the variances of personal choice. Such an approach contrasts markedly with self-assignment "to a culture, nation or people", which "is constituted from biographical experiences ... we live from the potential for experience and meaning in our own life history, which is embedded in collectives, environments and nations" [ROSENTHAL 1997 p24]. The latter approach has echoes of Mathews' 'global cultural supermarket', discussed below at 2.4.2. It seems that it is easier to be subjective about ethnicity than nationality, which is more a political concept; although nationality and ethnicity can share many similarities, "the distinguishing mark of nationalism is by definition its relationship to the state" [ERIKSEN 1997 p35].

2.4.2 Culture

(a) Towards a definition of culture

There are many definitions of culture, and how the concept is defined is significant in interpreting what is happening in the classroom. It is maintained throughout the present study that the individual learners each have their own culture, and that the class has a culture of its own. It therefore seems important to be clear from the outset as to what the term denotes. To reach clarification, it has been necessary to evaluate a range of approaches. Cultural study is itself extremely wide, varied and complex, embracing sociological, anthropological and political concepts. A detailed analysis of what 'culture' means for language learners in a country from which they do not originate in the twenty-first century would be a thesis itself, and there is insufficient scope here to do more than examine broad contrasting views and explain the definition used in this study which is set out below. Therefore the aim of the following discussion is to reach a workable definition of culture as it pertains to the language classroom.

Firstly, it must be asked whether culture is visible or invisible. One broad approach to defining culture is to conclude that it consists of its own visible or tangible manifestations. This is Durkheim's approach, that culture is manifest in symbols, objects and practices [DURKHEIM 1915]. It is certainly true that different ethnic cultures invest certain artefacts or behaviours with different meanings. Take, for example, washing for hygiene and washing for ritual cleansing; eating with the right hand; the significance of head coverings; the status of an elder son. An alternative approach is that culture exists in invisible and intangible forms: ideas, beliefs and similar phenomena. For example, culture may be defined as the values, norms, beliefs and attitudes of a particular group. Examples of definitions of culture from this perspective include:

...whatever a person must know in order to function in a particular society
[SCOLLON & SCOLLON 1995],

and

a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in
order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members [GOODENOUGH
1964 p36].

These approaches are not opposed to each other; one may flow from the other, but as definitions of culture they both seem too polarised to suit the purpose of the present study. Outward manifestations of culture may hint at what lies deeper but themselves may not be truly representative. Intangible beliefs may be part of

culture, but it is arguable that shared cultural behaviour may not derive from shared beliefs, nor even from a shared world view.

Some definitions concentrate on the systematic quality or intelligibility of culture, involving some cognitive structure and a degree of communication between participants. For example, "the culture shared by a group of people consists essentially in the cognitive system that makes the actions of one intelligible to another." [KAY 1970, p.29]. This seems to leave no scope for cross-cultural communication; it implies that the actions of people of one culture cannot be properly understood by those of another, a highly debatable assertion which is echoed by Byram: "Culture is ... knowledge which is shared and negotiated between people" [BYRAM 1989a p82]. Another 'systems' definition is "an intertwined system of values and attitudes, beliefs and norms that give meaning and significance to both individual and collective identity." [ADLER 1977]. Thus culture may be seen as a convergence of beliefs and behaviour, a 'signifying system' which is evidenced in 'signifying practices' [WILLIAMS 1993 p13]. However, it is not universally accepted that shared values give rise to similar actions, and motivation may proceed from other instigators than cultural norms [SWIDLER 1986]. That is, the motivation underlying people's actions may be hard to explain in terms of the shared values of the culture to which they belong.

Another approach to defining culture is environmental, which may reflect the idea that culture is acquired through behaviour. It is argued that if culture is learned or acquired rather than innate, it must relate to the participant's environment. Rosaldo [1984] argues that a person's culture relates to their environment and how they construct their world within it, making culture transient and temporary. This approach leads logically to the view that an individual can be part of several different cultures depending on their circumstances, and this links to ideas such as 'culture miniaturization', meaning the relation of the concept of culture to small groups such as the classroom [SCOLLON & SCOLLON 1995 p.382]. The present study is constructed on such a paradigm.

Culture may also be viewed as the story that a group or individual tells about itself. This approach to defining culture has developed from structuralism, embracing shared meanings and giving people a role in the story they tell about themselves, rather than pinning a cultural label on external symbols, or internal values and beliefs. Just as ideas and beliefs develop, the stories that are told change over time, and within this definition culture can be seen as a dynamic entity rather than a fixed paradigm. A different angle on this approach of culture as the story people tell is to

view culture as the definition that people give to themselves and the world around them.

Other definitions of culture focus not just on what it is, but also on how it comes about. The emphasis of these is on learning or acquisition rather than on culture being a state inherent in people by virtue of birth, for example:

Culture is learned, not inherited [HOFSTEDE 1991 p5];

culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society [TYLOR 1924],

and

(culture) is, among other things, a set of likely reactions of citizens with a common mental programming [HOFSTEDE 1991 p112].

However culture is manifest, and however it is acquired, it must not be applied in too rigid a way as a label to individuals, and it should not be assumed to be unchangeable. As Tudor warns, "within a given culture ... It cannot be assumed that all participants will share in the same perceptions and goal structures, particularly during periods of change when social groupings and ideologies are in a state of flux" [TUDOR 1998 p330]. This is a pertinent warning for the present study which is concerned with individuals whose lives may be in a state of flux for a wide variety of reasons including marriage, moving to live in another country, carrying out a job in a foreign language and leaving home as a refugee.

Williams has presented culture as both stemming from learned tradition, and also having creative elements which are being tested out within society; in this way culture is constantly developing and reforming [WILLIAMS 1993]. These two approaches, of Tudor and Williams, emphasise that both personal and group culture are changeable. The present study will assume that culture can exist in miniature and that it can change, and will attempt to test these assumptions through analysis of the data collected. In order to assess the nature of the culture in the class, some precise definition of culture must be adopted. A definition that I consider appropriate for the language classroom is Thompson's, describing culture as:

the pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms, including actions, utterances and meaningful objects of various kinds, by virtue of which individuals communicate

with one another and share their experiences, conceptions and beliefs [THOMPSON 1990 p.132].

This approach combines the visible with the invisible, incorporates the element of communication between members of the same culture, and focuses on communication, which is the essence of the language class studied. It therefore describes culture in a context, forming part of a relationship, rather than in a vacuum. Inevitably, the language used by the participants is central to such a definition.

(b) Culture and language

The links between language and culture are complex, and are discussed in section 2.4.3 below.

(c) Culture and identity

Discussions of multi-culturalism can assume too readily that there is an inevitable relationship between identity and culture. It is arguable that people can belong to the same group without necessarily being defined in the same way [GROSSBERG 1996]. Mathews discusses the anthropological idea of the global cultural supermarket; far from culture being the way of life shared by a group of people, it may instead be a range of 'information and identities available from the cultural supermarket' [MATHEWS 2000 p186]. His study of three groups of people of different nationalities finds that having a choice of identity is taken for granted more than an individual's cultural roots. He concludes that "it may be that roots and home will be felt as progressively less necessary in the world" [MATHEWS 2000 p196] and this is significant when examining how closely to link culture, language and nationality in the classroom.

(d) Culture and nationality

In ESOL teaching there is a tendency to link culture to nationality. It would have been possible in this study to examine national culture rather than nationality. However, there is a persuasive school of thought to the effect that culture is a much more complex entity than can be represented by national stereotypes.

I try to get away from stereotypical national cultural definitions, which are often the basis of destructive ethnocentricity, and to look at culture in a smaller, more precise way. It is more useful to talk about the cultures of individual classrooms and of individual teacher and student groups ... also because these smaller cultures are less connected with partisan national feelings, more neutral in their connotations, it is

easier to talk of, for example, cultures changing and being influenced by each other.”
[HOLLIDAY 1994 p6.]

Research on different aspects of culture indicates that one's culture and ethnicity are more idiosyncratic than a 'nationality' label would indicate. To address each language learning context as unique, because its group culture has been formed from the culture of the group members, does not demand the application of national or cultural labels. Coleman argues that:

a non-universalist – an ideological – approach to the study of behaviour in the English classroom does *not* imply cultural stereotyping or simplistic labelling. On the contrary, it recognises the extraordinary diversity of human behaviour and human achievement. It argues that we are all, as unique individuals, nevertheless at the same time members of interlocking and overlapping communities and social systems, from the family to the nation state and beyond. In our different ways and to different degrees we influence the other members of each of those communities, just as we in turn are influenced by them ... the construction of the *meaning* of the English language classroom must be culturally embedded [COLEMAN 1996 p13].

Therefore, although this study examines culture, and particularly group culture as it pertains to the classroom, it seeks to understand cultural differences and to avoid cultural stereotyping. A more detailed discussion of culture as it pertains to the classroom follows below.

(e) Culture in the classroom

The culture of the classroom is an important component of the language learner's experience.

The learning of a foreign language ... involves an alteration in self-image, the adoption of new social and cultural behaviours and ways of being, and therefore has a significant impact on the social nature of the learner [WILLIAMS 1994 p77].

As discussed above, culture can be viewed as the creation of the society in which it is manifest, rather than the creative force itself. Vygotsky, who developed a significant paradigm for group learning which is very relevant to the present study, shared this approach:

Culture is the product of social life and human social activity. That is why just by raising the question of the cultural development of behaviour we are directly introducing the social plane of development [VYGOTSKY 1981 p164].

Holliday describes the classroom culture itself as "part of a complex of inter-related and overlapping cultures of different dimensions within the host educational environment" [HOLLIDAY 1994 p28]. This idea of inter-relationship gives rise to the question of whether the formation of mixed nationality relationships affects the culture of the ESOL classroom.

One part of the complexity referred to above is the situation where a teacher has a different cultural background from the learners, in which case they will "bring different cultural experiences and expectations with them, not only as content, but also as medium" [JIN & CORTAZZI 1998]. This type of cultural clash of learning and teaching styles is not uncommon, and must be a particular danger in a mixed nationality group. One approach is that such a clash should be considered a learning opportunity. Jin & Cortazzi explore this idea and describe the possible outworking of such a situation to depend on how it is viewed by the participants:

such intercultural situations, now very common around the world, might be viewed as bridges to the learning of intercultural skills or alternatively as barriers to intercultural communication and foreign language learning [JIN & CORTAZZI 1998 p98].

Looking at data from Britain and China, they conclude that

intercultural classroom learning would be aided by participants becoming more aware of their own cultural presuppositions and those of others; this constitutes the building of "mutual intercultural learning bridges" [JIN & CORTAZZI 1998 p98].

A culturally embedded approach to meaning in the classroom should subject the learners' learning or behavioural traditions to careful examination whilst seeking to understand them [COLEMAN 1996]. This can be easier in practice where the classroom is established in the learners' own national or ethnic culture; in the present study these traditions are not always visible and may have to be searched for. Adopting a culturally embedded approach also means being alert to the possibility that learners are using learning resources effectively outside the classroom [COLEMAN 1996]. An awareness of the learners' wider context is therefore helpful in evaluating the learning that is taking place.

One potential problem arising from the culture of the mixed nationality language classroom is *anomie*, which term describes any kind of imbalance between cultural

goals and institutional means. That is, anomie can arise in individuals where their ambitions are frustrated:

It is not the structurally limited opportunity for success that originally causes anomie; rather, it is the culturally induced pressure to be successful that accounts for the ensuing anomie [ORRU 1987 p123].

Srole's theory of anomia is the dysfunctional relation of individuals to their social worlds, alienated from political, cultural and economic systems, and institutionalised social norms and values [SROLE 1956]. There is a two-way link between individual anomia and social anomie. This theory of anomie centres on "the functional integration of individuals with their social worlds" [ORRU 1987 p.141]. A different approach is 'value-anomie'; rather than looking at the dysfunctional relationship between things it looks at possible configurations within a certain cultural or individual value-orientation.

One might expect evidence of anomie in the context of the present study because of the mismatch that the individual learners were experiencing between their ability to communicate and the demands of the social worlds in which they were living. Examples of data that would tend to suggest the likelihood of anomie are discussed in section 7.1.6 below.

2.4.3 Language

Language, nationality and culture are separate entities that have close links.

Language neither drives culture nor is driven by it; ... the relation is not one of cause and effect but rather one of realization: that is, culture and language co-evolve in the same relationship as that in which, within language, meaning and expression co-evolve ... given that language and culture evolve together in this kind of relationship, it is inevitable that language will take on an ideological role [HALLIDAY 1993 p11].

A major aspect of the relationship between language and culture is enshrined in the theories of semiotics and structuralism, dealing with the encoding of cultural concepts in language. Semiotics describes reality as 'encoded' in language, and thus interpreted through culture [FISKE 1987]. Locke views language as "the primary mode of transmission of culture", allowing people to communicate and share cultural experiences and behaviour [LOCKE 1992 p3]. Although it is relatively easy to state what a person's first language is, it is not easy to extricate language from culture or

identity and therefore there are inherent dangers in attempting to classify people according to their first language. Nevertheless, in examining relationships between learners of different national backgrounds in the present study, language will be an important factor. The idea that each person has their own 'idiolect', that is, that each person speaks a unique form of their language, highlights the influence of cultural and identity factors on language. The discussion of culture above concluded that language is intertwined with culture. In the present study this inevitably raises the issue of the effectiveness of communication between individuals from different language backgrounds and different cultures. A recognition of this aspect of cultural interaction and development is crucial in language teaching. One approach is that a common language itself is not enough to guarantee communication:

Everyone readily recognizes the fact that only very restricted communication is possible without a shared language. However, the realization that, even with a shared language, successful communication may depend on sociocultural factors, which include conventions of language use, is just beginning to dawn [KACHRU 1999 p77].

Kachru divides the English-using world into three concentric circles: the Inner Circle consisting of native English-speaking countries, the Outer Circle consisting of former colonies or spheres of influence of the UK and the United States, and the Expanding Circle consisting of countries where English is fast becoming a dominant second language in areas such as education, science and technology [KACHRU 1985]. An illustration of how culture is linked to the development of language is shown by the development, in Outer Circle countries, of grammatical and textual forms derived from first languages, such as categorising verbs, in Indian English, in terms of volitionality, reflecting the practice of Hindi, Marathi and Kashmiri [KACHRU 1999].

National identity is bound up with the language a person speaks:

Today, in the age of language conflicts, a shared common language is pre-eminently considered the normal basis of nationality ... Indeed, 'nation state' has become conceptually identical with 'state' based on common language [WEBER 1997 p24].

It is not usually difficult to determine a person's first language, that is the language that they learnt to speak as a child. However, it is not inevitable that a person's first language is the language that they use most now, and of course some children are brought up to be bilingual. In the present study the learners communicated with

those of a different nationality using English. From the above it can be concluded that each learner's English was a different idiolect, and that each person's endeavours to communicate were shaped by culture. This context to the communication taking place between learners, and in the learner interviews, provides a warning that there might have been a significant gap between what was meant and what was said, as well as between what was heard and what was understood. The intercultural aspect of communication forms the core of the thesis, but also raises questions about the data collection methods, which are addressed in Chapter 3.

2.4.4 Identity

Identity is by definition a concept that is idiosyncratic to the individual, affected by their nationality, culture and language. "Identity is not a static characteristic of a person. It is a matter for negotiation" [SKUTNABB-KANGAS 1991 p309.] Identity is characteristic that is complicated and elusive; it is relational and incomplete, temporary and unstable. People have a multiplicity of identities and differences [HALL 1991].

One means of addressing identity in the context of the present study is to link it to nationality and culture. The term 'national identity' can be used to refer to the national identification that people apply to themselves. A British citizen may prefer to describe themselves as, for example, Scottish, Welsh or Chinese. In the class being studied, some learners had acquired British citizenship in adulthood, but had retained a strong identification with another national culture. For example, [Mariam] is a British citizen. She lived originally in Kenya where she was educated. She is now part of the British Asian community and is married to a man from a British Ugandan Asian family. She describes herself as British, but her domicile of choice would be Kenya. In similar vein, two learners from Venezuela described themselves as Italian [Andreas] and [Luigi]. Identification with and attempting to make sense of one's old culture may be part of the process of adjusting to living in a new culture [see WONG 1992]. This idea is discussed by Harklau in the context of cultural inquiry by ESOL learners in the U.S. through writing. Asserting that "constructions of culture are multiple and shifting" [HARKLAU 1999 p130], she considers the value of the teaching situation as a forum that allows learners to address cultural issues; everything that occurs in the classroom has a cultural value that will assist the learners in defining their own culture.

Clearly, in mixed nationality contexts, strong identification with ethnic nationalism can cause conflict and may give rise to xenophobia. As Ager points out, although ethnic nationalism has been the cause of crime and war, it may also give rise to increased confidence in oppressed peoples [AGER 2001]. Language is significant to nationalism.

The precise definition of nationalism, of ethnic and nationalist feeling and its relationship to language is the subject of continuing discussion, and each new example makes close definition even more difficult" [AGER 2001 p14].

Individuals' beliefs about identity are related to social context and 'social identity' has been used to refer to "that aspect of a person's self-concept based on their group membership" [TURNER 1991 p8]. That is, people define themselves on the basis of the social contexts they experience. The need for positive self-image gives rise to the need to emphasise the positive comparators of the group to which one belongs as against groups to which one does not belong. This theory is debated in detail by Turner, and has given rise to 'self-categorization theory', which refers to self-stereotyping when people define themselves and others according to social category rather than more personal attributes. Not only is identity bound up with the individual's role in the group, but it is a product of social relationships; ethnic identity is "an aspect of social relationship between agents who consider themselves as culturally distinctive from members of other groups" [ERIKSEN 1997 p39].

Ouwerkerk et al. review the literature on the effects of group cohesion and find that the common assumption that the more cohesive the group, the more effort members make towards achieving common goals is not wholly supported empirically [OUWERKERK 1999 pp. 187-8]. Rex distinguishes between the type of group affiliation in which the individual has an emotional investment, and affiliation which is "related in some way to ulterior and rationally formulable purposes" [REX 1997 p270]. The relationship between an individual's identity, and how closely, and in what ways, they identify themselves as a member of the group, is a variable one. In his work on bilingual education, Cummins argues that the stronger the skills and integration into the first language, the easier it is for the individual to acquire a second language [CUMMINS 1996]. It is arguable that if this is the case for language acquisition, it may also be true for cultural integration.

Perceptions of identity are linked not only to culture but also to the language that is being used. The writer's own experience, when teaching, of asking language

learners from a wide variety of national backgrounds about the person they are when they speak different languages indicates that it is not uncommon for an individual to feel that they take on a different identity when speaking a foreign language. In the present study the influence of language on identity is pertinent to the impact that culture, nationality and identity they have on relationships, group dynamics and learning.

2.4.5 Linguistic and cultural imperialism

Although the present study engages primarily with individuals who are interacting with each other, the context that places them together cannot be ignored. The learners are seen in the context of their participation in an English class, and proceeding from the issues of individual identity, culture and nationality discussed above is the controversial area of the effect on the learners of the role, status and nature of English as a language in the world today. The way these factors are received and processed in the minds of the learners may affect their behaviour in the classroom and towards each other.

How and why English is taught, as well as who it is taught to, may give rise to the concerns about linguistic and cultural imperialism, accusations of which have been made against the promotion of English worldwide. These accusations have been fuelled by the apparent reasons for teaching English and the way in which it is taught, as well as by the variety of English that is taught, and the identity and characteristics of the target recipients. These criticisms are not surprising given the context in which the rapid growth in English teaching has occurred. Not only the effects of the historical British Empire of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but also the role of the U.S.A. in the world in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, have linked English with ideas of privilege and inequality, oppression and exploitation. Much that has been written about linguistic imperialism relates to the teaching of EFL in countries where English is not the first spoken language (although it may be the national language, or otherwise a language of business, trade or power).

Second language instructors, who teach their language to immigrants or visitors in their country, or to adults abroad, have tended to transmit, with the language, a view of the world that reflects only the values and cultural assumptions of the native speaker's society. Even as an international language, English instruction transmits such Anglo-Saxon values as efficiency, pragmatism, and individualism, that

superimpose themselves on those of the learner's native culture [KRAMSCH 1993 p12].

Although nothing may be further from the minds of the teachers themselves, the values they communicate unconsciously may cause a cultural breakdown of communication. This very lack of awareness may be more damaging to the way English is viewed across the world than an openly expressed difference in values. As Holliday comments:

the unilateral professionalism which has carried English language education across the world ... is ethnocentric, failing to appreciate the social backgrounds of others [HOLLIDAY 1994 p3].

The present study touches on this problem with EFL only insofar as it may have been experienced by the learners before they came to Britain; it is considered in contrast to their experiences in the ESOL classroom, but it must also be noted as possibly having affected the attitudes of the learners. Nevertheless, in other guises the issue of cultural imperialism is a live one for ESOL classes in Britain. KHANNA et al. [1998] talk about 'linguistic colonisation' (p1) and describe the English language as "post-Imperial Great Britain's invaluable tool to wield global influences well as a marketable asset" (p1). Their work traces the history of ESOL teaching and shows that an early goal was to Anglicise immigrants; that is, language was being used as a tool to change culture. It appears that early programmes had little impact, partly because the target groups were just not reached. In the 1970s the ethos of ESOL changed; the desire for cultural uniformity was at least in part replaced by a concern for immigrants' well being and there were concerted efforts to reach those who needed to learn language, such as women at home. ESOL workers adopted 'welfare' and 'pastoral' roles, engaging in counselling type activities as well as teaching, and this approach still persists. One outcome seemed to be the development of strong teacher - learner relationships. The approach has been criticised [BHANOT & ALIBHAI 1988] for not providing the learners with the linguistic skills they needed, but rather focussing on their life problems. I would argue that earlier research on English teaching to the immigrants to Britain is relevant to my study because the learners in the class studies carried with them experiences from other countries, other situations and other teachers. This was one reason for asking them, in the second set of interviews, to reflect on previous English learning experiences and to try to formulate comparisons. The findings are discussed more fully in Chapter 8.

In the area of culture it is important for researchers to address whether teachers are providing what learners want, or whether there is any attempt to form or coerce the learners' needs from the teachers' ideals and expectations. Phillipson raises the question of whether second/foreign language teachers and researchers share a common starting point, as this will inevitably affect whether underlying beliefs and research findings have universal validity and relevance [PHILLIPSON 1991 p38-9]. He makes the point that the idea of a 'native speaker norm' of English is itself culturally biased. He points out that third world researchers, coming from multilingual backgrounds, perceive the form of English in a different way from monolingual researchers, because for them English has been 'indigenised'.

Lest such concerns be relegated to the past, it is worth noting that there is current evidence of non-native English speakers feeling disadvantaged and alienated by their lack of language skills within British society [NAPHRAY 1998]. Naphray describes this perception powerfully, asserting that the "excessive emphasis on linguistic standards" threatens those who cannot use English, and considers that the provisions of ESOL by colleges is part of the "war against elitist approaches and perspectives on language learning" [NAPHRAY 1998 p190]. This view raises a number of pedagogical questions about the form of English that should be taught and the methods that should be used. The idea of English learning as empowerment can also lead to the concept of the learner understanding a new culture in order to more positively retain their own culture. This view is promoted by Roberts:

Learning to belong to a new community may also mean learning to resist, or at the least take up an ambiguous position in relation to the socio-cultural knowledge and discourses which constitute it [ROBERTS 2001 p120].

In the present study an analysis of the development of the class culture takes account of learners' attitudes to the culture of the society they are living in, and their reactions to or against it. The findings in this area are discussed in Chapter 7, and are linked to the discussion of classroom culture below.

2.5. Factors affecting classroom culture

Following on from investigating the learners' individual cultures, the section below addresses the literature that relates specifically to classroom culture. The areas of learning and teaching styles, and the social function of the class are considered in detail below, and need to be considered in conjunction with the wider principles outlined above.

2.5.1 The effect of different learning and teaching styles

Within any language classroom there will be a mixture of learning and teaching styles, and this is particularly so in a class which contains learners from a mixture of nationalities. Learning styles are related not only to culture but also to personality, and factors such as inhibition, extroversion and introversion and self-esteem, will affect the ways in which individuals choose to learn. Some favour a passive, 'surface-processing' approach, oriented to getting the 'right' answer, and others seek the whole picture, using deep level processing and learning in a more active way [JACQUES 2000]. Holliday, considering classroom culture from the viewpoint of cultural diversity, [HOLLIDAY 1994 pp28-9, see diagram], observes that:

...classroom events incorporate not just one lesson, but many lessons - one which the teacher plans and administers, and one for each student taking part [HOLLIDAY 1994 p142],

and emphasises the importance of the social context of language teaching and learning:

we do not know enough about how learning might be affected by the attitudes and expectations that people bring to the learning situation ... which in turn influence the ways in which people deal with each other in the classroom" [HOLLIDAY 1994 pp9-10].

It is therefore necessary to examine the effect of different learning and teaching styles on the dynamics of the class, the relationships that are made and the learning that takes place. Different learning and teaching cultures in one class will inevitably affect the class culture:

In the foreign language class, culture is created and enacted through the dialogue between students and between teacher and students. Through this dialogue, participants not only replicate a given context of culture, but, because it takes place in a foreign language, it also has the potential of shaping a new culture [KRAMSCH 1993 p47].

Reid's helpful review of the research into learning styles indicates that although every individual learner has their own learning style, to which their learning strategy will be linked, they can be encouraged to 'stretch' their learning styles as a way of

empowering them in the classroom [REID 1999]. The term 'culture of learning' can be used to describe:

taken-for-granted frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, about how to teach or learn, whether and how to ask questions, what textbooks are for, and how language teaching relates to broader issues of the nature and purpose of education [CORTAZZI & JIN 1996 p169].

The different teaching and learning styles go to make up the culture of learning of each participant in the language classroom, and also help to form the group classroom culture. The link between culture and learning style seems an important one. Cortazzi and Jin point out that not all writers who consider differences in learning strategies make the link between the learners' cultures and their learning strategies, and that researchers into second language acquisition do not pay sufficient attention to cultural influences [CORTAZZI & JIN 1996 p171].

Language learning and teaching styles are in part derived from past educational experiences, and in part from the individual's personality. Different traditions in language teaching, for example, the grammar-translation method, the audio-lingual method and the communicative method encompass a variety of different underpinning theories and approaches, and inevitably inform different expectations. Aside from the teaching methods employed, individuals may be extrovert or introvert; some feel more secure with written learning materials, making use of resources such as dictionaries; others are communicative when speaking, but much more inhibited when required to produce language in written form. Some learners much prefer to be alone with a computer. All kinds of factors affect the individual's culture of learning, such as age, intelligence, previous educational experience and degree of confidence or anxiety. The culture of learning is rooted in early experiences, but its development is a continuing process, which will affect what happens in the classroom.

From an early age, students (and teachers) are socialized into expectations about what kinds of interaction are appropriate in class, about how texts should be used, about how they should engage in teaching and learning processes. The expectations arising from a culture of learning can be powerful determinants of what happens in classroom interaction. This can lead to possible mismatches between those cultures portrayed in textbooks and the cultures of learning used by teachers or students to

acquire appropriate knowledge, skills, or attitudes about the target cultures [CORTAZZI & JIN 1999 p196-7].

However it would be an over-simplification to impute to all the individuals in the classroom an enthusiastic adherence to the learning experiences they have had in the past. Some learners may be seeking to change the way they learn, either because they dislike the strategies they have employed in the past, or because they have found them to be ineffective.

Regardless of the curriculum in which they work and regardless of whether or not they are being taught, all learners of a language are confronted by the task of discovering *how to learn* the language. All learners will start with differing expectations about the actual learning, but each individual learner will be required to adapt and continually readapt in the process of relating himself to what is being learnt. The knowledge will be redefined as the learner uncovers it, and in constructing and reconstructing his own curriculum, the learner may discover that earlier strategies in the use of his abilities need to be replaced by other strategies. Thus, all learners - in their own ways - have to adopt the role of negotiation between themselves, their learning process, and the gradually revealed object of learning ... Within the context of the classroom group, this role is shared and, thereby, made interpersonal [BREEN & CANDLIN 2001 p18].

Thus, although the classroom may contain conflicting learning styles, these may be seen as a resource whereby learners develop their learning styles through interacting with others.

There is a distinction between learner expectations at the outset of a course, and the strategies used by learners during the course. Cortazzi and Jin state that differences in the expectations of learners and teachers, or of different groups of learners, can pass largely unnoticed, but nevertheless cause difficulties in the learning process. Such a clash could occur where some learners believe that they will learn using communicative methods, and others feel that taking time in class to talk to each other wastes valuable learning time (see for example the instance given by CORTAZZI & JIN 1996 p.186). A graphic example of a clash between a teacher's process-based teaching style and the learners' teacher centred learning style is provided by Shamim. She relates her experience of attempting to replace formal lectures with communicative group activities, requiring a reallocation of teaching and learning roles. Despite her having thought out the changes in a coherent and

detailed way, and having explained them fully to the learners, giving reasons for the change, the new methods met with massive resistance:

Initially, when I gave a group task, I tried to walk around to see if any help was required. The groups stopped talking as soon as I came too close to them ... So I tried to leave the class sometimes on different pretexts, but I found on my return that, in fact, no work had been done during my absence. Finally, I compromised by 'watching' over them from my seat ... Surprisingly when I followed this procedure tasks were accomplished more quickly and efficiently than when I was trying to circulate around different groups ... As examinations approached and learners began to show signs of panic, I had to make other compromises, such as increasing teacher talking time during discussion sessions. I gradually found myself assuming more and more authority in the classroom and this seemed to make the learners happy and relaxed. It was indeed ironic that the techniques I had been trying to use to create, supposedly, a non-threatening and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom had, in fact, we become a potential source of tension and conflict [SHAMIM 1996 pp 108-9]

It would seem from the above experience that the sooner mismatches between the expectations of participants in the learning process are uncovered and addressed, the more likely the participants will be to amend and develop their cultures of learning.

Learners also differ in their approach to assessment and correction; they "may not pay attention to error correction if it does not suit their purposes at hand" [COHEN 1991 p112]. This illustrates a potential mismatch between teacher and learner aspiration, if the teacher considers error correction fundamental to the learner's progress. In the present study the learner interviews have attempted to elicit what it is that the learners view as learning priorities.

Earlier research projects have provided examples of the cultural mismatch which may occur between Western teachers and Chinese students. Western teachers tend to expect student participation and independent thinking. Chinese students often have a culture of learning which encourages careful reflection before participation, and where the emphasis is upon mastering the subject before making an original contribution to it. Questions are a case in point. There is often a reluctance on the part of Chinese students to ask questions, as they do not wish to look foolish, whilst Western teachers regard students asking questions as a necessary part of learning. Western teachers often perceive Chinese students as orientated to exams rather than the process of learning. In contrast, Chinese students may consider Western

teachers to be poor at teaching, because they use communicative methods rather than teaching the students directly [CORTAZZI & JIN 1999]. However, it is important not to generalise too widely, as teaching and learning methods are developing constantly:

China is undergoing a period of rapid change and among young people greater individuality is becoming manifest. So, in any portrayal of a Chinese culture of learning - or of Western ones - we might expect a complex picture of many variables some of which may be in tension or even contradictory. This seems to be in the nature of a culture of learning [CORTAZZI & JIN 1996 p174].

In the ESOL class studied, there were a group of learners who originated from South Korea and who interacted closely with each other, obviously relying on each other for support in learning. Li carried out research with South Korean EFL teachers in 1994 and 1995, investigating their responses to the use of communicative language teaching methods. They stated that their students had difficulties with the approach. These difficulties were: the students' lack of proficiency in English, which made speaking activities difficult; the students' lack of motivation to develop their communication skills because they were motivated instead to learn the grammar upon which the university entrance exam was based; and the traditional classroom structure in South Korea where students take notes while the teacher lectures and speak only if spoken to, which impedes their willingness to be involved in communicative methods of learning. If English teachers were encouraging class participation and teachers of other subjects were not, the English teachers feared that their students would become confused. It was safer for the learners to behave traditionally. Also the teachers considered that the large size of their classes mitigated against the approach, because of the difficulties of classroom management, complaints about the noise generated, the inability of the teacher to give students attention, and a lack of space to move around in [LI 2001]. The difficulties discovered by Li have been raised and addressed in Chapter 8 below.

2.5.2 The second research question

The discussion of the interlinking of nationality, culture, language and identity, and how this pertains to individuals and the identification of cultural issues specific to the language classroom, together give rise to the second research question: 'Does the formation of mixed nationality relationships in the ESOL classroom affect the classroom culture?' This question is addressed in Chapter 7, which also contains a

review of the data to examine whether there are signs of the shaping of a new culture through the dialogue between learners.

2.5.3 The social function of the classroom

Linked to the above area of inquiry is the question of whether, and if so, to what extent, a social function is a necessary component of a class where learning takes place. It cannot be assumed, inevitably, that where the teaching methodology is communicative, the communication by which the learners are learning is developing their social as well as their language skills. In the quotation from Kramsch in 2.5.1 above the concept of learners communicating together to form a new culture is mooted. In support of this approach is Brookfield's suggestion that group discussions in class can have social aims, in addition to learning goals, namely to help develop a sense of group identity and to encourage democratic habits [BROOKFIELD 1990]. In addition, when considering the social function of the learning group, note can be taken of Allwright's view that some participants in the classroom are there to have fun [ALLWRIGHT 1996].

2.5.4 The third research question

The third question I am raising in this study seeks to address the area of the importance of social relationships in the language classroom, by asking: Does working in mixed nationality groups appear to further the social success of the class? This question is addressed in Chapter 7.

2.6 Learning theory

Above I have addressed the literature relating to the context of the present study and to the issues of nationality, culture and identity of the learners who are engaged in learning. It is now necessary to address the learners' activity within the class, by investigating the aspects of learning theory relevant to the present study, which include the notion of 'affect', theories of language acquisition, and the effect of group work on the learning process. These are considered in turn below.

2.6.1 Affect in language teaching

Affective factors, that is, factors relating to the learners' emotions, are important in any exploration of learner behaviour and motivation. It is arguable that an understanding of affective issues can enhance language learning, by making it possible to overcome negative emotions and make use of positive ones. The affective features of language learning for the individual include feelings of anxiety

and self-esteem, as well as personal characteristics such as inhibition, extroversion and introversion, motivation and individual learning styles. Affective factors pertaining to the relationships in the language class include empathy, classroom transactions and cross-cultural processes [ARNOLD & BROWN 1999]. All of these have relevance in an investigation of the effects of learner relationships and group work on learning.

It has also been suggested that an understanding of affective factors can lead to using language learning to increase social good in a moral way: "we can also educate learners to live more satisfying lives and to be responsible members of society" [ARNOLD & BROWN 1999 p3]; however, this aim has not been a conscious one in the carrying out of the present study.

Of Arnold & Brown's factors, above, the effects of inhibition, extroversion and introversion, self-esteem, and individual learning styles have been addressed in section 2.5.1 above. Issues relating to classroom transactions and cross-cultural processes have been discussed in section 2.4 above and motivation is discussed in section 2.6.5 below. In this section, I give more detailed consideration to the area of learner anxiety and its implications for language learning. Self-evidently, anxiety can be disempowering, 'debilitating anxiety', or empowering, 'facilitating anxiety', for the learner. What is rather less obvious is which sources and manifestations of anxiety disempower and which empower, and whether learners vary in their reactions to different prompts. Attempts that have been made to distinguish different types of anxiety have produced 'trait anxiety', which is a permanent feature of the learner and 'state anxiety', which is temporary, brought about by circumstances [ALLWRIGHT & BAILEY 1991]. 'Language shock' is a term that refers to the state that competent adults are reduced to in a non-native language situation where because of their level of language they are "forced by the circumstances to display a self that is fundamentally incompetent in all those things that everybody else around takes completely for granted" [SCHUMANN 1975 quoted in ALLWRIGHT & BAILEY 1991 p174].

Previous research studies have indicated that language learning anxieties are linked directly to performing in the target language, rather than to performance generally [GARDNER AND MACINTYRE 1993], but that these anxieties diminish over time [DESROCHERS AND GARDNER 1981]. Most language learning research shows a negative correlation between anxiety and performance [OXFORD 1999]. Negative anxiety appears to lead to multiple problems and failures, including low grades,

poor performance in proficiency tests, poor performance in speaking and writing tasks, low self-confidence and low self-esteem. However it has also been suggested that high anxiety could be the result of language learning problems rather than the cause; a learner who is confident and motivated initially, when perceiving a lack of attainment through testing, or in some other way, experiences heightened anxiety. It may be hypothesised that anxiety which is the result of learning failures may also become the cause of subsequent problems, producing a negative spiral effect on learning [GANSCHOW, SPARKS, ANDERSON, JAVORSKY, SKILLER AND PATTON 1994].

Assertions that there can be more positive aspects of anxiety are controversial, but it has been suggested that anxiety helps keep learners alert [SCOVEL 1978]. It has also been suggested that a positive aspect of anxiety is always present unless there is a negative manifestation which is noticed, instead of the positive aspect [YOUNG 1992]. Other writers have referred to 'tension' as helpful for language learning, rather than 'anxiety' which carries more negative connotations [YOUNG 1992].

Chang's study of self-directed language learning by Taiwanese students in Britain found the causes of the participants' language anxiety to include, as well as lack of competence and lack of training, factors linked to having to communicate with native speakers, such as being afraid of being laughed at [CHANG 1999].

In section 2.4.3 above I have considered the relationship between language and culture. It is at least arguable that cultural difference produces as much, if not more, anxiety than a lack of language knowledge, and therefore it cannot be assumed that evidence of anxiety in the class is evidence that it is learning induced.

2.6.2 Language (and culture) acquisition

Historically there have been polarised views of how language is learned, a dichotomy still exists between behavioural and cognitive psychology, and therefore researchers have approached this field from different perspectives. An area that has provoked much research and debate is that of the similarities and differences between the learning of one's first language and the learning of an additional language. One school of thought categorises first and second language learning as similar processes:

The task of second language learning is to cultivate skill components that were already mastered for a first language so that they can be applied to the building of is

a new language. Second language acquisition, then, is an extension of first language acquisition in that the development of proficiency depends upon the same types of cognitive processes. It is discontinuous from first language acquisition in that these skill components must function to reassemble and reorganise a new language system that the learner is attempting to master [BIALYSTOK 1991 pp63-4].

A concise summary of research in this field is provided by Valdes, drawing together ideas from psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, social psychology and neurolinguistics. She discusses the contrast between treating EAL as a subject to be learnt in the classroom like any other subject, and the language acquisition that takes place by learners in real-life settings, such as the work environment. She concludes that communication is vital in second language learning, but that individual differences in the learners create variables in their proficiency and achievement [VALDES 2001]. Differences arise from the learners' age, language aptitude, motivation and personality, as well as learning style.

An adult learning a second language behaves just like a child acquiring a second language. The differences in their ultimate attainment, therefore, need not be explained by a biological critical or sensitive period." [VALDES 2001 p20].

It is apparent that, as well as some uncertainty about the similarities and differences in first and second language learning, a difference in approach arises depending on whether language is viewed as a product to be acquired or a process by which the learner is socialised. This conflict of theory is liable to give rise to a 'mixed' approach by ESOL teachers, themselves uncertain as to which approach is most effective in meeting their specific targets. Valdes terms this "informed eclecticism", which she describes as:

a view holding that teachers can selectively bring together a combination of best practices without concern about underlying theories of language and language learning [VALDES 2001 p23].

Chomsky, arguing for language learning by immersion, based on the belief that every learner possesses a language acquisition device enabling them to draw on innate rules of language, nevertheless did not link his ideas about language acquisition to specific teaching techniques:

My own feeling is that from our knowledge of the organisation of language and of the principles that determine language structure one cannot immediately construct a teaching programme. All we can suggest is that a teaching programme be designed in such a way as to give free play to those creative principles that humans bring to the process of language learning, and, I presume, to the learning of anything else [CHOMSKY 1968 p690].

Chomsky's approach has been criticised for not taking account of social and cultural differences and context of use [DEREWIANKA 2001 p256]. Other theorists, in particular Halliday, have emphasised the need to address context, and argued that within the cultural context, the specific situation determines the choice of language used [HALLIDAY 1976].

The main language acquisition theories result either from behaviourist approaches or from those theories that indicate that learners are innately able to learn language. The best known example of the latter is the theory of the language acquisition device, defined by Stevick, in declining to use the term, as, "a cover term for whatever combination of assorted and variously interconnected features of the human nervous system enables humans and no one else to produce and understand - to control - what we call 'language'" [STEVICK 1999 p56]. An example of a behaviourist approach is the negotiation model of language learning, which requires a trigger which sends a signal, which evokes a response, which causes a reaction. This model focuses on form, and neglects the external factors that may influence the learner. In contrast, social interactionists view language acquisition as a constantly integrative process consisting of the interaction between the learner's predisposition to handle language data in a particular way and the data which the learner encounters. Social interactionists assert that the structure of the language data must be relevant to the learner's communicative needs if it is to be useful in the learner's acquisition of language [DOUGHTY 2000]. In social interactionist theory, the central focus is the communication of meaning, not proficiency in language skills. Learners will learn language by using it in order to act in a meaningful way with others [WILLIAMS AND BURDEN 1997].

Second language acquisition (SLA) has developed sophisticated methods for analysing fragments of the learning of the rules of linguistic form, and to a lesser extent the pragmatic rules for use of the language, but how far can it really tackle acquisition of the rules for creative interpretation and negotiation, in a multitude of cultural contexts, which characterise human interaction, verbal and non-verbal? [PHILLIPSON 1991 p39].

Le Page, in considering the notion of 'sociolinguistic competence', observes that an individual creates his or her own system of verbal behaviour in order to identify with a chosen group, or conversely, to show that the individual does not belong to the group. He defines 'competence' as that which the individual needs to know in order to operate as a member of a particular society [LE PAGE 1978 pp39 & 41]. Following this viewpoint, and going beyond social interactionism, Roberts [2001] discusses 'language socialisation' as a more accurate view of the way migrants learn language than 'acquisition'. Her position, which seems relevant to the learners in this study, is that, learners come to produce and interpret language amongst the assumptions about multilingualism and second language learning held by the society they are in. She points out that adult workers learning the language of the society they have migrated to, do so in work or other institutional situations, and when research is carried out into how their language learning develops the individuals concerned must be seen in this social context, "not simply as language learners but as social beings struggling to manage often conflicting goals. After all, the researcher may be interested in their language development, but the minority workers are concerned with getting things done" [ROBERTS 2001 p 109]. She draws the distinction between language as a process rather than a product, and recommends research into the learner as a whole social person. She portrays second language socialisation as a gradual induction process, but points out that it is more than an 'apprenticeship' because it involves more than learning what to do and say in particular social contexts. Socialisation also involves the individual coming to and belonging to the new community, a process of developing self identity which never reaches a conclusion. Her point is that there is no simple functional model that can be applied. Second language socialisation must take account of the range of factors affecting the individual including ethnicity, class and racism, and this refers us back to the question of the relationship between language and culture discussed in section 2.4 above.

Chang links culture shock and language shock in explaining the difficulties experienced by Taiwanese students in Britain [CHANG 1999]. When discussing second language learning, language and culture are inextricably linked, and it has been suggested that the proximity between speech and thought patterns involves the acquisition by language learners of the thought processes used by the speakers of the language [KIM 1988]. In the present study, all the learners were living away from their native culture; some, for example the au pairs, were living in the midst of culturally different families; other learners were living with families of the same original native culture as themselves. It follows that as well as learning new speech

and thought patterns, these learners would need to take on certain facets of the culture in which they were immersed, a process often described as acculturation, and which may involve long or short term adaptation to the new situation [KIM 1988]. It must be questioned to what extent a language learner needs to acquire a new culture when acquiring a new language, particularly as the two do not proceed inextricably; research has indicated that culture is more difficult to acquire than language [BYRAM 1991, KORDES 1991, KRAMSCH 1991, KRAMSCH 1993a].

Although it may be possible for people to develop an intellectual understanding and tolerance of other cultures, a more interesting question, perhaps, is if, and to what extent, it is possible for people to become cognitively like members of other cultures; that is, can adults learn to construct and see the world through culturally different eyes? [LANTOLF 1999 p29].

Acquisition of a new culture appears to be a four stage process, producing first excitement, then shock, then a more positive form of stress, and finally an assimilation or adaptation to the new culture [BROWN 1994]. The progressive nature of the development of language acquisition cannot be ignored in classroom research, and therefore it is helpful to elicit information about the learners' backgrounds. The learners who were the subject of the present study had lived in the UK for differing amounts of time, details of which are included in Chapter 5 below, and it can therefore be presumed that different stages of the culture acquisition process were present in the class together.

2.6.3 The effect of groups on the learning process

A key area in this study is the relationship between learner relationships in the classroom and the learning, if any, that takes place there. There are many suggestions that such a relationship exists, for example in Claxton's discussion of group learning [CLAXTON 1996]. A number of different possibilities can be considered. Firstly, there may be an overt and deliberate effect resulting from negotiation, cooperation or pressure among the individuals in the class. Allwright discusses the conspiracy theory where teacher and learners co-operate together to maintain a facade of learning, to save face, whilst deliberately avoiding activities that would go towards learning, but which would cause difficulties [ALLWRIGHT 1996]. Secondly, a Vygotskian approach would tend towards learners making greater progress when working together, than when working apart, through processes such as scaffolding. Thirdly, competition theory suggests that learning in proximity to others can spur the individual to greater achievement.

(a) Co-operative learning

By looking at classroom culture one can begin to understand language learning and what happens between people; the classroom culture addresses interactive and social features and is instrumental in language learning [BREEN 1986].

This interaction exists on a continuum from ritualistic, predictable, diversely interpreted communication ... motivated by the assumption that people can learn together in a group [BREEN 1986 p143].

Certainly in communicative language teaching the learner has to take the role of negotiating with the group within the classroom activities. They therefore have an interdependent status. In such a classroom, learning cannot be seen as highly personal and subjective, for in group learning, the learner, like the teacher, provides support, encouragement and feedback to the others. In this way, the learner is working in partnership with the other members of the group and the teacher [BREEN & CANDLIN 2001]. Valdes' in-depth study of four Latino students in schools in the USA indicated that a significant problem for the students was the lack of opportunities to communicate with fluent English speakers. She saw a direct link between the progress made by the students and the access that each had to English outside the classroom [VALDES 2001].

Working in pairs and groups to perform language learning tasks and activities is a form of co-operative learning, models of which have been given by Slavin [1990], Kagan [1994] and Johnson & Johnson [1994]. Rather than reproduce each model in detail I have chosen to incorporate some of their shared characteristics in Figure 2.3 below.

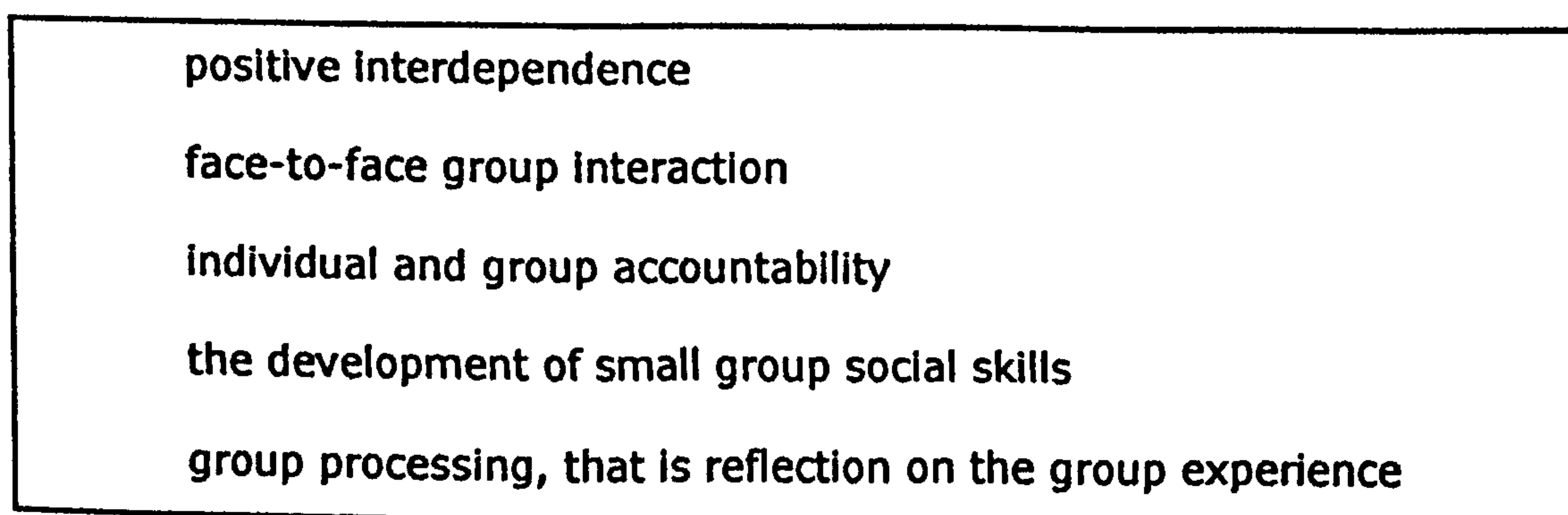


Figure 2.3 The shared characteristics of models of cooperative learning

There is a difference between examining the aims of cooperative learning, and considering how it can be used. Addressing the latter, Crandall suggests the following rationale for using cooperative learning:

- (a) to reduce learners' anxiety, because they are given the opportunity to try out the language on each other first;
- (b) to promote interaction, the learners taking on the role that was the teacher's, traditionally;
- (c) to provide comprehensible input and output: the members of the group have to understand each other in order to perform the task;
- (d) to increase the learners' self-confidence and self-esteem, and
- (e) to increase the learners' motivation [CRANDALL 1999 p233-4].

In the present study it was intended that there would be learner interaction. The classes were designed to produce more learner-talk than teacher-talk, and in such a way that the learners have to understand each other in order to accomplish the tasks. The interviews attempted to elicit whether or not the learners perceived that this method of learning enhanced their self confidence, self-esteem and motivation.

Brookfield [1990] proposed intellectual aims for group discussion which were as follows:

- (a) to engage in exploring a variety of perspectives;
- (b) to help discover new perspectives;
- (c) to emphasise the complexity and ambiguity of issues, topics or themes;
- (d) to help recognise the assumptions behind habitual ideas and behaviours;
- (e) to increase intellectual agility;
- (f) to increase active listening.

In similar vein, and having set out the rationale of cooperative language learning, Crandall suggested benefits, which include the items contained in Figure 2.4 below [CRANDALL 1999 pp235-9].

The present study aims to explore whether items 3, 4 and 7 of Figure 2.4 were experienced by the learners in the ESOL classroom in the present study. A discussion of the findings is set out in Chapter 8.

1. Increased opportunities for learners to listen to and produce language;
2. Learners using a greater range of speech acts and language functions;
3. Opportunities for learners to develop cross-cultural understanding;
4. Increased learner-centredness and learner direction in the classroom;
5. Increased opportunities for the development of academic language;
6. More opportunities for learners to develop critical thinking, and
7. Increased support enabling the learners to move towards independence.

Figure 2.4: Suggested benefits of cooperative language learning from Crandall 1999

(b) Scaffolding

In examining whether the methods used and the multi-national nature of the group involves the learners supporting each other towards greater independence, we can examine the theory of learners advancing each other's learning. Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and the notion of scaffolding are both relevant. Vygotsky pioneered an approach to the psychology of learning which incorporated social, cultural and historical forces in an individual's development. The ZPD refers to the individual's potential for development if assisted by others, and it is a concept that Vygotsky used to explain how learning involves social and participatory processes [DANIELS 2001]. He viewed instruction as a tool to activate a learner's potential:

Instruction is only useful when it moves ahead of development. When it does, it impels or awakens a whole series of functions that are in a stage of maturation lying in the zone of proximal development. This is the major role of instruction in development ... Instruction would be completely unnecessary if it merely utilised what has already matured in the developmental process, if it were not itself a source of development [VYGOTSKY 1987 p212].

To understand the way an individual's mind works, Vygotsky considered that it was essential to examine the social and cultural processes which had an impact on that individual. The ZPD concept is based on the theory that psychological development depends as much on the social forces that act on a person as on their inner resources [ARDICHVILI 2001]. The related concept of 'scaffolding' is that some person or persons other than the learner provides support during the learning

process that enables the learner to reach a higher level of learning than they would have attained alone. This is of significance and relevance in a study of how learners operate in the learning environment. The first theories of scaffolding related to adults helping children to communicate messages that they could not manage alone; the idea of scaffolding has since been applied to adult language learners in a variety of contexts [HATCH et al. 1986]. There are indications from research into this area that suggest that the learner's peers, who are providing the scaffolding, also benefit from doing so [CRANDALL 1999].

Lave & Wenger (1996) classified interpretations of the concept of the zone of proximal development into three broad categories. The first categorises the ZPD as "the distance between problem-solving abilities exhibited by a learner working alone and that learner's problem-solving abilities when assisted by or collaborating with more experienced people" [LAVE & WENGER 1996 p144]. The second is where the ZPD represents the distance between the breadth of sociohistorical knowledge about a culture and the individuals' normal experience of that culture. Thirdly, the ZPD can be interpreted socio-culturally, as "taking into account in a central way the conflictual nature of social practice" and as "connecting issues of socio-cultural transformation with the changing relations between newcomers and old-timers in the context of a changing shared practice." [LAVE & WENGER 1996 p144]. Thus, because culture reflects those involved in it, and is constantly changing, working together can make sense of differences and help to avoid polarities.

If being part of a group has a significant effect on learning, it is worth asking what conditions maximise effective group learning. Jacques states that effective learning in groups requires the development of mutual trust and openness between the participants [JACQUES 2000 p65]. It would seem therefore that providing group activities is not necessarily enough. Some action should be taken to ensure the creation of an appropriate environment. Jacques recommends the use of constructive feedback to correct distortions in communication, and metacommunication, that is, communication among the group members about the process of communication itself. This reflects the Vygotskian approach of negotiating 'comprehensible input' in social interaction [ROBERTS 1998].

Jacques also refers to 'language socialisation', or how learners come to produce and interpret discourse, supported by the assumptions of society at large about multilingualism and second learners. It remains a controversial question, whether

language is a product to be acquired, or a social process into which the learner is socialised.

(c) Inhibitors to learning in groups

Luker [1987] in Brown and Atkins [1988] identified student likes and dislikes for small group teaching. The likes were that the learners had a greater influence on what was being discussed; were able to find out other people's ideas; flexibility; the development of an ability to analyse problems and reach solutions, and a strong feeling of identity. The dislikes included the fact that the group may be dominated by one person, the problems that arise when sometimes group members will not talk, long silences and having to contribute when the learner does not want to. Below, in Chapter 8, I have selected these as indicators against which to measure the learners' comments in interview about group work.

It is possible that a number of factors could have a negative effect on learning within the group work in the ESOL classroom. These include the compulsory nature of the group work, and the affective impact of having to communicate in English as the only shared language, as well as difficulties of racial prejudice. Allwright & Bailey discuss the 'receptivity' of language learners to each other, particularly in small group work, dealing with issues such as self image ("Do you want to be seen as someone who is interested in learning foreign languages?" [ALLWRIGHT & BAILEY 1991 p160]), as well as individual, cultural and other prejudices:

Beyond the very real possibility of simple personality clashes, however, there may also be all sorts of inter-ethnic or political prejudices that threaten learners' receptivity to each other as people [ALLWRIGHT & BAILEY 1991 p161].

They go on to assert, from research findings in the 1970s and 1980s, that:

Many people do not actually enjoy communicating, or attempting to communicate, with others, especially with people from other cultures [ALLWRIGHT & BAILEY 1991 p164].

This assertion an issue that it is crucial to explore in the present study, that is, whether the mixed nationality nature of a group can itself be an inhibitor to learning.

2.6.4 The fourth research question

The discussion above, relating to affect and learning theory, prompts my fourth research question: Does mixed nationality group work affect the learning in the classroom? This question is addressed in Chapter 8 below.

2.6.5 Learner motivation

In exploring the area of learner relationships, and of learner differences, motivation is a significant factor. Ager makes a distinction between theories that explain the motivation of individuals and those which attempt to explain the motivation of groups. Whereas goal theory tends to explain individual motivation, groups are motivated by a desire to improve status, and the desire for solidarity. Ager lists seven motives informing language planning and policy: Identity, Ideology, Image, Insecurity, Inequality, Integration and Instrumentality [AGER 2001]. However, little is really known about how the views that the learners bring with them to the class affect learning and all that takes place within the classroom. As Holliday says,

we do not know enough about how learning might be affected by the attitudes and expectations that people bring to the learning situation ... which in turn influence the ways in which people deal with each other in the classroom" [HOLLIDAY 1994 pp9-10].

Goal theory explains motivation in terms of learners seeking to attain particular ends. These may be short-term or long-term, concrete or idealistic [DORNYEI & OTTO 1998]. Goals in language learning may be idiosyncratic and diverse, and may well combine integrative and instrumental elements. Linked to the idea of motivation as being goal centred is the influence of the learner's needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a clear link between human motivation and action [MASLOW 1954]. In order to understand why learners behave the way they do in language learning situations it is essential to explore their motivation, and goal theory provides some useful tools for doing this. "Goal theory ... leads to concern with motives of instrumentality and integration, identity, ideology and insecurity" [AGER 2001 p9].

There has long been a distinction made between integrative and instrumental motivation in language learning, the one held by those who wish to be associated with the language community, the other by those who seek the advancement of their own ends [GARDNER & LAMBERT 1959]. However, the distinction is not always precise and the two categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Ager

conducted five in-depth interviews with adults in early 1999, relating to the nature of instrumental motivation in language learning, and concluded that there could be a strong link between instrumental and integrative motivation [AGER 2001]. He comments on Young's study of over 500 French and British school students, which found clear indicators that instrumental motivation was much more important than integrative in 14 year-olds. It appeared that the most successful children in Britain and France were those with parents who were aware of the external world [YOUNG 1994 discussed in AGER 2001]. Ager concludes that there is no sharp difference between instrumental and integrative motivation. Individuals or communities can be motivated, by a disparity between their skills and their environment, to improving their existing skills, and to:

add a new communicative mechanism for use in some domains like commerce, or, in the case of the worst fit, to shift from one language to another. The motive seems in all these cases to be a search for a better match between organism and environment. One thing is clear: language behaviour is not random nor unplanned [AGER 2001 p124].

Dörnyei [in DÖRNYEI 2001] describes his 1994 framework (p18) which involves 3 levels of motivation: the language level, the learner level and the learning situation level, which last level operates as course specific, teacher specific and group specific. He goes on to develop this using a 'process-oriented approach' which tries to account for changes of motivation over time³. There are three stages in the model: preactional, actional and postactional. Dörnyei explains that at the preactional stage the learner has the motivation to make a choice, for example, to opt to learn a language. At the actional stage 'executive' motivation is linked to carrying out the tasks that need to be done to achieve the aim chosen. The motivation to actually do the learning tasks is therefore different from the initial enthusiasm to embark on the chosen project. The final, postactional, stage involves retrospective motivation.

From the existing models of learner motivation I have adopted Dörnyei's process-oriented approach because it lends itself to a longitudinal study of this kind, and because the theory seems to me to be a convincing one, and I therefore wish to try to apply it and find out how applicable it is.

There seem few accounts of research conducted in the UK into the motivation of ESOL learners. One study was conducted by Khanna et al. [1998] to examine the

role of individual and social variables in learning English as Another Language looking at a sample of ESOL learners at adult education centres in Britain. The study began in April 1989, and the final sample consisted of 133 learners from 13 ESOL centres in various British cities. There were 90 females and 43 males, with a total age range from 15 to 68. Over 77% were between 15 and 46. Most were over 25 and most were female. Most had been in England for less than 10 years. Preliminary visits to the ESOL centres showed that the learners were diverse in terms of ethnic background, mother tongue, sociolinguistic background and proficiency in English. The teaching and learning situation was informal the classes were small (10-15) and the main teaching strategies were communicative. There was no fixed curriculum. The aim of the study was to look at attitudes and motivation and it was found that these vary from setting to setting. When learning English in the UK, social-psychological variables acquire significance, just as social variables do. Those learners with positive stereotypes of English and the English people, and who also had strong integrative motivation were assessed as achieving more highly, but proficiency appears to rest on more than motivation and social and linguistic stereotypes.

2.6.6 The effect of relationships on motivation

A review of the research into the effects of promoting humanistic exercises in second language classes has indicated that using such activities has a positive effect on the learners' attitudes towards each other, and that having good relationships in the class promotes motivation [GALYEAN 1979, MOSKOWITZ 1981]. Moskowitz explains the theory behind the success of humanistic teaching strategies in terms of learner self interest:

With humanistic activities, everyone has the chance not only to speak, also to have everyone *want to listen*. And when students converse, the topics focus on the most meaningful and absorbing subject there is - *themselves*. In this way, they get to know one another less superficially - to see the inner being, not just the outer shell [MOSKOWITZ 1999 p189].

Studies of peer relationships among child learners indicate that positive relationships enhance self-esteem, which in turn increases expectancy of success, and thus increases motivation. Positive aspects of good peer relationships amongst child learners include having support in dealing with problems, and the avoidance of loneliness [PINTRICH & SCHUNK 1996]. It is assumed that this approach could equally be applied to adult learners. Jourard concluded that people learn about

themselves through the way other people respond to them, and that therefore building relationships is important for learning [JOURARD 1971]. It appears that the learners who have a lively interest in, and motivation to know more about, themselves, are likely to engage more readily and more productively in the learning process, where communicative methods are used.

2.6.7 The fifth research question

From the literature on learner motivation, and in order to test out the theory that group work has a positive effect on learning and learner relationships, my final research question is: Are there ways in which mixed nationality learning relationships affect the group adversely? This question is addressed in Chapter 8 below.

2.7 Specific problems in the field

Above I have carried out a review of the literature and existing research pertaining to the diverse subjects relevant to the present study. It should be noted that in some areas, little relevant research has yet been undertaken. This is particularly so in the area of the implications of learner relationships. In other areas, where issues have been explored in more depth, such as the relationship between motivation and learning, unanswered questions still remain.

2.8 Conclusions from the literature

2.8.1 ESOL in the UK

The literature on ESOL reveals that, although this area of English teaching is being promoted politically, and although there are moves to centralise and rationalise what is being done in the field, it is nevertheless misunderstood and neglected. Furthermore, a coherent framework for delivery of ESOL provision needs to be based on a clear underpinning philosophy.

2.8.2 Group dynamics

The literature on group dynamics indicates a range of psychological approaches to how learners behave in groups. There are clearly positive and negative implications for the use of groups in language learning, and an understanding of the effect of the group on the individual appears critical in curriculum design and lesson planning. For the purposes of the present study, an understanding of group theory is necessary in order to interpret the words and behaviour of the group members. It is

evident that learner relationships will affect the culture of the group they are in, and thus in the present study it is necessary to investigate what the effects are.

2.8.3 The relationship between nationality, culture, language and identity

The literature on this area presents a very complex framework for identifying the factors at play in the classroom. In addressing the individuals and the relationships they form, stereotyping must be avoided. A focus on these issues in the present study leads to the need to examine whether the mixed nationality relationships formed within the class influence its social success.

2.8.4 Classroom culture

An application of the literature on learning and teaching styles and group learning to the classroom culture reveals that what happens in the classroom may take place on a number of different levels. To attempt a useful understanding, both surface and deep action must be penetrated. The literature on this area, together with the literature on group dynamics, and on nationality and culture, combine to raise questions about the impact of the mixed nationality relationships on the learning that takes place in the class.

2.8.5 Affect

The literature on affect makes it plain that to understand both the learners, and what is happening in the class, the researcher needs to take account of individual affective characteristics. In the present study there is the need to investigate whether there is any link between the feelings of the learners and the mixed nationality relationships in the class. The indications from the literature that affect can influence learning positively or negatively give rise to the question of whether such relationships could have an adverse effect on learning.

2.9 The research questions

From the literature reviewed above I have formulated the following research questions:

1. What impact do the relationships that learners form have on classroom dynamics?
2. Does the formation of mixed nationality relationships in the ESOL classroom affect the classroom culture?
3. Does working in mixed nationality groups appear to further the social success of the class?
4. Does mixed nationality group work affect the learning in the classroom?
5. Are there ways in which mixed nationality learning relationships affect the class adversely?

In the following chapter I discuss the methodology required for empirical investigation of this complex area in order to answer the research questions above.

Footnotes

1 For a definition of ESOL, see Chapter 5.

2 See Chapter 5 for more detailed information about the cohort of learners.

3 See diagram on p22

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Overview

In the previous chapter I discussed the literature underpinning the thesis, and discussed how the key research questions arose from the literature. This chapter is concerned with the methods used for collecting and analysing the data in the present study, and the theoretical principles underlying those methods. In addressing the methodology I have attempted to answer the following questions:

- (a) What overall strategy was adopted in carrying out the present study, and why was this strategy used rather than any other?
- (b) How was the project designed, and what techniques were used? Why were these techniques chosen and not others?
- (c) What methods were used to carry out the research, and why?

To answer the above questions I have reviewed the appropriate literature, and drawn out from this a defence of the rationale of the thesis, an explanation of how the key research questions are to be addressed, and a description and defence of the strategy and methods employed in the study. Accordingly the chapter contains the following sections:

- * **the rationale of the thesis** and the research questions;
- * **the research approach**, comprising a discussion of the literature underpinning the research approach and an appraisal of the research approach;
- * **the data collection methods**, comprising a discussion of the literature underpinning the methods of data collection, recording and presentation used in the present study, and a description and critical appraisal of the methods and procedures used for data collection, recording and presentation, arising from the key research questions;
- * **the methods of analysis**, comprising a discussion of the literature underpinning the methods of data analysis used and a critical appraisal of

them, and a discussion of the literature underpinning the methods used to measure the validity and reliability of the data and a critical appraisal of them, and

* **ethical considerations**, comprising discussion of the problem of subjectivity and bias, the avoidance of cultural stereotyping and ensuring participant confidentiality and consent.

3.2 The main aim and rationale of the study, and how the research questions were addressed

The aim of this study was to explore the relationships between learners in a mixed-nationality ESOL classroom, and to attempt to identify whether the mixed nationality identity of the class was significant. It therefore involved the investigation of the learners' experiences of language teaching in a mixed nationality class and the exploration of the effect of the relationships which the learners formed on the classroom dynamics. The 'relationships' considered were not merely the links made between learners studying together within the class, but also included friendships that were evident, existing both in and out of the classroom.

The rationale of the study arose from the preheld suppositions that:

(i) group learning is beneficial to the learners both educationally and socially, and that

(ii) there will be, inevitably, positive and negative facets for those involved in mixed nationality group learning.

In order to address the aim I formulated five key research questions, discussed in Chapter 2 above and summarised as:

1. What Impact do the relationships that learners form have on classroom dynamics?
2. Does the formation of mixed nationality relationships in the ESOL classroom affect the classroom culture?
3. Does working in mixed nationality groups appear to further the social success of the class?
4. Does mixed nationality group work affect the learning in the classroom?
5. Are there ways in which mixed nationality learning relationships affect the class adversely?

A discussion of the methods by which each question was addressed is dealt with in section 3.4.2 below.

3.3 The research approach

3.3.1 The literature underpinning the research approach

The focus of the present study was one class, a group of adult language learners who were observed during their weekly class over one academic term. The study was therefore longitudinal in approach but comparatively small in scope.

Approaches to the way in which qualitative research is designed and conducted differ according to the model to which the researcher adheres. Different research models, that is, different ways of looking at data, stem from different analytical preferences. Gubrium and Holstein cite four distinct analytical preferences, namely, naturalism, ethnomethodology, emotionalism and postmodernism [GUBRIUM & HOLSTEIN 1997].

An ethnomethodological approach

The present study has arisen from an ethnomethodological approach, which in turn gives rise to the concepts, theories and methodology of the study. Ethnomethodology has been described as "the sociological study of everyday behaviour, concerned primarily with how individuals make sense of their experiences, their social interaction and the people with whom they interact" [COLEMAN 1996 p.230]. Because the focus of such research tends to be a relatively small number of cases, and

because the analysis of the data mainly consists of "descriptions and explanations" [HAMMERSLEY 1998 p2], this approach has been criticised for being unscientific and accordingly unreliable in respect of conclusions drawn from its findings. Against this it can be argued that "the aim of social research is to capture the character of naturally occurring behaviour ... this can only be achieved by first-hand contact with it" [HAMMERSLEY 1998 p.8]. Ethnographic methods may also be criticised for dealing with relatively small samples, but, as Hammersley points out, a loss of breadth may involve a gain in depth. A small sample does not necessarily mean that the data collected is unreliable or of no relevance; in a study of personal beliefs and behaviours, where every teaching group has different members and a different group culture, it may be small studies that provide the most accurate picture of what is happening and why.

Ethnomethodology, being the study of how people make sense of their world, is relevant to the present study in two main ways. Firstly, this is a study carried out by a teacher acting as researcher, and the role of ethnomethodology in reflective practice has been identified and advocated by Schön [SCHÖN 1983]. Secondly, the present study seeks to gain deeper understanding of the learners in the class as a distinct group of people, and raises questions about how they "come to know, and know in common, what they are doing and the circumstances in which they are doing it" [HERITAGE 1984].

An ethnographic approach

The research approach used in the present study is ethnographic. This is task based research, and 'ethnography' denotes the particular methods of data collection and analysis, and also the end product. "Ethnography yields empirical data about the lives of people in specific situations" [SPRADLEY 1980].

Ethnography has been defined as "observational work in particular social settings" [SILVERMAN 2000 p300]. It seems to be generally accepted that the distinguishing characteristic of ethnography is the achievement of a description of real behaviour through the use of field work. The descriptive element enables the researcher's findings to be communicated to a wider audience.

Ethnography literally means 'a portrait of a people'. An ethnography is a written description of a particular culture - the customs, beliefs and behaviour - based on information collected through fieldwork [HARRIS & JOHNSON 2000].

The real behaviour could occur in any setting, "the description may be of a small tribal group in an exotic land or a classroom in middle-class suburbia" [FETTERMAN 1998]. The methods are such that ethnography can be carried out by "a single investigator who 'lives with and lives like' those who are studied, usually for a year or more." [VAN MAANEN 1996].

A key characteristic of ethnography is that it is usually focused on one particular setting or group of people, and therefore it is carried out on a small rather than a large scale, again suiting qualitative rather than quantitative methods. Data is collected in informal ways as well as by formal methods, and is taken from the data subjects' normal context rather than obtained in an artificially created setting. Analysing the data involves interpreting what people do and is usually represented by verbal description and explanation rather than calculations and statistics [HAMMERSLEY 1990].

One difficulty with choosing to adopt an ethnographic position as a researcher is that there is considerable diversity of approach to ethnography. For clarity, the position adopted in the present study is that the appropriate data collection methods are capable of being idiographic and interpretive [HAMMERSLEY 1998 p7]. An ethnographic approach can be overt or covert. In this study I have chosen an overt approach because I felt that not only was it more ethical for those being investigated to be made aware that this was happening, but also because an awareness of some of the issues being addressed might assist those being interviewed in forming perceptions. At the outset all learners were given written information about the project and signed forms consenting to their involvement in it. The text of the consent form is included as Appendix A. The data was collected by an observer present in class with them, whom they were able to engage with, and by interviews carried out by the teacher. The role of teacher as participant observer is discussed in more detail in section 3.4.1 below. The advantages of adopting an overt approach are that interviewing is easy to do, notes can be taken contemporaneously and it avoids the ethical problem of lack of informed consent. However, this approach has attendant problems, namely that all participants have to give consent, and that because the learners are aware of the project they may change their behaviour accordingly ('reactivity').

There were three main facets to the approach taken, all ethnographic. Firstly, the researcher, being the class teacher, was an integral part of the group studied. The

observer was the teacher's assistant, and accepted by the learners as a natural part of their learning environment. The teacher and observer did not come in to the learners' pre-existing culture and alter it by studying it; rather they were part of the class culture from its inception. Secondly, the focus of the study was the behaviour of the group, and of the individuals within the group in relation to one another. Methods of investigating groups can take the form of examining patterns of participation, addressing communication and cohesiveness, gauging atmosphere, exploring group ethics or standards, tracing sociometric patterns, discovering procedures and eliciting goals [JACQUES 2000]. Thirdly, the voices to be heard in the present study were those of the subjects of the study.

An ethnographic approach was chosen over an approach which required the research conditions to be more deliberately determined and constructed by the researcher. It was hoped that such an approach would provide a more penetrating insight into the processes of the group and the intercommunication between its members. As language learners may be completely immersed in the target language in the belief that this will develop their communicative competence, so it was hoped that the immersion of the researcher in the group process would vouchsafe greater insight into the meaning of what was observed. Roberts [2001] emphasises these benefits of an ethnographic approach, stating that:

In intercultural communication, the analyst needs to participate in the everyday routines of a particular group in order to understand conventionalised ways of interpreting meaning [ROBERTS 2001 p119].

In the present study, the teacher took a less important role in what was observed than is usually the case in educational research. The data collected relates to the learners and their relationships with each other, rather than focusing on the teaching that was taking place whilst they were doing so. The teacher, as participant observer, was noting the activities of the learners and their response to each other, rather than their response to the teacher. This approach was prompted by a belief that, to find out more about the learning process, teachers need to look at the learners themselves [COHEN 1991], and that an important part of a teacher's role is an awareness of what is happening within the classroom, both at a conscious and an instinctive level.

Being a good classroom teacher means being alive to what goes on in the classroom, alive to the problems of sorting out what matters, moment by moment, from what

does not. And that is what classroom research is all about: gaining a better understanding of what good teachers (and learners) do instinctively as a matter of course, so that ultimately all can benefit [ALLWRIGHT & BAILEY 1991].

One note of caution about ethnography is that it puts researchers in touch with 'real world' situations, but it does not provide a solution to the problems present in those situations [HOLLIDAY 1994 p214].

3.3.2 An appraisal of the research approach: Why is a qualitative approach more appropriate than a quantitative approach in the present study?

The data collection and analysis methods chosen are qualitative. This is almost inevitable where data is collected from a small study of one class, and where it is not intended that it should provide statistical evidence to support its conclusions. It is arguable that every class varies to such an extent that quantitative analysis of data derived from studying it would be unreliable if applied across a wider field. However, the use of qualitative methods of analysis enables the researcher to compile a view of the significance of events in one context that may provide insight into other similar situations. It is claimed that, "it is only through qualitative research that the world can be studied through the eyes of the people who are studied" [BRYMAN 2001 p431].

Whilst an objective approach may appeal because it appears to produce definite facts, this is not necessarily the most helpful approach in studying what is happening in the classroom. In finding out about what the learners are doing in the classroom it may be as important to study their beliefs about and perceptions of what is happening, as to collect the facts of what is happening, because the beliefs and perceptions may explain the reasons behind the facts:

human endeavours such as classroom language learning cannot simply be reduced to a set of incontrovertible facts without missing out on a great deal of what is humanly interesting and probably pedagogically important [ALLWRIGHT & BAILEY 1991 p64].

'Qualitative' and 'subjective' are not synonymous terms. Qualitative data collection involves the gathering of data which is not measured by being quantified, such as photographs or interview transcripts. Qualitative data analysis involves reflection and interpretation rather than measurement and does not exclude objectivity;

indeed it is arguable that there is "most value in investigations that combine objective and subjective elements" [ALLWRIGHT & BAILEY 1991 p67].

In the present study a quantitative approach would be inappropriate for several reasons, discussed by Silverman [SILVERMAN 2000 p7]. Firstly, as indicated above, the data to be addressed is that which occurs naturally in its setting, rather than that which is artificially created for the purpose of the research. Such data can be gathered by the researcher being involved with the subjects in their natural context, whereas the methods required in quantitative research often largely omit this contact.

The present study attempts to penetrate the deep action in one particular classroom, and to discern what is happening, and what that means for language learning more generally. The study is therefore more suited to the collection of naturally occurring data, rather than to the examination of data that has been artificially created by the researcher. Qualitative methods lend themselves to the collection and analysis of naturally occurring data more readily than quantitative methods.

Then, the pursuit of 'measurable' phenomena can lead to problems where there are concepts which have been given a value by the researcher unconsciously. For example, in the present study, 'friendship' is a key concept, and one for which a researcher could easily adopt an unperceived value, which would in turn affect the objectivity of the analysis.

Lastly, there may be a question over the value of what is concluded; statistical logic in an ethnographic context can result in trivial hypotheses. In addition, there is a risk of defining variables in an arbitrary way, and basing statistical correlation on these variables, then speculating on the meaning of the correlation in an unscientific manner. Furthermore, qualitative analysis tends towards the generation of hypotheses rather than hypothesis testing, more appropriate in attempting to interpret what is actually happening in a classroom situation when encompassing learner perceptions, relationship formation and language learning all occurring simultaneously.

Ethnography is particularly suitable for the present study because it requires sensitivity to the culture of the subjects. In the present study, cultural identity and

difference are vital concepts in identifying and interpreting behaviour. However, the emphasis on the importance of culture can itself present difficulties.

"Ethnography assumes the researcher is capable of understanding the cultural mores of the population under study, has mastered the language or technical jargon of the culture, and has based findings on comprehensive knowledge of the culture. There is a danger that the researcher may introduce bias toward perspectives of his or her own culture." [GARSON 2003].

I have addressed the danger of bias in section 3.6.1 below.

3.4 The data collection methods

3.4.1 The literature relating to data collection methods

It would be beyond the scope of the present study to review all the literature that relates to the data collection methods used and therefore I have identified three particular areas which are controversial, to consider in depth. The first is the nature of the participant observer, the second is the methodology of narrative, and the third is the conduct of interviews.

(a) The nature of the participant observer

The teacher's role within this study is that of the 'participant-as-observer', defined by Lindlof as one who openly acknowledges the research but maintains a position within the group [LINDLOF 1995]. Bailey suggests that the advantages of being a participant observer include the relationships the observer forms with those being observed, which creates a more natural environment for the observation [BAILEY 1978]. Jacques sees the role as more organic than that of the teacher as a 'technician' implementing the findings of others, but emphasises the need for self-criticism where the teacher is the researcher [JACQUES 2000]. An ethnographic approach requires the researcher to gain the trust of those being studied from as early a stage as possible. In the present study, the researcher's role as the teacher of the class aided this process, and [Olga]'s comments in the third interview are telling in relation to the success of this process [3:6:174-190].

Nevertheless, some conflict between the researcher and the researched, in terms of objectives and motivation if nothing else, is inevitable [HOLLIDAY 1994 p212]. Thus triangulation by the researcher and the 'researched' is important [ROWAN & REASON 1981].

In addition, in discussing and analysing observational data, the researcher must be aware of the important difference between "accounts-of and accounting-for, of distinguishing the phenomenon to be explained and the explanation" [MASON 2002 p179].

There are different approaches to conducting observation and Allwright compares three of these in relation to language classroom research specifically. The 'Long' approach involves the systematic observation of learners, not in their 'natural' classroom setting, but in a controlled environment. Such a method would not have served the research objectives in the present study. The second approach is the systematic observation of learners in a controlled classroom environment, and this can be contrasted with the 'Lancaster' approach which involves the systematic observation of naturally occurring events in the language classroom [ALLWRIGHT 1988 p254]. The present study combines these two approaches; it could be argued that the events in the language classroom are naturally occurring, but as they are controlled by the teacher-observer it must be conceded they are to some extent controlled within the confines of the research project.

Although observation attempts to record the learners' behaviour in an objective way, inevitably the learners may be affected by the observation process, and this may alter their behaviour. One reason is participant anxiety. It is argued that participant observation should initiate less learner anxiety than observation by a stranger. There is also the problem of reactivity, where an alteration in the observees' normal behaviour is triggered by their knowledge that they are being observed. Labov describes this phenomenon as 'the observer's paradox'; by observing one can trigger alterations in the behaviour one is trying to record [LABOV 1972]. One way of lessening this reaction is to familiarise the learners with the observer and the process of observation. An extract from the teacher's log illustrates how in the present study the observer became well integrated:

[Minjo] had cut [Ham-Ei]'s hair. During the break (and into the second half of the lesson) she cut Andrew's. The men in the group were very interested; the women thought it was amusing. They also thought it was amusing when Andrew fell asleep during the first half of the lesson [TL7].

The observer himself, in interview, saw himself as part of the class but not wholly integrated into it:

I think they perceived my role as as someone who was there doing something that was slightly outside of what they were doing, although they did include me and they were friendly and would talk to me and ask me if they wanted some clarification of a point because the ethos was friendly. But I think I tended to try and detach myself a little bit so I could actually see what was going on, so that I wasn't involved, because I think if I was too involved I would miss things ... I think some of them might look at me from time to time ... and ... be interested in what I was doing, or wonder why I was writing things down, but I think this class were confident enough and relaxed enough not to really change as a result of somebody observing [Obs.Int:152-7, 160-4].

In the present study the learners appeared to accept the teacher and the observer as legitimate participants in the learning process, and there was little evidence of anxiety or reactivity triggered by the observation process.

(b) The methodology of narrative

One approach to qualitative data analysis is narrative analysis, described by Bryman as:

an approach to the elicitation and analysis of data that is sensitive to the sense of temporal sequence that people, as tellers of stories about their lives or events around them, detect in their lives and surrounding episodes and inject into their accounts [BRYMAN 2001 p401].

Narrative data has also been described as 'cultural stories' [GUBRIUM & HOLSTEIN 1997]. Elements of narrative analysis are valuable in a study like this one, where a large part of the data consists of the subjects' own perceptions, recounted in their own voices. In order for the characteristics of the narrative to be preserved in the analysis, direct quotations have been used throughout.

One criticism of using narrative as a way of letting the data subjects speak relates to the representation of truth. It is argued that truth cannot be measured, and that assumptions are made about the authenticity of the narrative that are not capable of independent substantiation. Against this it can be argued, firstly, that analysis of the narrative can be applied to a frame of explanation used by the researcher, and secondly, attempts can be made to verify the 'truth' of what is said through triangulation [SILVERMAN 2000].

(c) The conduct of interviews

There are several reasons as to why using interviews to collect data in the present study may be controversial. Firstly, interviews reflect what the respondents say, rather than what they think, thus presenting a problem of how to establish the validity of the data. Lindlof emphasises that we can never be sure that what the interviewee says represents the full story. "Interview talk is the rhetoric of socially situated speakers, not an objective report of thoughts, feelings or things out in the world." [LINDLOF 1995]. It should not be overlooked that, just as the interviewer has an agenda for the interview questions, the interviewee also has an agenda of his or her own, not always communicated to the interviewer.

Secondly, interviews carried out in a language other than the respondents' first language disadvantage the respondents and make it much more difficult to say what they want to say. It can be difficult for native speakers to state their perceptions accurately, even if they want to. It is more difficult for people who are being interviewed in their second or third language, and this difficulty may result in them saying what they are able to say, rather than what they mean. It is often impossible to discern from interview transcripts where such difficulties have arisen. Problems with taped interviews include the 'under-representation' of the communication that takes place, by not recording facial, expression, gestures and other body language [POWNEY & WATTS 1987 p145].

Thirdly, interviews conducted by the respondents' teacher are bound to reflect the relationship between the two parties to some degree. Nevertheless, there are methodological reasons for using a researcher who is an integrated part of the class. As Holliday comments, "Ethnography is not just for outsider expatriates to find out about 'foreign' cultures, but also for 'indigenous' teachers to find out more about their own changing classroom cultures" [HOLLIDAY 1996 p101]. It is also arguable that a good relationship between teacher and learner will put the interviewee at ease when being interviewed in a foreign language.

Fourthly, structured interviews with closed questions may be considered little better than questionnaires as data collection instruments; worse perhaps, because the respondent to a questionnaire has time to consider their answer. Interviews range from the highly structured to those completely led by the interviewee. This study seeks to find a balance between obtaining data from all the interview subjects to address specific questions, and allowing the interviewees sufficient scope to express their own ideas in their own way. For this reason I chose to use the 'hierarchical

focussing' method. Hierarchical focussing enables the interviewer to ensure that necessary topics are covered whilst allowing the interviewee a considerable degree of control over what they say and how they say it. It uses prompts and checklists rather than set forms of questions and fixed structures. It allows the interviewer to adapt their interviewing style to each participant. This is a significant advantage where, as in this study, language levels of comprehension and production vary considerably among the interviewees.

3.4.2 The methods and procedures for data collection, recording and presentation, arising from the key research questions

(a) Data collection for the pilot study

The data collected for the pilot study is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. As in the main study, methods of participant observation, learners interviewing and self-reporting were used. The pilot study provided a useful trialling process before the main study was carried out.

(b) Data collection for the main study

The main data collection instruments during the year's study were observation and interviews. In addition, class records and written self-reporting by the learners was used. Class records included the learners' registration information held by the college administering the class. This information included names, dates of birth, and country lived in for the last three years. Not all the learners registered for the class, for a variety of reasons, and thus this information was not available for all of them. Other records were instigated specifically for the purpose of the study. When the learners attended for the first time they were asked to complete an information form about themselves. The classroom data was collected over 14 teaching weeks between September and December 2001. The data collection was designed to address the five key research questions, as detailed below:

(i) What impact do the relationships that learners form have on classroom dynamics?

One way of approaching classroom dynamics is to examine friendship patterns that arise and develop over time; a study involving a longitudinal element is necessary. In the present study, friendships were monitored, being traced back to before the learners began to attend the class, and brought forward to the period after their attendance at the class had ceased, to discover which were enduring. It was my

original intention to address the question of whether relationships are formed in the classroom by taking a study of one specific class over an academic year. For the first term, a period of 15 weeks including one week's holiday, I and a volunteer teacher compiled data about the class by observing who the learners chose to work with, asking them to report who their friends were, and interviewing them. The original intention was that this process would be repeated for the following two terms. However, my access to the class being studied was withdrawn at the end of the first term. I therefore had to attempt to trace the developments in the group by other means, and accordingly, at the end of the academic year a sub-sample of the learners was interviewed again, in greater depth, and the teacher who had taken the class for the second and third terms was also interviewed.

Observations were carried out both by the observer, and to a lesser degree, by the class teacher, who kept a weekly log. The observer's role was to record, each time the learners formed pairs or groups in which to carry out tasks, which learners worked together, and he noted whether this appeared to be a voluntary choice or whether they were coerced. He also made some notes about other relationship patterns that he observed, if any, at the beginning and end of classes and during the breaks. On 10 October and 14 November the learners were asked to write down the names of whom they had worked with, so that this could be checked against the observer's records.

(ii) Does the formation of mixed nationality relationships in the ESOL classroom affect the classroom culture?

Measurement of classroom culture is not an easy task. The learners' perceptions about what was going on in the class were collected, through a series of interviews.

The learners' perceptions about what was happening in the class were mainly gathered by interview, although on one occasion they completed a questionnaire about age and learning. Twice, near the beginning of the autumn term (26 September, 3 and 10 October 2001), and near the end of that term (28 November, 5 December and 12 December 2001), the learners were interviewed. Inevitably, not every learner who attended the class was present on the interview days; of the 41 who had attended at least once by the week when the first interviews were completed, 16 were interviewed. Of the 55 learners who had attended at least once by the time the second interviews were completed, 18 were interviewed.

At the end of the summer term (June and July 2002) a sample of 7 of the learners was interviewed again. Sampling in this way presents a number of difficulties, and I was constrained, in selecting the sample, by a number of factors beyond my control. These were the presence or absence of learners in the UK when I wanted to interview them, the fact of whether they had continued to attend the class after the first term, their level of English, as this was to be a longer, more complex and less structured interview, and their willingness and availability to participate. Having taken account of these factors, my choice of sample was informed by a wish to interview not only a spread of ages, and nationalities, and learners of both genders. but to include learners from different backgrounds, for example, not all being permanent residents.

The views of the teacher, the replacement teacher and the observer were collected by means of the teacher's log and interviews. In September 2002 I interviewed the new class teacher, and in October, the observer.

(iii) Does working in mixed nationality groups appear to further the social success of the class?

The third question echoes work that has already been done by others concerning the social role of group work. In this study the learners' perceptions and observed behaviour are set against Brookfield's suggestions about the two social aims of group work: that is the development of a sense of group identity and the encouragement of democratic habits. Use is made of the learners' self-reporting. On two occasions they were asked to write down the names of their friends in the class; these lists were used to draw up sociograms showing the learners' own accounts of the relationships within the class. This took place at the beginning and end of term (19 September and 12 December) so that changes in friendship patterns could be noted.

(iv) Does mixed nationality group work affect the learning in the classroom?

It was not intended that this question should be measured in a quantitative way. Rather, this was an area where the learners' subjective views were again valuable, because the information sought linked to the learners' perceived valuing of the class and the learning methods employed in it. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, and the theory of scaffolding, when applied to children's learning refer to a process of which the children are not aware. However both concern learning progression

that it is arguable that adult learners should themselves be aware of, because the processes involved, and the interdependence involved, serve to inform the learner's consciousness of their own identity and their assumptions about teaching and learning. This in turn raises questions about how fixed such assumptions are, and to what extent adult learners can change not only their learning styles but their own self-concepts. In addition, one can look at the learners' aims in relation to the class, and how they perceive those aims are succeeding, and the involvement of mixed nationality group work in that process. This involved some probing into the motivation of the learners, and took the research beyond an investigation purely into learning aims, where learners' aims departed from those.

At the beginning of the term the learners who were present completed a brief self-assessment sheet. At the end of the term they were asked to complete a similar sheet.

(v) Are there ways in which mixed nationality learning relationships might affect the class adversely?

The final question gives attention to the learners' views about mixed nationality and learning relationships, but can also be answered to some extent by the comments of the observer; for example, if there were tensions present in the class and if so how they were dealt with. What happened when relationships cooled or went wrong? The views of the observer and the teachers were sought on how much attention which would otherwise have been concentrated on teaching had to be focussed on maintaining good relationships.

(c) Presentation of the data

Throughout chapters 5 – 8 inclusive, extracts from data have been included, either in the form of direct quotations or in figures and tables. In the appendices the data is presented in a fuller form.

In the analysis of ethnographic data, the use of quotations enables the subjects of the data to be shown in their own terms, rather than only through the interpretative language of the writer. For this reason direct quotations from the interviews are included as a matter of course in the text of the data analysis chapters, 6, 7 and 8.

3.5 The methods of data analysis used in the thesis

3.5.1 A discussion of the literature underpinning the methods of data analysis used and a critical appraisal of them

(a) The literature

In this section I give consideration to two main types of data analysis, both of which are useful in a study of this kind that involves observational and interview data. The first is analytic induction and the second is grounded theory. Below I attempt to set out a brief explanation of how I interpret these terms, and summarise their advantages and disadvantages, then appraise how they have been used in the analysis of the data in this study.

(i) Analytic induction

In analytic induction the main steps are set out below in Figure 3.1.

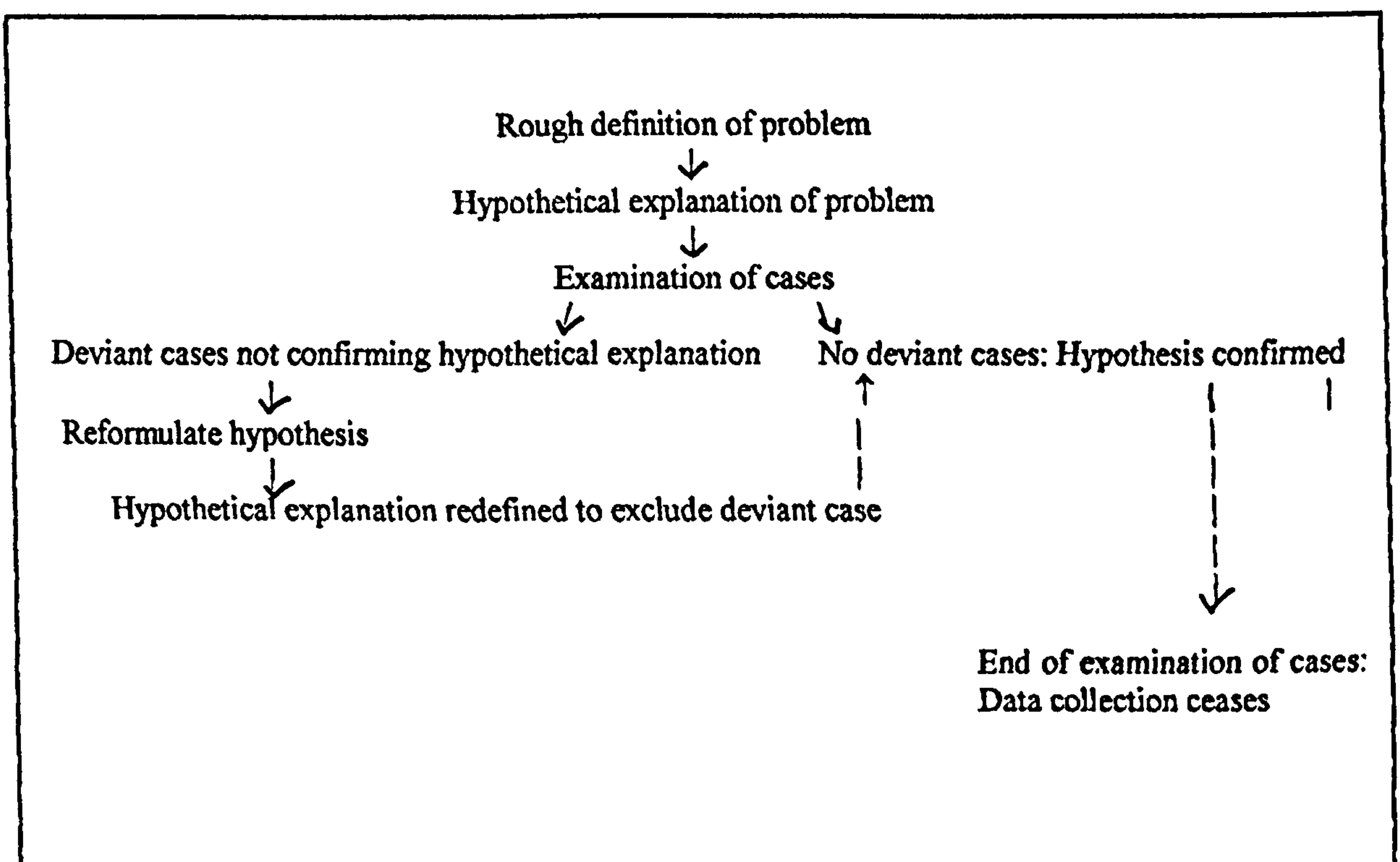


Figure 3.1: The process of analytic induction, adapted from BRYMAN 2001 p389.

The Inductive Idea is that by eliminating deviant cases, a hypothetical explanation is formulated to provide a universal explanation of the phenomena. This approach is very rigorous, and a disadvantage arising from its rigour is that it does not provide useful guidelines about how many cases need to be investigated before the absence

of negative cases and the validity of the hypothesis can be confirmed. It may be assumed that the larger the number of cases investigated, the greater the reliability of the results. Whilst this is not necessarily the case, a very small study showing no negative instances may not appear to demonstrate very much, if anything, of value. If analytic induction is to be useful, it should produce a satisfying result, in the form of an inclusive theory. One problem of applying the process to very small data samples is that the inclusive theory derived may lack credibility.

(ii) Grounded theory

Grounded theory has a number of manifestations [BRYMAN 2000]. The basic rationale is that the theory formulated is grounded in data that has been gathered and analysed systematically. The procedure involves theoretical sampling, coding, theoretical saturation and constant comparison, as set out in Figure 3.2 below.

<u>Processes</u>	<u>Outcomes</u>
1. Research problem	
2. Theoretical sampling	
3. Collect data	
4. Coding -----	4a Concepts
5. Constant comparison -----	5a Categories
6. Saturate categories	
7. Explore relationships between categories -----	7a Hypotheses
8. Theoretical sampling	
9. Collect data	
10. Saturate categories	
11. Test hypotheses -----	11a Substantive theory
12. Collection and analysis of data in other settings -----	12a Formal theory

Figure 3.2: Processes and outcomes in grounded theory adapted from BRYMAN 2001 p394.

Strauss and Corbin assert that "Grounded theories, because they are drawn from data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action" [STRAUSS & CORBIN 1998 p12]. However, in relation to the present study, a number of criticisms of grounded theory apply, which can be summarised thus:

1. It is questionable whether a researcher can suspend their awareness of theories and concepts until a later stage in process. It seems disingenuous for researchers to

decline to take any notice of existing theories. This criticism, incidentally, is not confined to grounded theory; it applies similarly in other methods, for example Conversational Analysis. In the present study the data collection methods and the aim of the study were informed by existing theories.

2. There can be practical difficulties with grounded theory because of the length of time it would take to work through every stage in the process thoroughly. In many situations, as with the present study, there was no further opportunity to collect data to continue to test against the analytical findings from the initial data sample.

3. Grounded theory may not always produce actual theory, that is, a proper explanation of the phenomena being studied, or it may produce an explanation of the data studied which is not generally applicable to other phenomena. This is a danger to which the present study has to be alert, given the idiosyncratic nature of the data.

4. Grounded theory can be vague on the difference between concepts and categories.

5. A continuing criticism of grounded theory is the difficulty caused by fragmentation, in that each piece of data is examined individually and so the whole body of data is broken up and thus distorted.

6. Grounded theory can be criticised as 'objectivist', in that it aims to find external truth from the data. Such an approach is open to criticism from a perspective which requires the suspension of belief in the objectivity of objective truth. Whether the 'objectivist' criticism is significant to a piece of research, depends, subjectively, on whether the researcher adopts a postmodernist stance; in the present study this does not raise difficulties.

(iii) Coding

Grounded theory, then, is a meticulous and time-consuming process which may be too objective in approach for a small qualitative study. Nevertheless, the process of coding is a useful tool in preparing data for analysis. Coding involves putting data into general categories, and to do so the researcher asks what questions about the topic the data suggests; for example, what is happening?, what are people doing?;

what do they say they are doing?; of what topic is each item an instance?, and what is the data about?

Coding should be done as early as possible, when the data is as new as possible. For this, as well as for practical reasons, interviews should be transcribed at an early stage. Data should be considered by being read through several times before notes are made and the coding begins [BRYMAN 2001 pp 398 & 399]. The codes used should be reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate. For example, once codes begin to be applied to the data it may be found that they overlap.

(iv) Interview analysis

A practical adaptation of grounded theory to assist in interview analysis has been described by Gillham [GILLHAM 2000 pp59-76], summarised as follows:

1. Key, substantive points should be identified from the interview transcripts. Taking each transcript in turn, the substantive statements should be highlighted; repetition, digression and irrelevant material should, in theory, be ignored, but cannot always be. For example, if an interviewee moves from one answer to its opposite, the inconsistency is not irrelevant and should be addressed in the analysis. This process needs to be checked; and changes made if necessary.
2. These key points should then be put into categories. Category headings should be chosen that lead to the sensible ordering of the data. The categories must be exhaustive and exclusive. The highlighted statements then must be reviewed and ordered, in an attempt to derive a set of categories for the responses to each question. Each category should be given a simple heading, and the category headings listed.
3. The next stage is for the transcripts to be gone through, with each substantive statement being checked against the category list to see which category it fits. If a substantive statement does not appear to fit anywhere, it should be marked as questionable. The category headings may then be modified if necessary.
4. The categories should then be entered on an analysis grid, as in Figure 3.3 below.

5. Using the grid, the transcript should be worked through with each substantive statement being assigned to a category. There may need to be an 'unclassifiable' category.

6. In writing up the analysis, Gillham recommends that direct quotations from the interviews should take up between one third and one half of the text. The emphasis of this part of the thesis should be 90% on the interviewees.

Respondents	Categories								
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
1									
2									
3									
4									
etc.									

Figure 3.3: Analysis grid [GILLHAM 2000]

One problem mentioned above, and relevant to the above procedure, is that of fragmentation, where the data is broken down so much that the whole picture can disappear, and the narrative and argument flow be disrupted.

(b) Appraisal of the analysis methods used in the present study

Analytic induction grounded theory have both been used to an extent in the present study, adapted as appropriate, given the characteristics of the data. In analytic induction there is an inclination towards quantitative evaluation that the small amount of data collected in this study would not sustain, but nevertheless, part of the analysis of my data involves measuring what I have found against theories already formulated by other researchers. To that extent, analytic induction is a helpful approach.

Although coding may be seen as the antithesis of grounded theory, because it is research-based, whereas grounded theory is system-driven, the process of coding can be incorporated into grounded theory; this approach has been used in this study to help to make the data more manageable. It is expedient for coding to be carried out as early as possible, when the data is as new as possible. For this, as well as for practical reasons, interviews should be transcribed at an early stage. All the main study interviews were transcribed within days of being recorded, if not the

same day; this made them easier to transcribe than the pilot study interviews, some of which were transcribed weeks later.

Because the approach was ethnographic, the way in which the data is presented is itself part of the process of analysis [HAMMERSLEY & ATKINSON 1983].

3.5.2 A discussion of the literature underpinning the methods used to measure the validity and reliability of the data and a critical appraisal of them

(a) The validity of the data

Approaches to ensuring the validity and reliability of observational data of the type used in the present study, should take account of Chaudron's assertions that, whereas the reliability of such observations, "whether by means of planned schemas or post hoc characterisation and discourse analysis, must undergo an evaluation of their reliability as descriptions (by means of intra- and interobserver consistency checks)", when attempting to establish validity, "the validity of such observational descriptions as constructs relevant to the research questions can only be fully attained if the observations and summary findings of the study are shown to hold in more general ways (external validity). Such validation is accomplished through rigorous application of sampling procedures and design principles" [CHAUDRON 1991 p188].

Although qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis differ widely from each other, validity in qualitative research can be defined in much the same way as it is in quantitative methodology, but it should be applied rather differently. That is validity "refers to whether 'you are observing, identifying, or 'measuring' what you say you are" [BRYMAN 2000 p.270]. This is a crucial precept in educational research, as

the validation of claims about instructional variables (such as the effectiveness of programmes, teaching methods, syllabus changes, materials, rule presentations and so on) depends on the application of valid observational analyses [CHAUDRON 1991 p188].

Furthermore, in order for research findings to be of use in other settings and contexts, there must be some standard of validity that can render them applicable:

Validity, which has many aspects but refers in essence to the determination of the 'truth' of an analysis or theory, is a fundamental goal in researchers' efforts to

understand and predict language learning and teaching outcomes [CHAUDRON 1991 p188].

Internal validity, (the match between the data collected and the theories formed from its analysis), and external validity or "the degree to which findings can be generalized across social settings" [BRYMAN 2000 p271], both require measurement whatever the approach to analysis. An earlier description of the distinction between internal and external validity considers internal validity to be the truth of observations within the study and external validity to be whether such findings hold true across studies [CAMPBELL & STANLEY 1972]. Nunan suggests asking the following questions to attempt to establish the validity of a study. To establish internal validity one should ask, "Is the research design such that we can confidently claim that the outcomes are a result of the experimental treatment?", and to establish external validity, "Is the research design such that we can generalise beyond the subjects under investigation to a wider population?" [NUNAN 1992].

Another approach is that of 'authenticity' [GUBA & LINCOLN 1994]. Validity is "the extent to which an account accurately represent the social phenomena to which it refers" [HAMMERSLEY 1990 p57], or "another word for truth" [SILVERMAN 2000 p175]. As the conclusions drawn from a piece of qualitative research are of little value unless their validity can be established in some way, methods are needed which will convince the reader that the research findings are credible. Generally accepted validation processes for qualitative methods of collecting and analysing data include triangulation and respondent validation.

(i) Triangulation

Triangulation is "the attempt to get a 'true' fix on a situation by combining different ways of looking at it or different findings" [SILVERMAN 2000 p301]. Multiple perspectives can be taken in different ways. 'Data triangulation' describes the use of a variety of strategies for sampling data, while 'investigator triangulation' uses more than one observer, and 'methodological triangulation' refers to the use of different data collection methods. 'Theoretical triangulation' is the use of more than one perspective on the interpretation of the data [ALLWRIGHT & BAILEY 1991 p73].

When one is looking at a variety of different sources, or using different observers or different methods in order to identify the reality of a situation, there may be a conflict in the information given. In such circumstances the data is not invalidated, but reasons for the conflict must be identified and explored.

As discussed above, validation of data is not merely a process for demonstrating that the research findings match the researcher's theories; it is also a discriminative process, showing where appropriate that the data does not show what the researcher does not want it to show.

The validation methods used in this study included triangulation and respondent validation. The data collected by the observer about the groupings of learners was triangulated by the learners themselves and by the teacher's log. The point of the triangulation exercise was to measure the learners' recollections at the end of the class of whom they had worked with against the observer's contemporaneous records and the teacher's comments made after the class.

Triangulation is a particularly appropriate method of validation in the present study. Investigator triangulation is possible because data has been collected about the same phenomena from the observer, the teacher and the learners: in identifying the voluntary working groups formed by the learners across the boundaries of nationality, data was obtained from the observer's notes of the groups that the learners formed, the teacher's log which contained comments on the learners' behaviour in forming groups, and the learners themselves being asked to recall who they had worked with in groups. Methodological triangulation is appropriate for validating the data about the learners' friendships. The learners stated who their friends were verbally, in interview, and also in written form, for the sociograms, and the observer and teacher made observational notes of how the learners' actions appeared to disclose friendships, for example by learners frequently sitting together, spending breaks together or making social arrangements.

(ii) Respondent validation

Respondent validation requires the researcher to obtain the subject's comments on the data and to revise the data in the light of those comments. However, this method of validation should be treated with some caution, as there is no guarantee that the interpretation given by the respondent to their words or actions at a later date will be more valid than the message contained in the original words or actions. However, respondent validation may be treated as another source of data rather than a method of validation [FIELDING & FIELDING 1986].

In the present study respondent validation was only used formally when the observer was shown the interpretation of his interview data and invited to make

further comments in the light of that to expand or clarify issues. It is arguable in this instance, if there is any contradiction, that the nearer in time to the data that the observer was, the more likely his comments were to be valid. However, a form of respondent validation also occurred through the repeated interviewing of the learners, allowing them to comment several times on issues relating to group work, their friendships and the nature of the learning in the class.

(iii) Constant comparisons and deviant cases

In the light of the defects inherent in triangulation and respondent validation, Silverman suggests a number of approaches to analysis to ensure greater validity. One method is to attempt to refute the researcher's original assumptions about the relationship between the data and the conclusions drawn from it. Only when the assumptions cannot be refuted can validity be established. Similarly, the 'constant comparative' method requires the researcher to test provisional hypotheses against other cases to find out if they hold good. When making generalisations about small quantities of qualitative data, such generalisations should not be held applicable until they have been tested against all the relevant data [SILVERMAN 2000]. 'Deviant-case analysis' involves "actively seeking out and addressing deviant cases" [SILVERMAN 2000 p180]. This method requires a theoretical approach to the data, as data can only be defined as deviant in relation to the approach applied to it. In the present study these approaches have been used where it is felt that they provide a greater measure of validity than other methods. This is relevant to the present study, for example, when attempting to generalise about the ease with which the learners worked with others of different nationalities: deviant case analysis is a helpful method of addressing the minority group who behave differently from the majority.

(iv) Quantitative methods

Finally, a qualitative approach does not exclude the use of some quantitative methods of validation, and Silverman argues that tabulation, if used appropriately, means that, "instead of taking the researcher's word for it, the reader has a chance to gain a sense of the flavour of the data as a whole" [SILVERMAN 2000 p185]. Throughout the present study quantitative measures and presentation of data have been used where it is felt that they are the most appropriate means of addressing the data.

(b) The reliability of the data

One view of reliability is that it is the measure of whether the research has been designed in such a way that it is possible to replicate it. Nunan's questions for establishing the reliability of a study are, to establish internal reliability, "Would an independent researcher, on re-analysing the data, come to the same conclusion?", and to establish external reliability, "Would an independent researcher, on replicating the study, come to the same conclusion?" [NUNAN 1992]. To express it another way, in establishing reliability there are two perspectives on the data collection and analysis methods that need to be addressed: external reliability, or replicability, and internal reliability, or agreement among the members of the research team [BRYMAN 2000 p271]. In order to ensure reliability researchers should document their procedure and demonstrate that categories for data analysis have been used consistently [SILVERMAN 2000].

Attempts to ensure reliability in the present study include the documentation of the procedures for data collection, contained in chapter 5, and the procedure for and categories of analysis of the data, set out in chapters 6 to 8 below. From the description of the procedures and analysis it should be possible for the data collection to be replicated, and for the analysis of the data to result in the same conclusions being drawn.

3.6 Ethical considerations

3.6.1 The problem of subjectivity and bias

One danger of bias in qualitative research, using observation and interviewing, is identification with the viewpoint of the interviewees, or a negative reaction to the ideas and opinions expressed. This was a danger in the present study, where one focus was the subjects' views of being with people of other nationalities, and could have produced racist or nationalistic reactions. Another problem is that of the interviewer attempting to steer the interviewee towards comments that will substantiate the interviewer's own prejudices.

the reader is entitled to know something of the aims, expectations, hopes and attitudes that the writer brought to the field with him, for these will surely influence not only how he sees things but even what he sees [TURNBULL 1973 p13].

One peculiar difficulty with this study was the fact that I, the class teacher as researcher, had handed the class on to another teacher; I had to be particularly

aware of my subjective reactions to that and to her when interviewing both her and the learners at the end of the year.

3.6.2 Avoiding cultural stereotyping

Mention has already been made in chapter 2 of the need to avoid cultural stereotyping when investigating a context that combines different cultures within it. Coleman warns that "we must question whether there are universally appropriate ways of evaluating the success or otherwise of English language teaching projects" and "learn to question the ideological origins of our own assumptions about all aspects of English language teaching in institutional contexts" as well as learning "to look at our own work with a greater sense of humility and at the work of other with increased openness" [COLEMAN 1996 pp13-14]. I would add the need to step outside one's own institutional culture, to be able to be critical of those structures, systems and behaviours that provide comfort and security through familiarity.

3.6.3 Ensuring participant confidentiality and consent

The use of qualitative methods of data collection opens the way to the identification of the participants and a general lack of confidentiality. In order to protect the learners who generously agreed to participate in this project, I have assured confidentiality by changing their names and the names of any organisations, including the educational institutions, that they were involved with.

To ensure that the learners involved were willingly participating, I explained the project to them and secured their signatures on consent forms at the beginning of their attendance at the class (an example of which is to be found in Appendix A). I was pleased to note that none of the learners who attended the class declined to give their consent to being involved in the project.

3.7 Summary

Above I have explained the rationale for the methods employed. In the next chapter I describe and evaluate the pilot study.

Chapter 4: The pilot study

4.1 The purpose of the pilot study

4.1.1 The background to the pilot study

Before carrying out the pilot study I had taught adult ESOL classes where the learners were of different nationalities and my experiences in doing so raised questions about what was happening in the classroom. The class I intended to study could attract learners of any nationality, and the style of teaching employed required them to be willing to work with others who spoke a different first language and who were from different backgrounds to their own. As discussed in chapter 1.4 above, I was interested in exploring issues relating to mixed nationality learning, particularly relating to learner willingness to participate and learner reactions to mixed nationality groups.

4.1.2 The aim of the pilot study

The aim of the pilot study was twofold. Firstly, I wanted to collect data which would help me to begin to explore some of the issues surrounding the area of what influence learner relationships had on what was happening in the ESOL classroom. Secondly, the pilot study was designed to test the methodology which I intended to use for the main study, and to enable it to be reviewed, and modified, if appropriate, before I embarked on the main study. Given these two parallel aims, it would have been appropriate to conduct two separate pilot studies, however, in my original planning I was satisfied that both aims could be achieved in one pilot study. On reflection, I am persuaded that a two-stage process, the first stage to clarify issues and the second to refine methods, would have been more useful, because it would have allowed for clarification of the research questions before the trial of appropriate methodology.

4.1.3 Summary of the pilot study

As with the main study, the focus of the pilot study was a part-time ESOL class for adults, of which I was the teacher. The study was carried out over 13 teaching weeks between September and December 2000. The class had 43 learners from 19 different national backgrounds. (I use the term 'national backgrounds' because two of the learners were British citizens but had previously had a different nationality. See section 2.4.1 above for a discussion of nationality.) The learners' behaviour was observed at each class by me as the class teacher and by a volunteer teacher. On

four occasions learner self-reporting was used. 8 examples of learner group work were audio-taped. Six of the learners were interviewed at the end of the study.

4.2 The methodology of the pilot study

4.2.1 The methodological approach and justifications for the methods that were used

The definition and underlying principles of the ethnomethodological and ethnographic approach adopted in the pilot study have been discussed in section 3.3.1 above. The suitability of this approach arose from the fact that I was studying one class with its own culture and characteristics; the learners in it would behave idiosyncratically, as individuals, and also according to the culture peculiar to the class, and therefore could not be taken to be representative of all other language learners. I required methods of data collection and analysis which lent themselves to the individual and to the unique. Inevitably qualitative rather than quantitative methods were going to be more appropriate.

The methods of data collection that I chose involved participant observation. A stark contrast between participant and non-participant observation is said to be that, whereas the participant is a member of the group, the non-participant "stands aloof" [COHEN, MANION & MORRISON 2000]. However, the demarcation in the present context was less clear because although we were members of the group, the volunteer teacher and I had different roles within it from the learners who were being observed. I was orchestrating the study, by acting as the teacher of the class that I was observing, by communicating to the learners about it, and by seeking their consent to it, but I was also in the role of a "participant-as-observer" [LINDLOF 1995], as discussed in more detail above (see section 3.4.1 (a)). The volunteer teacher was observing the learners in relationship with each other, and with me, whilst participating in the teaching process. The benefits of carrying out the research in this way, rather than being a disinterested observer, included the possibility of more intimate and informal relationships developing with the people being observed during the research period. It was also likely that the data collected by this method would be less reactive because of the integration of the observer into the group [BAILEY 1978].

The study was carried out from a social interactionist stance (a "theoretical underpinning to a communicative approach to language teaching" [WILLIAMS & BURDEN

1997 p39]). The teaching methods used in the class studied were communicative, that is the learning took place through the learners communicating with each other, and the meaning of what they were communicating was central, and not peripheral to the learning activities. Therefore the aim of the classes was not for the learners to practise skills but rather to negotiate meaning, in a way which used the skills that the learners needed to develop. This approach to language learning stems particularly from Feuerstein's approach to mediation [WILLIAMS & BURDEN 1997], as developed by others into differing models of cooperative learning (see section 2.6.3 above for a detailed discussion).

4.2.2 The data collection methods chosen and reasons for choosing them

In order to investigate what was happening in the class, I needed to collect data about observable events, and also about what the learners perceived was happening, or what they wanted to happen. For this reason I decided to test a variety of methods of data collection that involved observation of the learners and which allowed their voices to be heard. A persuasive reason for collecting data about the same events in different ways was to facilitate validation of the data through methodological triangulation. The methods used were these:

(a) Teacher's log

Each week I wrote a log of what I observed, to record my impressions of what happened as soon as possible after the classes had taken place, enabling me to compare my own impressions with data collected in other ways and from other sources.

(b) Initial information form

When the learners came to the class for the first time they filled in an information form about their background, saying whether, and if so which, learners they already had relationships with. This form supplied data on nationality, gender, age and whether the learners already had relationships with each other at the commencement of the course.

(c) Learner essays

I set the learners a piece of writing about how they learned English, to give additional background information about their culture. The learners were the best people to describe their culture, and to give insight as to how it related to their language learning. By writing, rather than speaking to me about it, they had time to

reflect. The disadvantage of eliciting information in this way was the constraints imposed by the learners' limited language skills.

(d) Group work recordings

8 items of group work were recorded. The aim was to collect data on what happened when the learners were together in groups, for example, how they negotiated meaning and whether they all participated. Selection of the data was kept as random as possible by keeping the tape recorder on the same table each week; the learners chose the groups they would work in and where they would sit from week to week.

(e) Observer's notes

The observer, who was a volunteer teacher, and who therefore had a role in the class that was identifiable and accepted by the learners, made notes of what groups the learners formed and anything that appeared to influence their choice. He also recorded observations of social groupings, for example, which learners left together at the end of the class. This data was useful in triangulating the subjective impressions of the teacher's log and for checking how accurate the learners' self-reporting was.

(f) Learner self reporting

On three separate occasions during the term the learners were asked to say who their friends were. Sociograms were prepared from this data, as a diagrammatic approach to representing relationships appeared to me to be clearer and more helpful than other methods of presenting the same information. In this way I hoped I would be able to build a picture of how relationships within the group developed and changed.

As well as reporting on their friendships, at the end of four classes the learners were asked to fill in a form stating whom they worked with. Just as the teacher's log recorded impressions of what happened in the class, the report forms recorded the learners' impressions, and these two types of data could be checked against each other, and against the observations of the volunteer teacher.

At one class I asked the learners present to write down five statements that they would use to describe themselves to someone who had never met them. The aim of this exercise was to elicit the learners' self perceptions.

(g) Interviews

At the end of the study I interviewed 6 learners, to explore some of the ideas gained from the other data collection methods in more depth and also in order to add the participants' voices to the data.

4.2.3 Data collection methods not chosen and reasons for not choosing them

This section seeks to explain why other, seemingly appropriate, methods of data collection, were not used in the pilot study. In section 4.5 below I reflect on whether my decisions in this regard were justified.

(a) Questionnaires

There were several reasons for not using questionnaires to be completed by the learners. Firstly, the learners were generally at a pre-intermediate level of English, or below, and previous experience of attempting to have learners in similar classes complete evaluation forms for the college persuaded me that they were unlikely to be able either to fully understand the questions, or to express their answers adequately in writing. Secondly, I considered the disruption to the learners of a lengthy questionnaire and decided that it would be likely to make them anxious and be burdensome for them. I also suspected that some learners simply would not complete questionnaires, skewing the study.

(b) Interviews with every learner

My main aim in conducting the interviews was to test the method for use in the main study. Interviewing every learner would have taken up a great deal of time and might not be feasible because of the fluidity of the attendance of the learners.

(c) Videoing the classes

I decided against video recording because I was concerned about affecting the learners' behaviour and causing them to be unduly aware of how they were behaving. In addition, the classroom was a long rectangular shape and the learners moved around it during the classes; it would have been impossible to site one camera in such a position to record everyone at once, and so either two cameras would have been required, causing the need for synchronisation of the two recordings, or the recordings would have been partial and therefore selective.

(d) Non-participant observation of another teacher's class

There were two main reasons for rejecting this method. The first was that, of the classes run by the college, this was the only one that I was aware of where learners had freedom to choose whom to work with; other teachers seemed to be more directive about who worked with whom in terms of factors such as language background and level of skill. The pilot study group also seemed to have learners from the widest range of different national backgrounds available in the college. The second reason was that participant observation, as discussed above in section 3.4.1 (a), lent itself to this study, given the researcher's role as teacher, and the relevant absence of participant anxiety in the class.

4.2.4 The validity of the pilot study

Not all the data required validation. For example, there was no real need to check on some personal information about the learners, such as their ages or nationalities. In relation to validity Hammersley discusses the nature of truth, and the distinction between having a high degree of confidence in the truth of data, as opposed to absolute certainty. There are three stages in assessing the validity of ethnographic claims, which are deciding how plausible the claim is; deciding how credible it is; and, where it is neither very plausible nor very credible, seeking evidence of its validity [HAMMERSLEY 1998 p67]. Accordingly, validation in both the pilot and the main study was limited to data where it was difficult to have a high degree of confidence without something else to refer to. Triangulation of data was a particularly useful way of checking the veracity of, for example, the learners' recollections of whom they worked with. Another method appropriate was respondent validation, and to some extent this was included in the interviews. Effective methods of triangulating data in an educational context could be difficult to find; one aim of the pilot study was to test methods of validation for use in the main study, and the pilot study gave me the opportunity to see if data could be triangulated using the methods I had selected.

4.3 An account of what was done

4.3.1 Description of the pilot study

The pilot project studied a regular weekly ESOL class for adults in a city in the North of England. The learners involved were something of an unknown before the first class, because any adult in the city or its environs who does not have English as a first language was able to join the class. Tuition was free to people who had lived in the E.U. for three years or more, or who were married to E.U. citizens. The aim of

the class was to improve the practical English skills of residents in Britain who were at pre-intermediate level; this did not prevent short-term residents, such as au pairs, attending the classes, nor did it always keep away learners whose English was of a higher level, but who wanted conversation practice. No limit was imposed on the number of learners who attended; this tended to regulate itself - if the class seemed too crowded some learners would stop attending.

The class ran from 10 - 12 each Tuesday. The group met in a small one-storey building near the hospital (it was thus easy to direct people to). The building had two classrooms, and the learners were divided into two groups, beginners and pre-intermediate. It was only the pre-intermediate group that formed the focus for this study. The building also had a small kitchen, and there was a five minute break at 11a.m. when all the learners were at liberty to mix with each other, have a hot drink or go outside to smoke. There were two paid teachers, one for the beginners' group and one for the pre-intermediate group. The pre-intermediate group also had the (unpaid) volunteer teacher. There was also a caretaker who had some interaction with the learners. During the two hours during which the class met, the learners took part in teacher-directed language-learning activities.

The idea of the study was to observe and record what relationships the learners appeared to make with each other (either for learning purposes or socially) and to consider how these were influenced by the learners' nationalities and cultures, and how they influenced the learners' experiences in the classroom. The volunteer teacher acted as an observer to record who the learners were working with during each activity. In this way he carried on a relationship with the learners while he was observing; he was not completely in the background.

The first thing I did was to obtain the participants' written consent. I gave them a written explanation of the nature and purpose of the research, and a form to sign and return. I also asked every learner, on attending class for the first time, to complete a form giving basic information about themselves, such as name and nationality. A summary of the information obtained is included as Appendix B.

4.3.2. Data collection methods

The data collection methods during the period of the pilot study were as follows:

(a) I asked one class to write, for homework, about how they learned English. (This was a learning exercise, and was not repeated at subsequent classes; therefore I did not gather data in this way from all the learners because not all of them attended the class when the homework was set, and those who were present did not all complete the task.)

(b) I wrote a teacher's log after each class (the same day but some hours later) recording what I could remember. The log is included as Appendix C.

(c) I taped 8 examples of group work; I put the tape recorder on one table, informed the learners and asked them to choose whether to sit with it.

(d) I asked the volunteer teacher to observe and record in writing who worked with whom each week.

(e) On 4 occasions I asked the learners to record whom (they thought) they had worked with during the class.

(f) On 3 separate occasions I asked the learners to write down the names of their friends in the class.

(g) At one class I asked the learners present to write down five statements that they would use to describe themselves to someone who had never met them.

(h) After the period of 13 weeks during which the class was observed, I interviewed six learners and audio-taped the interviews, partly as a case sampling exercise, and partly to discover what they could tell me about the formation of relationships and cultural perceptions within the class. The interview transcripts are included as Appendix D.

The variety of data collection methods used may at first appear to be diverse and wide-ranging, but the breadth was deliberate because the aim was to obtain a picture of what was happening within the class, and also to collect the stories told by the learners about what was happening. It was then possible to focus sharply on any divergence between the real and the perceived group dynamics of the class, in order to explore the reasons for what was actually happening, and the reasons why the learners might be perceiving it differently.

4.4 Analysis that has bearing on substantive & methodological issues

The purpose of the pilot study was to test methods of finding out whether, and if so, how, nationality influenced the relationships that formed within the ESOL classroom. I collected data to ascertain what relationships already existed at the beginning of the course, and what, if any, relationships were formed during the period studied.

4.4.1 The formation of mixed nationality groups

One of the aims of the pilot study was to explore whether, and if so, how, the learners formed mixed nationality groups. I was concerned to see whether the teacher could encourage the formation of such groups without dictating who the group members should be. The teacher's log and observer's notes both indicated that this was possible, and in fact presented no problems. I wanted to explore whether the learners were willing to work in mixed nationality groups, and whether nationality appeared to be a factor relevant to the way in which the learners worked together. The teacher's log and observer's notes showed a willingness of learners from different nationalities to work together. The learners who were interviewed indicated that nationality was a factor, and the learners' descriptions of themselves also bear this out.

(a) Enrolment data and register

The nationality mix of the class could be established by referring to the enrolment data and the weekly register kept of attendance. (Where learners held British citizenship I recorded their previous/dual nationality as well, e.g. 'British (Pakistani)'). The enrolment data and register showed that 19 different nationalities attended the group at some point during the 13 week period; these were Belgian, Brazilian, Chinese, Czech, Egyptian, French, German, Hungarian, Iranian, Italian, Kenyan, Korean, Pakistani, Slovakian, Spanish, Swedish, Taiwanese, Thai and Turkish. The learners are listed in Appendix B, identified by pseudonyms, and showing gender and nationality.

Table 4.1 below contains data taken from the register and shows the number of learners who attended at least one class and the number that attended half the classes. The 13-week period was divided by a two week break at half term. 10 learners attended only in the first half of the term and 12, who joined the class late, attended only in the second half. The table also shows the number of different nationalities represented. It was possible to identify a core group of 9 learners who attended at least half of the classes in the first period, and at least four out of seven

In the second period. These 9 learners ([Elke], [Karl], [Kong], [Lenka], [Lucia], [Ludmilla], [Rosa], [Siraj] and [Umaporn]) came from 6 different nationalities: Chinese, Czech, German, British (Pakistani), Slovak and Thai. Data from the observer's records of who worked with whom, audio-taped group work and the teacher's log revealed that three other Hungarians and one French learner attended class on some occasions without appearing on the register. One question arising from the pilot study was whether the core group that emerged would be large enough to make the study viable. A core of 9 out of 39 seems viable, as the key to the study is continuity, and any group of regular attenders throughout the study, however small, would provide a focus.

Number of classes attended	Number attending	Number of different nationalities represented
At least one class during the whole term	39	19
More than 50% of the total classes (core group)	9	6
At least one class during the first half of term	27	15
At least 50% of the classes during the first half of the term	20	12
At least one class during the first half of term	29	17
At least 50% of the classes during the first half of the term	18	12

Table 4.1: Learner attendance and nationality: pilot study

(b) The observer's records

The observer's records of who worked with whom are included as Appendix E. The learners were given freedom to choose whom they worked with, except that it was stipulated that they should work with others who had a different first language, to encourage them to communicate only in English. However, the records of which learners worked together shows 14 instances of same nationality pairs. The most significant example is [Rosa] and [Ludmilla], both Slovak, who worked together at five of the nine classes where records of groups were kept.

Table 4.2 below shows the frequency with which learners worked with each other in pairs. That learners did not always work with the same people is shown by the fact that although 215 pairs worked together at least once, only 58 worked together on two or more occasions; 15 worked together on three or more occasions; 2 pairs worked together on four occasions: [Karl] and [Klong], and [Sonja] and [Nasreen]; only [Rosa] and [Ludmilla] worked together 5 times. [Rosa] and [Ludmilla] were friends in Slovakia and had come to the UK together. They never attended the class separately.

Number of times that learners worked together in pairs	Frequency of same pair configuration
At least once	215
Twice or more	58
Three or more times	15
Four or more times	4
Five times	1

Table 4.2: Frequency of learners working together: the whole class

Table 4.3 below shows the number of other learners that the members of the core group worked with. Of the core group of 9 learners mentioned above, [Klong], [Magdalena], [Lucia] and [Rosa] worked with 20 other people over the 9 weeks; [Elke] worked with 19; [Karl] with 18; [Siraj] with 17; [Saisuree] with 16, and [Ludmilla] with 10 others. [Sonja] and [Nasreen] who were not in the core group, but who worked together four times also worked extensively with others; [Sonja] worked with 15 different partners and [Nasreen] with 11. Of the 43 learners, 22 worked with 10 or more other people during the 9 weeks recorded. Had there been a greater proportion of learners who were isolated within the class, a study of groups might not have been successful; as it was, the groups formed easily, and most learners were involved with a number of others.

Core group member	Number of other learners worked with
[Klong]	20
[Magdalena]	20
[Lucia]	20
[Rosa]	20
[Elke]	19
[Karl]	18
[Siraj]	17
[Saisuree]	16
[Ludmilla]	10

Table 4.3: Frequency of learners working together: core group

4.4.2 The sociograms

Sociograms were drawn up from data collected at three points during the study, showing who the learners named as their friends. The sociograms are included as Appendices F, G and H. When the first data was collected there were 14 (of 28) learners present. They were of 12 different nationalities. One learner [Hea Jin] named four people as friends, but was not named by anyone. No other learner present was not named by anyone. [Hea Jin] was not present when the other two sets of data were collected, and was not named on these occasions either. The data from the tapes of group work showed that she worked with 7 other learners, and with only one of these [Saisuree] on two separate weeks. [Georgia] was named by 9 people and [Sofia] by 10. The groups data showed that [Georgia] worked with 10 others and [Sofia] with 16. The learners' self-reporting about the friends they already had when they first attended the class recorded that [Georgia] said she knew 10 people already, and 10 people said they knew her. [Sofia] did not say that she knew anybody at the first class, although one person said they knew her when they first attended; this was [Patricia] who joined the class late and could have met [Sofia] at some other venue.

When the data for the second sociogram was collected, 15 (of 34) learners were present, of 10 different nationalities. All present were named as a friend by someone else. 4 of those not present were also named. Those named most were

[Sofia], [Magdalena], [Ludmilla], [Rosa] and [Klong], who were each named by 8 people.

When the data for Sociogram 3 was collected, 12 (of 43) learners were present, from 9 different national backgrounds. All present were named by someone else. [Ludmilla] and [Rosa] were not present on this occasion, and despite having been among those named most on the previous occasion, were not named by anyone this time. 6 learners who were not present were named by others. Those named most were [Nasreen], [Gianna] and [Celine] who were chosen by six people each, and [Helena] and [Klong] who were named by seven people each. [Nasreen], [Gianna] and [Helena] were among those interviewed at the end of the study; [Nasreen] and [Helena] both spoke enthusiastically about having friends in the class; [Gianna] was much more diffident; however on this occasion she named five others as friends.

The only two learners who were present when data was collected for all three sociograms were [Lucia] and [Klong].

From the pilot study I concluded that sociograms were a useful tool in exploring the complexity of, and change in, the patterns of learner relationships; they depicted information that the learners wished to disclose about themselves, but also the views that other learners had of them. They traced the consistency or otherwise of peer popularity. Particularly interesting was the significant role that some learners appeared to have in the group even when absent.

4.4.3 Learners' self-descriptions

On 12 December the group was asked to imagine that they were writing to someone they had never met and to list five things about themselves that they would tell their imaginary correspondent. The information given was put into twelve categories, and Table 4.4 below shows the number of learners who gave information for each category. This data showed that nationality and hobbies were the most commonly chosen descriptors, selected by 11 out of 15 in each instance. Other descriptors of significance were age (8) and job or occupation (7). Interesting features of the data included how the learners chose to describe themselves, and which factors they saw as significant in describing who they were to someone who knew nothing about them.

Category	Number of learners: maximum 15
Age	8
Nationality	11
Job / occupation	7
Future plans / aspirations	3
Time in U.K.	3
Life before coming to U.K.	5
Hobbies	11
Where they live	4
Family members	2
Appearance	5
Married / not	3
Personality	3
Feelings	4
Other	2

Table 4.4: Learners' descriptions of themselves

4.4.4 The interviews

Six of the learners were interviewed; the interview checklist is contained in Appendix I. Sample material from the interviews is included as Appendix J. The teacher's log, observation records and learners' self-reporting can be used for comparison with the learners' interview responses. For example, in her interview [Nasreen] said she knew [Gianna] when she first attended the class, whereas on the form she completed on her first attendance she said she only knew [Celine]. [Karl] said he knew [Klong] but on his form he said he knew no one. These instances illustrate how difficult it is to remember accurately even over three months, and should make us cautious about the accuracy of other assertions in the interviews.

The interviews trace the learners' experiences from their first attendance to the end of the pilot study period. Four of the learners interviewed said they had known others at the start; one of those who said she knew no one also reported negative feelings on her first attendance.

L: Um yeah it was like everyone else know each other because I arrive two weeks after everyone else (?) [Int.6:6-7]

However, this interviewee [Helena] became much more enthusiastic about the social benefits of belonging to the class as she made friends. Five of those

interviewed indicated positive feelings about other learners, and none were negative.

Did the learners want to work with each other? Five made positive statements about working in groups; one was less enthusiastic:

L: ... it's
better just fewer people (.) just (..) more for the teacher (..) have a lot of
time to give attention to a few pupils [Int. 4:22-24]

Two of those who showed positive feelings about group work also made negative statements. [Helena] identified writing as an area where she preferred to work on her own:

L: Er yeah I like it but I like to choose by myself what I want to write [Int. 6:17].

She also made the point that it can be difficult to work with others when there are disagreements:

L: ... when I say it's like that they say no it's like
that and I would choose to be right [Int. 6:20-21].

Interestingly, the transcriptions of group work (a sample of which is included as Appendix K) did not show obvious problems when there were disagreements; instead these were resolved amicably and with humour. Transcript 5 showed a disagreement about the task which was resolved through discussion and explanation. Transcript 8 disclosed a great deal of argument about use of language, but this was very good-humoured. Transcript 6 showed an interesting disagreement about whether British people were friendly or not; the learners involved agreed that they had had different experiences and were willing to accept the other's opinion as valid. The transcriptions disclosed no apparent ill-feeling, although this does not guarantee that none existed.

Five interviewees said they liked working with others and five said they got help from other learners. The group work transcripts all bear out these assertions.

Three were very definite about having friends in the class; [Elke] said she had no friends, although she mentioned another learner whom she would have liked to

have made friends with [Int.1: 60-81], and two said they had friendships, but they were not close. Four said that they saw friends outside class. All six were able to name friends within the class, although for [Elke] the 'friend' was someone she regretted not having got to know better.

On the issue of whether they wanted to work with some learners and not others, [Lucia] admitted to having favourites. The concept of favouritism is an interesting one, and learner preferences for other learners are explored in more depth in the main study. In contrast [Gianna] said she did not mind but that some other members of the class clearly did:

I: ...do you mind who you work with?

L: No

I: Are there some people you'd rather work with than others?

L: (.) Um yes I think so

I: Who do you like working with

L: To me is indifferent but I think some people um like work with the same people [Int. 5:28-34].

[Gianna] is shown by the sociograms to have been a very well-liked member of the class; her interview transcripts indicate a degree of detachment that she felt from the rest of the group. It appears that she exercised good social skills and was willing to work with others and friendly towards them; this did not necessarily mean that she liked them. [Elke] expressed a conflict between the respective advantages of working with the same people and of frequently changing partners:

L: No I think it's important because you have to er to learn a language you have to um talk with different people (.) yeah you try to understand and it's not always easy to understand people ...

... the advantage to be in the same group is you get closer to people may maybe the conversation gets deeper [Int. 1:27-31].

The only direct comments about working in groups with learners of other nationalities were favourable, although [Elke] highlighted a difficulty which she interpreted as helpful:

L: ... because there are different cultures and I get a better understanding because um er (.) it's more difficult to understand people from Thailand or with their accent than from people from France for example

um yeah for my job I think it's good to er listen to difficult accents because that's what could happen to me [Int. 1:46-50].

[Helena] felt it was good for her learning not to be able to speak in her first language:

...and then I think I enjoy talking in English because in the English class in Sweden we talked Swedish all the time

...

L: So here I can't speak Swedish to anyone [Int. 1:43-46].

One factor which did seem to make the learners interviewed feel positive or negative about their learning groups was age. [Nasreen] compared the ESOL class to another basic skills class she attended and clearly preferred the ESOL class because the other learners were younger:

L: Because I have my teachers good my friend is good and the one class I'm going they're old [Int. 2:46-47].

[Elke] also considered age significant in her not having managed to form a social life with the other learners:

... maybe I'm a little bit older than most of them ... [Int. 1:69-70].

[Helena] commented on both the nationality mix and the age range in the course of her positive comments about how the class was better than her English class at school:

L: Because here it has er people from other countries and they are different ages ... [Int. 6:35-36].

To summarise, both the observer's records and the interviews indicated that all the learners worked with others and were willing to choose partners of other nationalities. Some, like [Helena] had to. It is clear that there was a difference in experience between learners like [Elke] who, despite a positive attitude to a multi-cultural class, found it hard to form what she considered to be meaningful relationships with others, and those like [Helena] who became very involved in a social life through the group. The interview data seemed to indicate that learner differences in this respect may not be linked to nationality.

4.4.5 Triangulation

By using a variety of data collection methods, the same issues above could be approached from different viewpoints. Although it was unlikely that these different approaches would lead to exactly the same point, it was to be hoped that they would define the parameters of an area containing common issues. Firstly, the actual groupings formed by the learners were recorded by the observer's records, and triangulated by the recordings of group work, and to some extent by the learners' self-reporting. The learners' perceptions about the groups formed were recorded in their self-reports, and triangulated by the interviews. Thirdly, data concerning the interaction within the groups was recorded by the recordings of the groups, and triangulated by the interviews. Fourthly, data about the learners' attitudes to each other were obtained from the sociograms, and triangulated by the interviews, observer's notes, teacher's log and recordings of group work.

In an educational context it can sometimes be difficult to find methods of triangulating data, but in the pilot study it did prove to be possible, as outlined above, and effective. The data collected came from the viewpoint of the learners themselves, the teacher and a more objective observer. The data from the learners included their views of themselves and of others in the class. Addressing the data gleaned from the teacher's perspective, the observer's comments and the learners' responses, it all showed a willingness by the learners to participate in mixed-nationality groups as a way of engaging in the learning process. It also displayed a clear awareness by the learners that relationships with each other were significant and that some were more valuable than others. In addition, the data showed a difference in motivation between the learners; for some social relationships played a more central role than the learning process; for others the converse was true.

4.5 Reflections on the pilot study

4.5.1 Methodology

The following problems with data collection were experienced:

(a) There were problems with the taping and transcribing, because the quality of the recording was generally poor, both for the group work and the interviews. With the group work, it was difficult to pick up everyone in the group, there was a great deal of background noise and it was not always easy to tell who was speaking. For

example, in one task, at the beginning the learners were speaking a bit away from the tape recorder because they were not doing the task; they became more audible when they started it. The principal difficulty was that the classroom was very noisy, because of the number of people speaking in a confined space. It was not possible to move the group being recorded away from other learners. The disappointing results caused me to abandon this method of data collection in the main study.

(b) There were initial difficulties in communicating to the observer exactly what his task was. In addition, he was not always able to remember all the learners' names in order to identify who worked with whom. I found his notes sometimes hard to interpret. This should not have been an insurmountable difficulty, as he was on hand to explain them, but he could not always remember what they meant when he was asked about them. Initially he adopted a rather complicated approach and had a tendency not to follow instructions if he thought he had a better idea, but after discussions he gained a clearer understanding of the format I required. The observer used a number code to identify which groups the learners formed, and occasionally, by accident, one learner was placed in two groups simultaneously. However he could rectify this, from memory, if asked very soon after the class. The pilot study served to educate the observer in what was expected of him; by the end he was producing the data requested in an efficient way. The pilot study indicated that for the main study, initial training of the observer was required. I learned from this experience to be clearer in the way I communicated instructions, and the importance of 'debriefing' immediately after each class.

(c) There were problems in obtaining data for the sociograms, in that some learners appeared a bit embarrassed to be asked to name their friends. It is possible that they felt none of the group were friends but did not want to say so. Some wanted to name everybody in the class, which appeared to be a way of saying that they were willing to be friends with everyone. I attempted to overcome this difficulty in the main study by being very specific in my instructions.

(d) The teacher's log, although always written the same day, was sometimes rather brief because I found it hard to remember clearly what had happened. This may have been because my concentration during the class was more on the teaching and the material than on how the learners were interacting. This problem seems inherent in the teacher-as-observer role.

4.5.2 Were the methods chosen appropriate?

Interviewing proved a useful tool in testing my impressions of what the learners were thinking and feeling. Although interviews were a means of enabling the learners' voices to be heard, the extent to which this actually happened might have been heightened if the learners had been prepared beforehand for what they were going to talk about, an approach taken in the main study. These learners were generally pre-intermediate in level of English, and so they could experience impromptu interviews as tiring and stressful. In this pilot study the interviews were kept short in an attempt to avoid stress, but, on reflection, preparation of the learners beforehand would probably have helped. In the main study the learner interviews were conducted at three different points during the project; the aim of this was to help the learner adjust to the process and mitigate against one bad interview experience colouring the data.

Interviews are useful in that they can address inconsistencies or mismatches between different sorts of data and they are popular with the learners because they are perceived as a means to practice and develop oral skills. To obtain the most useful interview data one needs an adequate interviewer, and consistency in whom one interviews, if this is to take place over a period of time. In the pilot study each of the six learners was only interviewed once. In the main study the intention was that each interviewee would be interviewed three times, once each term, and that all the learners would be interviewed. However, there were potential problems with this process, because I could not guarantee that a learner who was interviewed at the outset would continue to attend the class.

The combination of data collection methods was helpful in revealing inconsistencies between objective and subjective perceptions of what was happening in the classroom. For example, the learners' self-reporting of who they had been working with differed from the observer's notes of who had worked together. These inconsistencies were not so great as to devalue one or more of the data collection methods used altogether; rather they demonstrated an interesting gap between events and the perception of those events, exploration of which added depth to the analysis.

4.5.3 The methods not chosen - were my decisions justified?

(a) Questionnaires

Although the learners probably would have completed questionnaires, some might not have had the requisite language skills to fully comprehend the questions and to express their answers adequately. There is a recurring problem with this class in that the college's quality assurance questionnaires are inaccessible to them. For example, one learner, on attending class for the first time, having arrived 45 minutes late, answered "no" to a quality assurance question, "Do the classes start on time?" It is quite likely that questionnaire answers would have required a degree of interpretation and a certain amount of guesswork. Ambiguities and inconsistencies can be picked up and clarified more easily within interviews.

(b) Interviews with every learner

From a practical viewpoint, I did not have time to transcribe interviews with all 38 of the learners; in addition 14 learners¹ had stopped attending by the end of the study. However, the interview data that was collected was illuminating to the extent that it gave some insight into the learners' perceptions, and trying out the interviewing method revealed both the willingness of learners to discuss the subjects raised and the restrictions on this method of data collection imposed by their level of ability in English. The interviews collected data that other methods did not, and are made more use of in the main study. Throughout the main study I have had to address language ability in the design and conduct of the interviews, discussed in more detail in 3.4.1 (c) above.

(c) Videoing the classes

I did not have regular access to a video camera and someone to use it. In addition, I was concerned about disruption of the learning process by learners feeling self-conscious. The teacher-as-observer role was a dual one, and I had to keep the learning aims in view as well as effective data collection.

(d) Non-participant observation of another teacher's class

I did not know of any other classes where there was such a focus on group work and such a large nationality range. Moreover, the study was designed particularly to investigate my own teaching preference for using mixed nationality small group and pair work to foster the learning process. It is arguable that the design of the study to reflect my teaching practices, rather than those of other teachers in the same

institution, reduces its usefulness. A counter argument is that a study of what happened in my classes could be useful to inform what modifications could be made to teaching style, both by myself and my colleagues.

4.5.4 The teacher as the researcher

The positive aspects of the combination of roles included the ability to direct the group, so that learners were given the freedom to combine with others of their own choosing, and the wider knowledge of the participants through constant and meaningful interaction.

The negative aspects included the difficulty of observing closely whilst concentrating on other tasks, and prejudice introduced by an awareness of the learners' academic progress as well as their behaviour. These aspects did not greatly detract from the pilot study but should be noted.

4.5.5 Substantive issues

This pilot study indicated that learners could find social interaction an attractive part of the learning process. Conversely, if the emphasis of the class was on learner relationships, some learners might feel excluded. The pilot study did not go very far towards exploring how the relationships between learners best serve the learning process. The scope of the main study will extend beyond that of the pilot, to try to find out the learners' perceptions of their own advances in learning; their motivation in attending the classes; any changes to their own views of learning as the course progresses; the perceived influence of the teacher on the learners' behaviour, and whether the learners behaved in a way that demonstrated that they were independent of the teacher's influence.

4.6 Changes to the research design

The Interview data gave a picture of the learners at the end of the study; it showed their perceptions at one point and provided no contrast from another point in time, for example, learners had to try to recall their first impressions, rather than state them directly at the time they held them. It can be implied from this data that it would be more valuable to interview learners throughout the study, rather than only at the end, as this would help monitor different stages the learners went through in their development of relationships and their degree of inclusion in the group. It would also be useful to allow learners to comment on the interview transcripts for

greater validation, and they could be interviewed about the group learning process, as well as whether they enjoyed the experience.

The interviews in the pilot study were short, and came to an end, sometimes abruptly, when the interviewees appeared to be running out of things to say. 'Interview fatigue' could be a hindrance to data collection, particularly as the learners are being interviewed in a foreign language at which most of them are not advanced. Short interviews would probably be best for the learners, and the process could be strengthened by encouraging them to prepare for the interviews beforehand, and to comment on the transcripts afterwards. I would use a checklist for each set of interviews, which could be used to structure the interviews, to ensure some uniformity, and to help prepare the interviewees beforehand.

4.7 In the light of the pilot, proposals for the main study

4.7.1 The time scale

The pilot study followed a class for their first term. This provided a long enough period to test the data collection methods. However, particularly in view of the fluid nature of the learner cohort, the pilot study was unable to collect data from the whole of the group process within the class, the forming and deepening of relationships, and the process of letting go and moving on at the end of the academic year. Accordingly I intended that the main study should be conducted over the whole of the year's course, to trace any patterns that develop within the group, and to achieve a more longitudinal focus for the study. It was clear from the pilot study attendance patterns that learners come and go. Some learners went abroad on extended visits, returning to the class months or weeks later. Data for a full year would give a clearer picture of how fluid the composition of the group was.

4.7.2 The data collection methods

In general, the same data collection methods should be used, allowing as they do for different perspectives to be gained on what the learners are doing. However, more emphasis should be placed on recording the learners' accounts of what is happening, and their interpretations of it. This would give more opportunity for the learners' own voices to be heard, which might lead to greater depth of analysis. Accordingly, more emphasis could be put on interviewing and on the learners' views of the process. If the study were carried out over three academic terms, all learners could be interviewed each term. They could be included more in the process by

being prepared for interview beforehand, and being allowed to comment on the interview transcripts afterwards. The relevance of the study to the learners could be clarified by the inclusion of questions about their own learning, motivation, independence and so on.

4.8 Conclusions

The research question prompting the pilot study was "What influence does nationality have on learner relationships in the ESOL classroom?" The study has answered questions about the validity of the methods to be used for investigating this. Firstly, the data collected demonstrated that this class could produce a core group of regular attenders big enough to form the focus of the study, and that a study of groups within the class was viable because very few learners suffered isolation within the class. Secondly, the pilot study showed that the learners were willing to form mixed nationality groups to work in without the teacher having to impose specific groupings on them. Thirdly, there was some indication from the learners themselves that nationality is a factor relevant to the way in which learners work together. Finally, the different data collection methods used disclosed inconsistencies between what is observed by a third party and what is perceived by the subjects of the study; exploration of these inconsistencies forms a valuable part of the data analysis which follows.

Footnote

1 The measure used of whether a learner had stopped attending the class by the end of the study was whether they had failed to attend all of the final three classes.

Chapter 5: The data collected for the main study

5.1 Overview

This chapter gives an account of the data that was collected for the main study; the analysis is contained in chapters 6 to 8. The design of the main study enabled data to be collected to address the five key research questions, discussed in Chapter 2 and set out below. This chapter will summarise the findings of each of the data collection methods.

It will be recalled that the key research questions are these:

1. What impact do the relationships that learners form have on classroom dynamics?
2. Does the formation of mixed nationality relationships in the ESOL classroom affect the classroom culture?
3. Does working in mixed nationality groups appear to further the social success of the class?
4. Does mixed nationality group work affect the learning in the classroom?
5. Are there ways in which mixed nationality learning relationships affect the class adversely?

5.2 The data collection methods

The methodology of the main study has been discussed in chapter 3. The main methods of collecting data were observation, interview and self-report. The participants in the class were the teacher, an assistant ("the observer") and 55 learners. All the participants were active in producing the data that was collected, although the design of the data collection instruments was carried out entirely by the teacher. The learners were aware that they were contributing to research about themselves and their class; they were all notified of the nature of the research project on their first attendance at the class, and they were asked to sign a consent form permitting data about them to be collected and used. None of the learners raised any objection.

Below is a brief resume of the nature of the data obtained from each of the participants in the study:

5.2.1 The class teacher

During the term when the main study data was collected, I was the class teacher. As such, I compiled written data by keeping a register and a weekly log of events, and comments. The following term another teacher [Susan] took over the teaching of the class, and she, although not aware of the research project whilst she was teaching, provided oral data through being interviewed at the end of the academic year. Although [Susan] could not comment on what happened during the term studied, she was able to comment on the learner cohort, the class culture and the learning progress.

(a) The register

A summary of the information contained in the register is included as Appendix K. The term which was studied was the autumn term of 2001, which lasted for 15 weeks, including a week's half-term holiday between weeks 6 and 7. The classes took place on Wednesdays, from 1pm to 3pm. The date of the first class was 13 September 2001, and the final class was held on 19 December 2001. The register shows week numbers rather than dates, and week numbers have been referred to, rather than dates, throughout the data analysis chapters. This was considered preferable because the week number on which an event occurred places it more immediately within the progress of the 14 weeks of the term.

The register recorded which learners attended which classes, the total number of learners at each class, and the total attendances for each learner.

(b) The teacher's log

The teacher's log is included as Appendix L. The purpose of the log was to keep a contemporaneous note of the teacher's impressions of each class, particularly focusing on any unusual events in the class, and the way that the learners worked together. The teacher's log was made up within 24 hours of the end of each class.

(c) Interview data

[Susan], the teacher who took over the class immediately after the main study was carried out, was interviewed on 18 September 2002. A transcript is contained in Appendix M.

5.2.2 Data from the observer

The observer, Andrew, kept weekly notes of the groups formed by the learners and also noted any additional comments he had about events in the classroom [Appendix N]. During the second half of the term he made diagrams showing where the learners sat when the class started. He was also interviewed in October 2002 [Appendix O].

(a) Notes of which learners worked together

A table showing the pairs and groups that the learners formed in order to work together each week is included at Appendix N. No entries are recorded for weeks 1 and 3, because although in these classes the learners co-operated informally, they did not form specific groups.

(b) Additional notes

The observer made these additional notes when he felt it was appropriate to do so. In the latter half of the term he began to draw the seating plan of the learners. He did this initially because it helped him to make notes of the groups that were formed, but in discussion we decided that this was a helpful device and he continued to do this for the rest of the term. The seating plans are included in Appendix N.

(c) Interview

The observer was interviewed once, after the class had ended, and after the third set of interviews had been conducted with the learners.

(d) Further comments

The observer was asked for his further comments on the written analysis of his data, and his further comments are included in footnotes, where appropriate.

5.2.3 Data from the learners

The learners were asked to provide written data several times during the term that was studied, and a selection of learners was interviewed on three occasions. Figure 5.1 below shows which learners provided the data each time it was collected.

From Table 5.1 above it can be seen that six learners who provided all three items of written data and participated in all the interviews; these were [Andreas], [Fillis], [Jan], [Luigi], [Minjo] and [Umaporn], who were members of the core group.

Learner	Initial Information Form	Sociogram 1	Interview 1	Interview 2	Sociogram 2	Interview 3
Abdallah	X	X				
Andrea						
Andreas	X	X	X	X	X	X
Anita	X	X				
Anne				X	X	
Antonio						
Asha	X					
Ayhan						
Carolina	X			X	X	
Dipok	X	X				
Elizabetta	X	X				
Eugenie						
Eva	X		X			
Fatima	X	X				
Fillis	X	X	X	X	X	X
Francesco	X	X				
Glanplacido	X					
Ham-EI	X		X			
Hookyoung	X	X	X	X	X	
Hunmin	X	X	X			
Ibrahim	X					
Isabella	X					
Isadora						
Jan	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jerome	X		X	X	X	
Juan	X	X				
Jullo						
Karin	X	X	X	X	X	
Kristl	X					
Lenka	X			X	X	
LI	X					
Louise						
Lulqi	X	X	X	X	X	X
Magalet	X	X	X	X		
Marcella						
Mariam			X			
Minjo	X	X	X	X	X	X
Monika						
Mujibur						
Nobuko	X				X	
Olga	X			X	X	X
Omar						
Parvaneh	X					
Pierre						
Roberto	X					
Saleh						
Sang-Kwan	X			X	X	
Shamim						
Siu Wa	X			X	X	
Sofia	X	X				
Song Bo	X		X			
Soon-Keum			X	X	X	
Umaporn	X	X	X	X	X	X
Vahideh	X	X				
Young-Joon	X			X		

Table 5.1: Table showing which learners provided data

In addition to these six, two learners, [Hookyoung] and [Karin], provided data for both sociograms, and six learners, [Hookyoung], [Jerome], [Karin], [Magalet], [Olga] and [Soon-Keum], took part in two interviews.

Of the 55 learners, 14 did not provide data for either the sociograms or the interviews, nor did they complete the initial information forms. Comparison of Table 5.2 with the register data shows that 11 of these attended the class on only one occasion.

(a) Initial Information Forms

On the first occasion when each learner attended the class they were asked to complete an Initial Information Form. The form asked for their name, nationality, details of other countries they had lived in and other languages that they spoke, and the names of anyone they already knew within the class. A summary of the information taken from the Initial Information Forms is included as Appendix P. Of the 55 learners that attended the class at least once, 38 completed Initial Information Forms.

(b) Initial assessment forms

Appendix Q includes tables showing the learners' rating of their skills and their motivation for improving their English at the initial assessment. The initial assessment forms were completed in week 1 by all 17 learners present.

(c) Final assessment forms

Appendix Q also includes tables showing the learners' ratings of their skills and their motivation for improving their English at the final assessment. It also includes a table comparing the skills ratings at the initial and final assessment. The final assessment forms were completed in week 13 by all 17 learners present. Seven learners were present in both weeks 1 and 13 and completed both assessment forms; their forms have been compared to show progression, or lack of it.

(d) Notes of whom the learners worked with

In weeks 5 and 9 the learners were asked to write down the names of the people they had worked with at the end of the class. A summary of this information is included as Appendix R.

(e) Lists of friends for sociograms

In weeks 2 and 13 the learners were asked to write a list of their friends in the class. The sociograms prepared from these lists are included as Appendices S and T.

(f) Answers to questions about age

In week 13 the learners were given a questionnaire about age to complete. The questions were about the learners' perceptions of their own age, the age of those they easily made friends with, and the best age at which to learn a language. A summary of the information from this questionnaire is contained in Appendix U.

(g) Initial interviews

The initial interview (interview 1) was carried out in weeks 3, 4 and 5. Nine learners were interviewed in week 3, four in week 4 and three in week 5, making 16 interviews in all. Sample transcripts of these interviews are contained in Appendix V. The interviewer used a list of questions which were handed out to the learners at least a week before the interview took place. The questions were these:

- How many different nationalities are there in the class and what are they?
- Who did you know here before the class started?
- Do you see any of the other students outside class; if so, where?
- What do you come to class for?
- Do you think talking to the other students helps you to learn English?
- Do you prefer working in a group or on your own?

(h) End of term interviews

The end of term interview was carried out in weeks 11, 12 and 13. Six learners were interviewed in each of these three weeks, totalling 18 interviews. Sample transcripts of these interviews are contained in Appendix W. This interview was also conducted using set questions, but this time they were not shown to the learners in advance. The questions were:

- Have you been to any other English classes and if so is this different?
- Have you got friends in this class?
- How easy is it to make friends?
- Is there anything that would make it easier to make friends?
- Is working in a group helpful or not?
- Do you like working with everyone here?

- Is there anything you would change about the class?

(i) End of year interviews

The end of year interview was carried out between 26 June and 28 August, 2002. Two learners were interviewed together on 26 June, one on 3 July, one on 6 July, one on 12 July, one on 29 July and one on 28 August. Transcripts of these interviews are contained in Appendix X. Interview 3 was much less structured and longer than interviews 1 and 2. The interviewer had a list of topics to include, which were these:

- Whether communicative language activities continued in the class after Christmas.
- How much time was spent in learner talk.
- Friendships that had continued with other learners.
- Whether the interviewee perceived their English to have improved over the year.
- The learner's view of the best way to learn English.
- Whether the interviewee considered the teacher or the other learners more helpful in the language learning process.
- If there was anything the learner would change.

5.3 The profile of the class and the core group

The data collected provides the following profile of the learners who were the subjects of the study. The focus of the main study was the class that met at [X] on Wednesday afternoons for two hours. Over the period of the autumn term 2001, 55 different learners attended at least one of the classes. The attendance patterns and frequency are contained in the summary of the register entries in Appendix K. Within the whole class was a 'core group' of 19 learners who attended at least half the classes.

(a) Gender

Of the other 55 learners who attended, 20 were male and 35 female. The gender ratio of the core group was 4 male and 15 female.

(b) Nationality and country of origin

On the forms that they completed on their first attendance at the class the learners were asked to give their nationality. 38 learners completed these forms, thus for 17

the teacher had to use personal knowledge or college held enrolment data to record nationality. The learners were of 17 different nationalities: Bangladeshi, British, Chinese, Czech, Dutch, French, Hungarian, Iranian, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Slovakian, Spanish, South Korean, Swiss, Turkish and Venezuelan. In Interview 1, sixteen learners were asked where they came from, and in five instances this elicited a response that was different from their country of nationality. Two Italians, [Andreas] and [Luigi] came from Venezuela; two British learners, [Umaporn] and [Mariam], came from Thailand and Kenya, respectively, and the Dutch learner, [Jan], came from Hong Kong. Therefore although there were 17 different countries of origin represented by the class (Bangladesh, China, the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, South Korea, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey and Venezuela), they differed from the countries of nationality in this respect. The class could be broken down into the following nationality groups shown in Table 5.2 below.

Nationality	Number of learners
Italian	7
Korean	7
French	6
Spanish	6
Bangladeshi	5
Turkish	5
Chinese	3
Iranian	3
Slovak	3
British	2
Czech	2
Dutch	1
Hungarian	1
Japanese	1
Russian	1
Swiss	1
Venezuelan	1
Total:	55

Table 5.2: Learner nationalities

The members of the core group (see 5.3 above) are indicated in the register details in Appendix K. They were of 11 different nationalities (British, Czech, Dutch, French, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Spanish, South Korean, Swiss and Turkish Kurdish) and 12 different countries of origin (China, the Czech Republic, France, Japan, Kenya, Russia, Spain, South Korea, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey and Venezuela).

It is interesting to note that in the whole class, and not counting the British learners, there were eight groups of three or more nationals of the same country (Italy, Korea, France, Spain, Bangladesh, Turkey, Iran and Slovakia). The class was therefore not merely multi-national but contained significant nationality groups. Different implications would be expected were every learner from a different national and language background; any communication at all in such a situation would involve relationships between different nationalities. Where there were many groups within a class one might discover cliques and a reluctance to move beyond same nationality relationships.

The core group could be broken down into the nationality groups set out below in Table 5.3 below. The core group was significantly different from the whole class cohort; the only sizeable group were the Koreans. This prompts the question of whether, despite the nationality groups possible from the whole class, in fact for most weeks there were not significant representations of same nationality groups. An indication of the nationality mix of each class can be gleaned from comparing the register data with details of the learners' nationalities. Table 5.4 below sets out a breakdown of the number of learners of each nationality present at each class.

Nationality	Number of learners
Korean	6
British	2
French	2
Italian	2
Czech	1
Dutch	1
Japanese	1
Russian	1
Spanish	1
Swiss	1
Turkish	1
Total	19

Table 5.3: Core group member nationalities

Comparison of Tables 5.2 and 5.3 shows that, although there appear to be substantial sized groups (five or more) of Italian, Korean, French, Spanish,

Bangladeshi and Turkish learners, it is only the Korean group which maintains significant numbers throughout the term, ranging from 3 to 7. The most surprising correlations are those between the number of Spanish and Bangladeshi learners, and the numbers attending. Although there were 6 Spanish learners, more than one was present on only two occasions. For five of the 14 weeks there were no Spanish learners at all. Although there were five Bangladeshi learners, they attended a total of six out of the 14 weeks, and on only one occasion were there more than two together. It is therefore not surprising, referring to Table 5.3, that the Korean learners formed the only substantial group in the core group.

Nationality	Week number													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Italian	4	4	2	2	3	3		2	1	1	1	2	2	2
Korean	3	4	5	6	5	6	6	7	4	5	5	5	4	3
French	1	3	1	2	2	3		2	1	2	3	2	2	1
Spanish	1	1			1	1		5	3		1	1	1	
Bangladeshi	2	2		4	2	2								1
Turkish		1	1	1	2	2	3	1	3	2	1	2	1	
Iranian		2		1			2	1						
Slovakian			1	2	2	2	2	3						
Chinese		2	2	1	3	3	1	1	2			1	1	
British	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2
Czech	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1
Dutch	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Hungarian	1	1		1										
Japanese							1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Russian							1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Swiss	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Venezuelan	1	1												

Table 5.4: The number of learners of each nationality present at each class

(c) Languages spoken

In the class 18 different first languages were spoken, which included Bangla, Catalan, Cantonese, Chinese, Czech, Farsi/Persian, French, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Kurdish, Russian, Slovakian, Spanish, Swiss, Thai and [Mariam]'s first language. [Mariam] did not complete a first attendance form. Other languages spoken by class members included German, Hindi, Moldavian, Papiamento,

Portuguese, Turkish and Urdu. Chinese, French, Italian and Spanish were spoken as additional languages as well as first languages.

The first languages of the core group were Cantonese, French, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Kurdish, Russian, Spanish, Swiss, Thai and [Mariam]'s first language.

(d) Age

The ages of 46 of the 55 learners were known. At the start of the Autumn Term, 2001, the youngest learner [Song Bo] was 16, and the oldest, [Li], was 54. The mean age was 31, and the median was 29-30. Figure 5.5 shows the breakdown of ages.

Age range	Number of learners
16-19	6
20-29	17
30-39	12
40-49	8
50-59	3

Table 5.5: Learner ages

5.4 Findings relevant to the research questions

5.4.1 What does the data show about the learner relationships and the class dynamics?

The data concerning the learners' stated perceptions of their friendships was given in their Initial Information Forms, sociograms and interview data (Appendices P, S, T, V, W and X). The data about the classroom dynamics comes from the observer's notes, the teacher's log and the interview with the observer (Appendices N, L and O).

Conclusions about the degree of contact that the group members had with each other could be drawn from the observations by the class teacher and the observer that showed that the learners were generally willing to participate in the learning activities, and appeared to enjoy interacting. The observer also noted voluntary

contact, for example when the learners arrived at, or left, class together and interactions during the break.

The sociograms indicated how close the learners felt their contact was with each other. Sociogram 1 was prepared from data collected in week 2. On that occasion 26 learners attended the class, but only 19 provided sociogram data. One other learner was named, and thus the sociogram shows 20 learners represented. Of these 20, ten were linked to at least five other learners, while four were linked to only two. When the data for the second sociogram was collected, in week 13, there had been a total of 55 learners attending the course at least once. However, 18 of these had not attended at all during the second half of the term, and thus a more representative number of possible respondents is 37. 17 learners were present at class in week 13, and all provided data. Only one non-attender was named. Of the 23 learners attending the class when the sociogram data was collected, 12 were linked to at least five other people, but five were linked to no one at all. Both the sociograms and the learners' responses to interview questions indicated that friendships changed during the term.

From the above data, conclusions could also be drawn about other aspects of group cohesion, including the learners' investment of energy in the group; the quality of the communication patterns; the closeness of their relationships; the degree of pride in and satisfaction with the group; the use of a common language and the learners' physical proximity to each other.

5.4.2 What does the data show about the classroom culture?

The data collected in relation to the classroom culture includes information from the teacher's log and the observer's notes, as well as from the learner interviews and the interview with the observer. The culture of the classroom was also investigated in relation to the learners' nationality, and national identity and culture. Data about learner nationality was initially obtained from enrolment records, but the learners were also asked to describe themselves. They gave a description of their own nationality on the Initial Information Forms that they completed at the beginning of the class (summarised in Appendix P). In the first set of interviews, data was collected about the learners' perceptions of the different nationalities that were present in the classroom, in an exploration of how significant the learners considered nationality as a means of defining each other's identity. Learners were asked how many different nationalities they thought there were in the class. There

were 18 possible nationality descriptors for the class and the responses ranged from "many" and "a lot", through "six or seven" to 15. When asked to name the different nationalities present, the number named by each learner ranged from 3 to 13. Eight learners were completely accurate but the others all gave at least one nationality that was not present in the class.

5.4.3 What does the data show about the social success of the class, including the correlation between friendships and working groups?

Data about the social success of the class comes from the teacher's log, observer's notes, and the Interviews with the observer and [Susan] (Appendices L, N, O and M), as well as the data about learner friendships (see above at section 5.4.1). The observer's records give details of the learners who made up 146 learner groups and pairs occurring over the 14 week period. 141 of these were composed of at least two different nationalities.

The observer's records showed that the learners did form mixed nationality groups when asked to do so by the teacher. On two occasions the observer and I took photographs of the learners working together; these are included as Appendix Y and are evidence of who the learners were working with, as well as providing insight into the demeanour of the learners.

An attempt to address the question, 'do the mixed nationality groups seem linked to the friendships that have developed among the members of the class?' Involves comparing the data collected under the two heads, and shows some overlap between friendship patterns and working groups.

5.4.4 What does the data show about the learning in the classroom?

The data about the learning styles and preferences of the learners comes from the learner interviews (Appendices V, W and X), and the age questionnaire and self-assessment forms (Appendices U and Q). Data about the learning behaviour that took place in the class is gathered from the teacher's log, observer's notes and the interviews with the observer and the replacement teacher. The observer listed the groups that worked together for each of the group activities. The learners, on the two occasions when they were asked whom they had worked with, gave lists of names (Appendix R), which can be compared with the observer's lists for the purposes of triangulation. The teacher's log also made some references to groups of

learners who worked together, and the photographs (Appendix Y) give a visual representation to which learners were working together.

In Interview two 15 of the 18 learners interviewed found working in a group helpful, two did not and one said that working in a group with others who were better at English than them was helpful, but not otherwise. The data discloses the learners' attitudes to learning, and their perceptions about the progress they were making. The study did not set out to measure learning according to objective, external standards. However, the series of interviews does provide data showing the progression of the interviewees' verbal communication skills.

5.4.5 What does the data say affected the class adversely, if anything?

The data that answers this question comes from the interview transcripts. There are indications that Douglas's costs of group membership are present in the class, although there are no obvious links between these and the mixed nationality character of the group. One learner expressed some discomfort caused by communicating with learners of other nationalities.

5.5 Notes on the presentation of the data

References in the text to sources of data use the following key:

Teacher's log: 'TL' followed by the week number, so that week 3 would be '[TL3]'.

Learners' interviews: The number of the interview series, followed by the number within the series, followed by the transcript line numbers. Thus lines 20-23 of the eighth interview of the second series would be denoted as '[2:8:20-23]'.

The observer's interview: 'Obs.Int.' followed by the transcript line numbers.

[Susan]'s interview: '[Susan]' followed by the transcript line numbers.

Where pseudonyms are used, for people and places, they are enclosed in square brackets, e.g. [Andreas].

In the interview transcripts, the following conventions are used:

{ : speaks simultaneously

(.) : pause

(?) : unintelligible.

5.6 Summary

Chapter 5 sets out above details of the sources of data, a summary of what the data comprises, and an indication of which sources of data answer each of the key research questions. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 proceed to discuss the analysis of the data.

Chapter 6: Learner relationships and class dynamics

Chapters 6 to 8 inclusive contain the analysis of the data collected and discussion of the issues arising from the literature. The framework for setting out the analysis reflects the five research questions. Chapter 6 examines question 1, Chapter 7, questions 2 and 3, and Chapter 8, questions 4 and 5. Each main question is subdivided into sections for clarity. In the present chapter, issues concerning the influence of learner relationships in the classroom are discussed in the light of group theory.

The data collected, set out more fully in section 5.4.1 above, includes the learners' stated perceptions of their friendships, given in their Initial Information Forms, sociograms and interview data (Appendices P, S, T, V, W and X). Data about the classroom dynamics comes from the observer's notes, the teacher's log and the interview with the observer (Appendices N, L and O).

Research question 1:

What impact do the relationships that the learners form have on the dynamics of the classroom?

6.1 Group cohesiveness

6.1.1 Overview

In attempting to answer the first research question, I have chosen to use Douglas's indicators of group cohesiveness, discussed above in section 2.3.1, to evaluate the effect of the learner relationships formed on the group dynamics of the classroom. I then consider whether Douglas's model has any defects or omissions, before identifying learner likes and dislikes and considering the impact of these on the class dynamics. I look for support from the data for Dörnyei and Maldarez's contention that learners may behave differently in the classroom from the way they behave alone, and I address the affective implications of relationships for group membership.

6.1.2 Factors influencing the class cohesiveness

In an attempt to form a judgment about whether the class studied was a cohesive unit, indicators of cohesiveness have been selected from Douglas's model, discussed

in detail in section 2.3.1 above. That section explains how the class studied could be termed 'artificial', 'created', 'open' and 'strong' [DOUGLAS 1995]. The term 'strong' refers to the fact that the members of the group are in close contact with each other and invest their energy in the group. From the data being studied it can be deduced that the learners gain from their membership of the group. A group's cohesiveness is said by Douglas to be influenced by the factors set out in Figure 2.2 in section 2.3.1 above. The relevance of these factors to the class in the present study should provide a measure of how cohesive the group was, and is considered in detail below.

Of the factors suggested by Douglas, the relationships between group members and the degree of intimacy between them will be dealt with more fully in Chapter 7, looking at the social success of the class. The degree of skill in the leadership of the group is touched on, but is not an area about which data has been gathered deliberately.

In this section, I have drawn from the data collected what evidence there is to show whether Douglas' other factors were present. The methods used to obtain the relevant data are discussed in detail in section 3.4.2 above.

(a) Were the members of the group in close contact with each other?

Close contact between group members in this context could include working together as instructed by the teacher, or relating to each other outside any instructions that they were given. This was an educational class, and therefore the teaching methods to a large extent determined how much the members of the group were in contact with each other during the class. Because of the teaching strategy, it was inevitable that the members had to interact with each other in order to perform the learning tasks. Observation by the class teacher and the observer showed that the learners were generally willing to participate in the learning activities, and appeared to enjoy interacting. The observer also noted that members voluntarily made contact with each other, arriving at class together, leaving together, sometimes to go on to other activities, and interacting with each other during the break.

The sociograms (Appendices S and T) indicated how close the learners felt their contact was with each other. From the sociograms it is apparent that some learners were engaged in more contact than others. Sociogram 1 was prepared from data

collected in week 2. On that occasion 26 learners attended the class, but only 19 provided sociogram data. One other learner was named, and thus the sociogram shows 20 learners represented. Of these 20, ten were linked to at least five other learners, while four were linked to only two. [Fatima] and [Vahideh] both named only each other, and [Elizabetta] named only [Sofia], who was a relative. [Abdallah] named only [Minjo]. [Karin], however, named eight others as friends, and six people said [Andrea] was their friend.

When the data for the second sociogram was collected, in week 13, there had been a total of 55 learners attending the course at least once. However, 18 of these had not attended at all during the second half of the term, and thus a more representative number of possible respondents is 37. 17 learners were present at class in week 13, and all provided data. Only one non-attender, [Magalet], was named. Sociogram 2 shows [Minjo] to be the learner with most friendships; she named 11 friends, and was named by eight other people. Of the 23 learners attending the class when the sociogram data was collected, 12 were linked to at least five other people, but five were linked to no one at all. [Jan] was named by eight other learners, and [Karin] by six. In contrast, [Soon-Keum] named only [Filis] and was named by only [Filis] and [Umaporn].

One would expect the degree of contact between the learners to change over time, and both the sociograms and the learners' responses to interview questions indicated that this was the case. For example, a comparison of sociograms 1 and 2 shows that [Minjo] appeared to increase in popularity; in sociogram 1 she was named by three other learners, two of whom were Korean like her, whereas in sociogram 2 she was named by eight others, only one of whom was also Korean. [Filis], who was named by no one in sociogram 1, was named by three people in sociogram 2. One might expect this increase in perceived friendships to be the normal trend, as learners got to know each other over time. However there were departures from it; [Hunmin], who was named by four others in sociogram 1, was named by no one in sociogram 2.

(b) Did the members of the group invest energy in the group?

The observer describes the learners as being eager to be with each other and looking forward to seeing each other [Obs.Int.45-9]. He used the adverb 'enthusiastically' to describe the learners greeting each other [Obs.Int.17]. He also described them as motivated to find out about each other [Obs.Int.178-184].

(c) Did the group members gain from their membership of the group?

The observer emphasised that the social relationships that the students had with each other seemed very important in this class, and he perceives that this facilitated their language learning, encouraging them to communicate with each other [Obs.Int.191-203]. This observation is surprising in one way, given that the learners had to communicate with each other in English, because of the low level of English ability of most of them when they began attending the class. It might have been assumed that they would be inhibited from making relationships. However, in another way it is less surprising, because the learners who stayed with the class and did not attend only one session presumably did so because they welcomed the communicative nature of the activities. As discussed in (a) above, the sociograms, even in week 2, showed flourishing friendship networks, and thus the sociograms support the observer's perceptions.

The observer did not notice any hostility between the members of the group [Obs.Int.42]. This is perhaps not surprising, given that the learners had a reasonable amount of freedom in choosing whom to work with, and were thus able to avoid those they disliked.

A related question is whether the learners perceived that they were gaining anything. This has been explored insofar as it relates to learning gains; and is discussed in section 8.1 below. The learner interviews disclose positive and negative perceptions of the group. This question could have been investigated more widely by direct questioning of the learners, specifically about perceived gains, or by having them discuss their experiences in group work, and recording the discussions. The first method would guide the learners as to what data was required; the second, less structured approach would measure what the learners felt to be important.

(d) Did the group members share their experience over time?

On the most superficial level, the group members shared the experience of the class activities, working together and making relationships with each other. On a deeper level, it was apparent that one of the more satisfying facets of the class for the learners was the opportunities they had to find out more about each other. Specific mention is made in the interviews of the sharing of experience taking place and being valued [for example, 1:11:55-58, 2:2:39-41].

(e) Was the quality of the communication patterns good?

One might ask what makes a good quality communication pattern. One could look at whether real communication was taking place between group members, or at the fluency or accuracy of their communication. The observer commented on fluency, stating in interview his impression that the class as a whole was "very communicative the ethos was one of corporation and communication people got on and did it" [Obs.Int.99-100]. He also mentioned that when the learners were working in small groups there was communication between groups, and also that some of the communication he observed was not necessarily relevant to the task in which they were supposed to be involved.

I: So did there seem to be inter group working as well as {within their own]

A: {Oh yes yeah there there was definitely inter group working yes I mean so you would get um not all the time but you would get people kind of talking across groups (.) um and maybe part of this was a clarification thing

I: When you were observing did you get a chance to listen to what the learners were saying (.) as they spoke to each other

A: Mm yes yes I did obviously I heard those who were near where I was sitting but also I would go round

I: Did you observe any of them being so enthusiastic about talking to each other that they weren't perhaps doing what was required by the teacher or they weren't paying attention to what was going on with the rest of the class

A: (.) Yes yes that that that did happen and I think then some of them would would um (.) I mean there were two two difficulties in this area I think some of them would misunderstand the initial instructions and so they would set off and then be trying to work out how they'd gone wrong (.) and then (.) that's right I think some of them would be enthusiastic but would have missed the point

I: I was thinking more of friendships wanting to talk to each other rather than do the task set

A: Yeah yeah I think hm particularly at the beginning of the class with the first exercise this was often evident in that they would be terribly keen to see people again who they might not have seen for a few days and sometimes I would observe them getting their diaries out and making social arrangements um especially during the first activity although this was something that went on throughout the class th- this kind of social involvement um (.) so sometimes that would override their um [Obs.int.117-138].

The picture that the observer portrays is one of meaningful communication between learners; meaningful in the sense that they were communicating about themselves and their lives, and sharing information that needed to be shared, in order to make real events happen, although not necessarily focussed on the learning task.

As regards accuracy, the interview transcripts reveal varying degrees of accuracy in the learners' 'free' speech, with [Luigi] in interview 1, and [Siu Wa] in interview 2 actually communicating very little. In this respect the pattern of communication changed over time, for [Luigi]'s three interviews present a pattern of improvement, for example,

I like the English language I need to my job [1:5:20],

Depend as well because I have people they know more than me [2:18:29], and

we need people with more level than us to learn that's the problem with [Y] we always stay in the new level and then the new people come to the class they don't know anything [3:1:147-9].

It may be concluded that the cohesiveness of the class as a group will have increased as the learners became progressively better at speaking and understanding English. However, against this must be set the fluid nature of the group membership; new learners continued to join the class until week 9, and therefore the group members had not all learnt and practised the same things. New members might have a lesser communicative ability, coupled with fewer and less developed relationships with the other group members. Both of these factors could have impaired communication.

(f) Were the relationships between the members close?

This measure of cohesion is very much linked to the social success of the class, and is therefore considered in detail in section 7.2.1. Suffice it to say for the purposes of assessing the cohesiveness of the group that there were some close relationships, although it was clear that many learners were happy to cooperate with each other even where relationships were not particularly close.

(g) Was there much pride in and satisfaction with the group?

The learners' behaviour might indicate pride and satisfaction with the group, for example, satisfaction might be shown by the learners continuing to attend the class.

An indication of satisfaction with the group is given by the observer mentioning that learners would bring new learners to the class, (interestingly the groups he referred to were largely groups of learners of the same nationality):

A: Yeah er right um (.) yeah er some of the au pairs from the same nationality would bring new au pairs and introduce them to the group (.) er (.) S- S- Swedes would bring other Swedes er students from the Czech Republic would bring other students from the Czech Republic sometimes er (.) people from the university would bring other people from the university and they'd be together (.) um and then there was a group of Chinese people who came together from Hong Kong who would bring other Hong Kong people and then of course the Kurds would bring er always brought other Kurds and new Kurds and things (.) so so it was quite strong really this (.)
[Obs.Int.32-40].

[Mariam] appeared to express pride in the group in her interview:

She was asking me which teacher I prefer I say I prefer always Anna so now maybe they're coming next week [1:11:38-9].

However, this may have been engendered more by a desire to please the teacher / interviewer than by satisfaction with the class.

(h) Did the group use a common language?

A significant factor about this group was that all the members were required to use a language which was not their first language in communicating with each other. Where there was a common first language it was observable that smaller sub groups emerged. This was particularly the case with the group of South Korean learners. This is demonstrated by the seating plans drawn by the observer in weeks 10-14. In week 10 [Young-Joon], [Hookyoung] and [Soon-Keum], all Korean, sat together, as did [Filis] and [Asha], both Turkish Kurds. In week 11 [Hookyoung] and [Hunmin] sat together, and [Young-Joon] and [Sang-Kwan] sat together and near them, again, all Korean. In week 12 [Hookyoung] and [Sang-Kwan] sat together, as did [Andreas] and [Luigi], both Italian and also father and son. [Andreas] and [Luigi] sat together in weeks 13 and 14 as well. This choice of seating indicates some degree of choosing companions who speak the same first language, particularly with the Korean learners, where the pairings are always different and therefore do not appear to reflect particular friendships. It is possible that other factors apart from language may have influenced initial choice of seat,

including the matter of which learners arrived together; this may well explain [Andreas] and [Luigi] sitting together. Nevertheless the observer noticed same nationality groups speaking to each other in their first language:

I: Did you observe any students any learners translating um for each other (.) or or explaining things in in their mother tongue

A: (.) I think by and large they they really tried not to because they realised they were supposed to be communicating in English all the time of the class but I think it happened with the Koreans occasionally and maybe (.) the Venezuelans it did go on yeah it did go on I think yeah Spaniards might do it to each other and um Czechs might do it you know [Obs.Int.146-152]

This observation illustrates the usefulness of the observer, because, as the teacher, I was not aware that this was happening.

Having to use a common language may have added to the cohesiveness of the group but also detracted from it. Although the members of the class used English to communicate with each other, their level of ability in English determined their effectiveness at communication. Thus in one way the fact that English was not the first language of any of the learners brought them together through a common aim and a common degree of difficulty; in another way, the lack of a common language was not a cohesive factor, as the most effective verbal communication would have occurred where the participants' first language was shared.

A further difficulty in asserting that the learners shared a common language was the difficulty they experienced in interpreting each other's varieties of English (see, for example, [1:7:28-9]).

(i) Was there a sense of obligation and responsibility among group members?

The success of the learning methods used in this class depended at least in part on the group members being prepared to work together and assisting each other in the tasks they were set. It was therefore possible to discern a sense of obligation and responsibility among the group members by watching them perform these tasks. One positive indication given by the observer was the example of the French student who was reluctant to work with others but who nevertheless joined in, presumably from a sense of responsibility that drove him to do what was expected of him and co-operate with the teacher and the rest of the group.

I: Were there any people who wouldn't work with the others or with particular individuals

A: Well (.) there was a French student who was a bit reluctant ah but but that's really kind of individual to him I think

I: So did he just stay on his own

A: No he didn't stay on his own (.) he he did join in but (.) he he always had more of a reluctant manner than than some of them [Obs.Int.60-65].

The learner that the observer refers to here [Jerome] was interviewed and, although he stated that he did not like working in groups, he was willing to join in because he perceived that he was the only one who did not like this style of learning:

T: You'd rather be on your own yeah so you don't find working in a group helpful for your English you don't find working in a group helpful for your English

J: No I don't think so

T: Do you like no we've done that one is there anything you would change about the class now there should be lots of things so can you tell me what they are

J: What this class

T: Mmhm

J: No

T: Yes because you don't like working in groups you like working on your own

J: Ah I am not I am not understanding the question

T: OK anything you would change

J: (.) No because is if I'm alone for thinking that then no

T: You're the only one

J: Yes

T: Yeah yeah but if if

J: If to me the maj- maj-

T: Majority

J: Majority

[2:17:32-49].

A distinction can be made between a sense of obligation and responsibility in respect of the learning taking place, and a more personal commitment to other learners at a social level. Interestingly, although the observer considered this group to place greater emphasis on the importance of their relationships with each other, he noted that one learner [Mariam], who was more isolated and needy than the others, was not having her needs met in the way that he had observed that classes in previous years had met them:

I: Can you name anybody or give me a an identity of anyone who seemed very needy

A: A female Kenyan woman who (.) um (.)

I: [Mariam]

A: Yeah can I talk about her I mean she'd been coming to this class for a number of years and I'd observed her over that period but I think in this particular class in the last year they were not as responsive to her needs as previous classes have been and

I: What effect was that having on her

A: Um er she was a bit more isolated and she stood out more as being needy and it was clear that her main motivation for coming to the class wasn't language but was what she got out from the relationships out of the relationships with other people there

I: Did she find it possible to to work with other people to get into pairs and groups

A: Mm yes she did you know people didn't people worked with her but but um I would say less easily than she had done previously [Obs.Int.211-225].

However, it is interesting to note that in interview 1 [Mariam] did not seem to feel isolated:

T: Good do you see any of them outside the class

M: Yeah sometime in the town we meet yeah

T: What do you do when you meet

M: Just we talking and just talking about the classes and how is your family and these things and say sometimes I have my many friends [2:11:21-25].

To verify this self account, the teacher's log for week 8 records that:

I noticed interaction between [Karin] and [Mariam], trying to arrange to meet, before class started.

However, her attendance became less regular as the term progressed, partly because she started a part-time job. The teacher's log for week 6 records that:

[Mariam] started her new job today (she left half way through the class). She was nervous, but several of the others obviously knew about it and were wishing her well.

The lower level of attendance in the second half of the term (4 out of 8 possible attendances, compared with 5 out of 6 possible attendances in the first half) could at least partly account for her seeming isolation.

(j) Did the members give each other positive feedback?

Inherent in the learners working together on set tasks was the facility for them to comment on each other's performance. The observer stated that the group had a cooperative ethos and this contributed to the learners helping each other:

A: (.) No I didn't because this was a very communicative group the ethos was one of cooperation and communication people got on and did it [Obs.Int.99-100],

and:

there's much more you can have more problems in EFL groups when they think that there's somebody in the group who might not be as good as them and is going to drag their English down and they're not going to make as much progress as other people and there's much more focus on what exam am I going to do and am I getting value for money and all this kind of thing whereas I think with ESOL the the emphasis is much more on I've come here to cooperate and get on with everyone and to learn along with everybody else and we're all helping each other and um it's much more cooperative and I think if you so there's much more cohesion group cohesion with ESOL and it's much easier to move people on as a group um (.) and much less (.) er of yeah [Obs.Int.304-313].

The fact that the learners continued to be willing and enthusiastic to work together throughout the term is one indication that at least some of the feedback they were providing to each other was positive rather than negative. The observer commented on the activities enjoyed in the class as follows:

I: What sort of activities did you observe the learners enjoying most

A: (.) Um (.) OK um activities where the whole group was being addressed as a group and they could listen to each other and but they all had an er an opportunity to contribute so for instance where a topic where they liked feedback when they'd been doing an activity because they could comment and listen to each other's ideas about about something they'd been doing in groups [Obs.Int.274-279].

(k) Were the members physically proximate to each other?

The layout of the room, which was orchestrated by the teacher, contributed to the learners' physical proximity to each other during the class. Learner numbers and the size of the room meant that the learners sat close together. The layout of the room consisted of rows of chairs next to each other in a 'U' shape, without tables, and therefore the learners were close together and had easy access to each other. Appendix N contains the seating plans drawn by the observer in weeks 10-14. The plan for week 12 shows a gap of one chair between [Carolina] and [Olga]; [Carolina] is on her own at the end of a row, with no one sitting directly behind her. In that plan, also, [Anne] has chosen to sit on her own in the back row. In the plan for week 14 neither [Abdallah], [Jan] nor [Jerome] have anyone next to them, although [Abdallah] is sitting directly in front of [Jan] and [Jerome] is immediately at a right angle to [Soon-Keum]. In none of the other plans is anyone alone.

It can be observed from the photographs in Appendix Y that the degree of proximity that the learners entered into voluntarily when working together was generally very close.

(l) Did the members share common interests and purposes to a high degree?

Dörnyei & Malderez assert that being part of a group in a language learning context is desirable because it will encourage positive feelings through the achievement of group and individual goals [DÖRNYEI & MALDEREZ 1999 p168-9].

As the ostensible aim of all the members of the group was to improve their English skills, it would seem self-evident that they shared a common purpose. Discussion of the learners' motivation, at section 8.1.4, reveals that although there was a wide range of motivating factors, there was convergence among the group. Considering common purpose class by class, rather than looking at it in relation to the whole course, the members of the group shared a common purpose which was to achieve the tasks that were set by the teacher. The nature of the class and the way it recruited learners were such that it was unusual for anyone to be present who was not willing or enthusiastic to participate, simply because a lack of motivation would mean that the learner would not attend. However, the register entries (Appendix K) show that 13 of the 55 learners who attended the class attended on only one occasion. It is arguable that they did not return because they felt the class was not right for them, for whatever reason. The presence of one or more of these

putatively disenchanted individuals in weeks 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 may have affected the feeling of common purpose within the class as a whole.

(m) Was the leadership skilled?

Leadership was present at different levels in the class. There was the obvious and apparent leadership of the class teacher, and the acknowledged authority of the observer as a classroom assistant. Within the groups formed by the learners to carry out tasks there may also have been leadership present, as there may have been within friendship groups.

In Interview 2 the learners were asked: 'Is there anything you would change about the class?' It was hoped that suggested changes might indicate areas where the teacher had failed to notice and/or meet learners' needs. Three learners indicated a desire for more practice in speaking or writing. One did not like the time of the class, which was not something the teacher had the power to alter. One was unable to express her answer in English [1:15:47]. 13 indicated that they would not like to change anything, although [Jerome] qualified this because he felt he was in a minority in preferring a different class style, and one learner expressed dissatisfaction at her own ability at grammar, which could be interpreted as an area the teacher should have been addressing.

(n) Was there an absence of disruption?

Disruption can take many forms in a language class. One type is purely physical, consisting of noise, interruption or challenging behaviour. Another source of disruption is the constant coming and going of learners, affecting the constituents of the class, and causing members to have to be making new relationships week by week. Within this class there was a small core of regular attenders, but also many other learners who attended infrequently. The class register reveals that 55 individuals attended at least one of the 14 classes and that 40 of these attended more than once. Only two learners attended all 14 classes. A core group of 19 learners attended at least 50 per cent of the classes, thus 36 attended less than that. The total number attending each class varied from 13 to 28, the average number being 19. The register entries show that 13 learners attended the class on only one occasion. Therefore it seems inevitable that there was a degree of disruption which would reduce the cohesiveness of the class.

(o) Did the members perceive protection within the group?

Dörnyei & Malderez assert that being part of a group in a language learning context is desirable because if it is cohesive it will allow for “unselfconscious, tolerant and safe” language practice and provide a comfortable environment derived from a sense of shared discipline and awareness of the group rules [DÖRNYEI & MALDEREZ 1999 pp168-9].

There were indications that the learners did not always find communication with native English speakers easy; it was a cause of anxiety. For example, [Anne] described English people as ‘cold’ and ‘frustrating’ [2:12:20-25]; communication with native speakers made [Minjo] ‘nervous’ [2:11:23-5] and [Olga] ‘anxious’ [3:6:42-7]. [Young-Joon] stated that:

when I speak with English people I never understand [2:14:23-4].

Given that all the learners wanted to improve their English, and that most were at a pre-intermediate level of proficiency, it could be said that the class offered protection from the English-speaking world; that is, it provided a safe environment in which the learners could practise speaking English without some of the difficulties inherent in using language with native speakers. The relaxed atmosphere within the classroom can be interpreted as a sign that the members perceived that there was safety within the group.

(p) Were there intimate relationships between members?

Because this measure of cohesion is linked to the question of the social success of the class it is addressed in section 7.2.1.

(q) Did the members perceive that the group was efficacious?

In considering the efficacy of group work for adult language learners of differing nationalities, their attitudes to the group are significant, and in addressing this indicator of cohesiveness, the class as a large group can be distinguished from the small groups in which the learners addressed learning tasks. For example [Jerome], who had no hesitation in expressing his dislike of small group work, travelled to the class at [X] from another city 15 miles away which had more free ESOL provision than the city [X] was in. He first attended week 4 and only missed 3 of the subsequent classes. The fact of his attendance at a class so far from his work

indicates a perception that the class was efficacious on some level, particularly as his motivation was instrumental:

T: Oh right so you don't live here what do you come to class for (.) why do you come to this class

J: Ah for learning English

T: What sort of English do you want to learn

J: (.) Everything um read speak and write as well

T: What's your purpose in learning English

J: Purpose

T: Yeah why do you want to learn English

J: Because I want to go in in other country where they speak two language French and English

[1:16:19-27].

With regard to the efficacy of small groups, in Interview 2 the respondents were asked whether they thought that working in a group was helpful or not. 15 out of 18 said that it was, and one said that it was if he was working with other learners who were better at English than him. Some of the reasons given related to greater ease of learning in a group and some were social reasons. The two learners who did not like working in groups expressed a preference for a different learning style, but did not say that the group work actually detracted from their learning.

6.1.3 Possible shortcomings of Douglas' model

Douglas's model describes the positive indicators of group cohesiveness, but it needs to be adapted for the present study, because it does not address the inherent conflicts and contradictions within a group that may detract from cohesiveness. This is a significant omission, and to remedy it I have considered, in section 2.3.1 above, what Ringer refers to as the 'paradoxical realities' of groups [RINGER 2002]. I have selected two examples of such paradoxes that are relevant to the language classroom, and sought evidence as to whether they are present in this class.

(a) safety / danger

The first paradox is the individual experiencing the group both as a place of safety and as a place of danger. The group is a place of safety because of its nurture, support and familiarity. It is a place of danger because of the chance of the learner being attacked for being different, and because the needs of the individual are subsumed to those of the group.

An example of the group being experienced as a safe place was the comment, "these people are kind" [2:13:38]; other instances can be found in all three sets of interviews ([1:3:26-32], [1:6:32-36], [3:2:10-14] and [3:6:179-184]).

The data does not provide any examples of learners being attacked for being different. The needs of individuals giving way to the needs of the group is illustrated by comments in the learner interviews, particularly [Jerome's] recognition that he alone disliked group work [2:17-43], and also reflected by other learners ([3:4:100-108], [3:5:19-20]).

(b) task versus relationships

The second paradox is that a group, in order to complete a task successfully, may have to override the relationships within the group that make it an appropriate vehicle for carrying out the task. There is little in the data to indicate that the learners perceived this to be a problem, but one example relates to the difficulty of completing writing tasks in a group [1:8:37-9].

One further note of caution in the use of Douglas's model in the present study is that it is constructed for general application, and not specifically for mixed nationality groups, nor for teaching and learning situations. As with any general model, it requires adaptation to fit the specific context to which it is applied.

6.2 Learner likes and dislikes and their effect on the group dynamics

Having used Douglas' model, to attempt to determine whether, and to what extent, according to those parameters, the class in the present study formed a cohesive group, I have noted that there was evidence of willingness among the learners to engage in the communicative small group work imposed by the teacher. Whether or not the learners enjoyed small group work was a matter of personal preference, and in addressing the question of the cohesiveness of the group, actual learner likes and dislikes are significant. In an ESOL class of the type studied learner preferences will determine the learners' behaviour, at least in part, because the learners are autonomous adults, and under no obligation to participate in the class. Thus likes and dislikes may inform the learning relationships formed and the way that the learners behave in the group.

(a) Likes

Luker [1987] (cited in Brown and Atkins [1988]) identified a range of student likes and dislikes for small group teaching, and these included the following likes:

- (i) having a greater influence on what is being discussed;
- (ii) finding out other people's ideas;
- (iii) flexibility;
- (iv) development of the ability to analyse problems and reach solutions, and
- (v) having a stronger feeling of identity.

The interview data provided some insight into the learners' likes in the present study. Interview 1 disclosed a range of likes including:

- talking to the other learners [1:2:33 and 1:4:32];
- working together [Int.1:6:41];
- having fun together [1:1:24 and 1:3:30-31], and
- getting to know each other [1:7:34 and 1:8:40].

[Eva]'s view was that:

E: Becau- you know I need a company I I'm not I don't like when I'm alone without any people so I need company I'm very talkative [1:15:33-34].

In Interview 2 the learners were asked if they would want to change anything about the class. Positive responses were as follows:

I thoroughly enjoying it [2:1:36].

I like how you teach the class and the class is OK [2:2:53].

I like my class [2:3:34].

I like the class a lot [2:4:44].

I think it is excellent for me [2:6:41].

No I like it no I like that you teach me you are very good teacher for me and your lessons are very nice and your lessons I have new inspiration to my class in my school in my country [2:13].

Er I like my teacher and then er I like coming here because I just talking this class because I I just speaking this class English English language [2:14:43-4].

In Interview 3 [Filis] said:

I liked my friends. [3:5:107].

These opinions bear out Luker's contention that there certainly appears to be some identification with the class, and an enjoyment of finding out other people's ideas.

(b) Dislikes

Luker's list of student dislikes about groups included:

- (i) the fact that the group may be dominated by one person;
- (ii) that sometimes group members will not talk;
- (iii) long silences, and
- (iv) having to contribute when the individual does not want to.

A search for indications of these dislikes in the learner interview data revealed some indicators of dislike of group members who would not talk from [Jan] [1:14:28-30] and [Karin]:

K: I like everyone everyone is different but I prefer to work with someone who with someone who speak who likes to talk and isn't very shy and can't speak anything

T: Are there some people who don't speak very much

K: Yes

T: What do you do if you're in a group with someone who won't speak much

K: I speak

T: So it's good for you

K: Yeah but (.) you speak and say something and I don't know

T: You don't get a response

K: Yeah yeah they don't even speak

[2:2:40-49].

There were no indications of Luker's other dislikes. However, there was mention of dislike of features directly associated with working in a group that did not share a first language. Comments about the difficulties of understanding other accents were made in [1:7:28-9], [2:15:28], [2:18:23-4], [3:1:47] and [3:3:82-86]. Accents

singled out for criticism were Czech, Chinese, Spanish and especially Korean. A linked dislike was that learners could not understand each other [2:15:23].

Other dislikes were:

- The fact other learners were not proficient in English:

T: Good do you think talking to the other students helps you to learn English

K: Yes I think it's it is probably the easiest way to learn English but um not for er perfect English because they they are not speaking perfect English [1:1:19-21],

and

sometimes they wrong sometimes right ... sometimes better than them [2:11:34].

- Some individuals were unfriendly, which made them difficult to work with, for example, "[Jerome] very closed man" [2:7:45].

- Group work wastes time, for example, "we lost the time when we are too much people is is better when you take the note" [1:1:39-40].

- It is harder to think when working in a group:

"there are too much noise is not very good for concentration" [2:17:63-4], and

"I would like the time for thinking because er sometimes it's er too fast" [2:17:70].

- Group work may be useful with those who are better at English, but not with those who are worse:

T: OK is working in a group helpful or not

L: Depend as well because I have people they know more than me

T: Is that helpful to work with people who are better than you is that helpful

L: Yeah

T: What if you work with people who know less than you

L: (.) I think you don't learn anything" [2:18:26-31].

The learners were asked in the second interview whether they would change anything and this seemed to be a difficult question to answer. Two simply said no. Nine said they would not change anything because they liked or were satisfied with the class. One said she would change the time because it did not suit her. One said

she could not explain in English what she would change and the interviewer did not speak Korean. Only four learners managed to specify actual changes to the way the class was run, and for three of the four these related to class content that they would like to have increased: vocabulary structures, practice, speaking and conversation. The other one of the four wanted a smaller, quieter class with a different learning style this was [Jerome] who stood out in the class as being unhappy with group work and the communicative approach generally.

6.3 Affective factors: the effect of the group on the member and the assertion that learners behave differently when part of a group

6.3.1 Overview

Section 2.3.1 contains a discussion of the suggestion that individuals may behave differently in conjunction with others from how they behave alone [DÖRNYEI & MALDEREZ 1999]. In the present study there was no controlled observation of the learners out of the group context, and therefore conclusions about the above assertion can only be inferred, and should be regarded with caution. Nevertheless, the affective factors considered below in this chapter may shed light on this area. In this section I will consider affective factors as they relate to group membership; the relationship between affect and learning is addressed in Chapter 8.

6.3.2 The rewards of groups

Douglas identified the following rewards of group membership:

- (i) companionship;
- (ii) the experience of working with others;
- (iii) a sense of belonging;
- (iv) access to resources which individuals do not possess;
- (v) help with difficulties and problems, and
- (vi) the chance of effecting personal change in a supportive environment [DOUGLAS 1995].

Indications of the presence of each of these elicited from the interview and observation data are set out below.

(a) Companionship

From the interviews and observations it became clear that social relationships were an important factor in the dynamics of the class. There was some teacher control over who the learners worked with, because they were usually told to work with people of a different nationality from them. Nevertheless, some same nationality social preferences were apparent:

A: (.) Er (.) um (.) yes I think so and some were probably along nationality lines like I think the Koreans were a distinct group of although they interacted with with other nationalities I think they they were a distinct group together and then um I think Asian students were were generally friendly with each other
[Obs.Int.24-8].

The observer also noted learners trying to stay with other learners of their own nationality, although he perceived this as a preference rather than something about which they were prepared to be totally intransigent [Obs.Int.78-86].

However, there were clearly firm friendships among learners of different nationalities, revealed in part by the recurrence of learners working together, discussed in more detail in section 7.2.2. below. One learner said that companionship was her reason for preferring working in groups [1:15:36-7].

(b) The experience of working with others

Comments from Interview 1 that supported the presence of this reward included simple expressions of enjoyment (e.g. 1:3:29-30); the view that working with others helped learning, which is explored more fully in Chapter 8 below, and the help one got from others (for example, 1:6:33-34).

In Interview 3 the learners were asked whether they felt the teacher or the learners were more important. Only one of the seven learners interviewed [Jan] felt the learners were more important:

J: I er I really want to learn conversation because er if example in writing you can practise in your home at home and er reading you can practise you can read much more but conversation you have to speak you have to practise and that's I think no way to do it yourself at home so yeah the conversation speaking is more

T: Speaking helps you most

J: Yeah

T: Yeah um who do you think is most important the teacher or the other students in helping you learn

J: (.) Well the same thing what I just said the speaking because in a class a lot of students I seem to be er I feel seem to be not the time is not long enough for speaking well I I know that is very very difficult for the teacher because a lot of student the teachers can't speak with each other so if I got the chance I I hope to go get er and a bit more time for speaking

[3:2:83-95].

It is clear from this extract that one of the rewards for [Jan] is the chance to converse with the other learners, and a curtailment of the time made available brings him as near as he ever comes to a complaint.

(c) A sense of belonging

The observer commented that he felt the class enjoyed activities where they worked together as a whole group, listening to each other and all having an opportunity to contribute their own ideas and be listened to.

I: What sort of activities did you observe the learners enjoying most

A: (.) Um (.) OK um activities where the whole group was being addressed as a group and they could listen to each other and but they all had an er an opportunity to contribute so for instance where a topic where they liked feedback when they'd been doing an activity because they could comment and listen to each other's ideas about about something they'd been doing in groups um they also liked activities where they asked what had they been doing during the week or what's been in the news that kind of thing and they would all get quite involved in that [Obs.Int.274-281].

(d) Access to resources which individuals do not possess

Douglas cites access to resources as a reward of group membership, and Dörnyei & Malderez also assert that being part of a group in a language learning context is desirable because it will acknowledge the resources brought by each of the members [DÖRNYEI & MALDEREZ 1999 p168-9]. It is questionable, in the context of the present study, what such resources might have been. It is apparent from the interview data that some learners valued the help they received from others, and there were also indications of appreciation of extended knowledge of other cultures. There do not seem to be any clues from the data of resources of this type other than elements discussed in other sections.

(e) Help with difficulties and problems

In the classroom the learners had to work on tasks together. There were ample opportunities for them to help each other with difficulties and problems if they chose to. The observer noted learners within the small groups working things out together, but also going outside their small groups to get help if they needed it.

I: Who did they look to or what did they look to for clarification

A: Oh they they they I think they either looked to ah the teacher (.) for clarification or they looked to each other and just kept asking each other and worked it out between them (.) or maybe they might have looked to somebody else in the group other than the person they were working with who perhaps they trusted

I: So did there did there seem to be inter group working as well as {within their own

A: {Oh yes yeah there there was definitely inter group working yes I mean so you would get um not all the time but you would get people kind of talking across groups (.) um and maybe part of this was a clarification thing

[Obs.Int.111-121].

The learners themselves were vocal about the help they received from each other, although there were some situations where it was acknowledged that others could not help, for example:

when you come to something like you test things you've really got to think on your own [1:8:41-2].

(f) The chance to effect personal change in a supportive environment

In section 8.1.2 below I discuss the effect on learning of the learners working together in groups, and providing support or 'scaffolding' for each other. The help provided by learners to each other in dealing with problems had been considered when looking at obligation and responsibility in section 6.1.2 above. There were no other indications from the data of learners using the support of this class to effect personal change.

6.3.3 Are there indicators of any rewards other than those listed above?

The other rewards indicated by the learners in the interview data relate to learner difference. Reference is made to seeing other people doing things differently [1:8:40-1]; learning about differences [1:11:55-58]; getting different ideas from different learners [2:1:32-4], and getting to know more about the other learners and their lives [2:2:39-41].

6.4 Interim conclusions based on research question 1

Conclusions from this chapter will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9. The interim conclusions are:

The class cohesiveness: Douglas's factors for group cohesiveness seemed prevalent in this group, but the model itself does not seem adequate to address the paradoxes in such a group, discussed in section 6.1.3, that may detract from its cohesiveness.

Learner likes and dislikes: The likes and dislikes most prominent from the data related to communication within the group; likes encompassed relationships between learners; dislikes included not being able to understand each other and having to work with people who were quiet or unfriendly.

The rewards of groups: Douglas's rewards of working in groups appeared to be present in the class; in addition there was an indication from interview data that experiencing the differences between learners provided rewards.

In this chapter I have addressed the data relevant to finding out what impact learner relationships have on class dynamics. Chapter 7 considers the second and third research questions, relating to classroom culture; the impact of nationality, culture and Identity on learner relationships, and the social function of the class.

Chapter 7: Classroom Culture

Chapter 6 assessed the effects of learner relationships on class dynamics. In this chapter I address the second and third research questions, firstly by exploring the impact that issues of nationality, culture and identity have on learner relationships, and the effects of such relationships on the class, and secondly by discussing the social function of the class, if any. Section 7.1 attempts to answer the second question, and section 7.2. the third.

Research question 2:

Does the formation of mixed nationality relationships in the ESOL classroom affect the classroom culture?

7.1 The means of addressing the question of whether the formation of mixed nationality relationships in the ESOL classroom affect the classroom culture

The link between nationality, identity and culture has been discussed above in Chapter 2.2. In order to explore the link between the culture of the class in the present study and the mixed nationality relationships within it, I have first considered the perceptions of the individual learners in relation to their own identity, and whether for them it has been true that learning a foreign language involves an alteration of self-image. I have examined the data for evidence of learners appropriating Mathews' 'cultural supermarket' model. I have then tried to identify whether the data collected discloses factors that accord with Thompson's definition of culture (see section 2.4.2 above). I have considered whether the data reveals anything of what the culture of this classroom indicates about its 'meaning', and whether there is any insight into the possibility of the learners in this class managing to view the world from a different cultural position from their own. I have looked for signs of learner anomie. Finally in this section I have explored whether the data supports Kramsch's theory that the dialogue between learners has the potential to shape a new culture (see section 2.5.3 above).

The data collected in relation to the second question, set out more fully in section 5.4.2 of Chapter 5 above, includes information about the classroom culture from the teacher's log and the observers' notes (Appendices L and N), as well as from the learner interviews and the interview with the observer (Appendices V, W, X and O).

7.1.1 How do the individuals in the class perceive that their nationality is related to their identity?

Data about learner nationality was initially obtained from enrolment records, but the learners were also asked to describe themselves. They gave a description of their own nationality on the Initial Information Forms that they completed at the beginning of the class (for a summary of the information contained in those forms, see Appendix P). In the first set of interviews, data was collected about the learners' perceptions of the different nationalities that were present in the classroom, in an exploration of how significant the learners considered nationality as a means of defining each other's identity. It was also interesting to see which nationalities had made an impact on individuals at that early stage in the term. For example, one might presuppose that a European learner would be Eurocentric, being more aware of the fine distinctions of nationality among European rather than, say, Asian learners.

Analysis of the first interview, which was conducted with 16 respondents, 14 of whom formed part of the core group, and which was carried out in the third, fourth and fifth weeks of the term, reveals the learners' perceptions about the multinational nature of the class. Learners were asked how many different nationalities they thought there were in the class. In the second week, one of the learning activities had focussed on nationality words, with particular reference to class members. Some learners had several possible national descriptors, for example [Jan] who was ethnically Chinese, from Hong Kong, gave his nationality as Dutch because he had lived in a Dutch colony in the West Indies.

There were 18 possible nationality descriptors for the class at the time of the first interview, and the number of learners of each nationality is shown in Table 7.1 below.

When asked how many different nationalities there were in the class, two learners gave general responses "many" and "a lot". The other 14 responses ranged from "six or seven" to 15. When asked to name the different nationalities present, the

number named by each learner ranged from 3 to 13. Eight learners were completely accurate.

Nationality (and any other possible nationality descriptor)	Number of learners forming part of that national group
Bangladeshi	5
British (Kenyan Asian)	1
British (Thai)	1
Chinese	1
Chinese (Hong Kong)	2
Czech	2
Dutch (Chinese, Hong Kong)	1
French	5
Hungarian	1
Iranian	3
Italian	3
Italian (Venezuelan)	2
Korean	6
Slovakian	2
Spanish	2
Swiss	1
Turkish Kurdish	2
Venezuelan	1
Total number of nationalities	18
Total number of learners	41

Table 7.1: Nationalities of learners attending the class during weeks 1-5 inclusive

One learner named two nationalities that were not present in the class, Australian and Austrian. Seven other learners named one nationality which was not present in the class; these were Pakistani (two learners), Swedish (two learners) and Japanese (three learners). Interestingly, [Song Bo], who was Chinese, said there were about 10 nationalities present in the class, but could name only five, one of which was English and the other four of which were South East Asian. [Magalet], who was French, said there were 'a lot' of different nationalities, could name only four, none of which were Asian.

[Susan], the teacher who took over the group, when asked to list the nationalities of the ESOL classes she taught, focussed initially on European nationalities, although only 'Czech' for Eastern European nationalities. She referred to 'Iranians' and 'Middle Eastern' students. She did not mention Thai. Of the 18 possible nationality descriptors for the Wednesday class she named ten. [Susan: 7-10].

The observer named Eastern European and Asian nationalities initially, and then added French, German (which was incorrect) and Venezuelan after some thought.

The perception of the group in the minds of the learners appeared to be that it was a mixed nationality class, but the extent of the range of nationalities was not known. It is possible that the fact that the learners were not fully aware of the range of nationalities meant that this was not particularly significant to them. The interview data showed that the learners found it easier to be accurate about the nationalities of others who came from the same area of the world as them.

As regards individual learners' perceptions of their own identity, most defined their nationality without a problem. At least two [Umaporn] and [Mariam] had changed nationality by becoming British, and [Mariam] was diffident about this:

[Mariam] is British but tends to say she's Kenyan because that is her original nationality; she doesn't seem sure she can call herself British [TL2].

[Jan] was comfortable saying he was Dutch, but was also prepared to explain why it was that he had Dutch nationality when he looked Chinese and spoke Cantonese as his first language. [Jan] seemed the learner with the most international perception of himself; he changed nationality to British during the course of the academic year, and his Initial Information Form reports that he spoke Mandarin, English, Spanish and Papiamentu as well as Cantonese, and that he had lived in Hong Kong, the Netherlands and the Antilles before moving to Britain.

[Luigi] and [Andreas] labelled themselves Italian. They were son and father, and stated verbally that they had come to Britain from Venezuela. However, although [Andreas] stated on his Initial Information Form that as well as Britain he had lived in Italy and Venezuela, [Luigi's] Initial Information Form said he had only lived in Brazil.

All the Turkish Kurds stated their nationality to be Turkish.

In the case of learners who had not changed nationality, they seemed to perceive that their nationality was a secure part of their identity. This seemed to be less the case for [Mariam].

7.1.2 Does learning a foreign language involve an alteration of self-image?

Although this was not an area that the learners were questioned about specifically, there are a few indications from the interview data of this kind of alteration. [Umaporn] talks of having to “pack our language in a bag” [3:3:74], implying the putting away of part of one’s own identity in the English class. [Anne] comments on the feelings she has living in Britain,

It’s quite difficult in England anyway I used to live abroad and it’s the first time I have a lot of problem to get some relationship I feel quite often frustrated about it but (.) after work (.) I am working I work with English people after that it’s finished just nothing more it’s very difficult there and I think for a lot of foreign people we became like English people more cold and (?) I don’t know [2:12:20-25].

From this one may discern a feeling of not being allowed to be oneself in an alien culture.

A further clue that the learners did not divorce the language they were learning from the culture they were living in was given by [Jan], who said,

the first step I think that I must know English culture understand how to speak with the people if I don’t know how to deal with this I can’t communicate with the people in here [2:8:45-47].

One other possible contribution towards an alteration of self image was the degree of difficulty that the learners experienced in communicating in English, of which there were indications in the interview data, for example:

very big problem my English (.) I have big complex [2:7:35]

and

I don’t know in English [2:15:47].

7.1.3 Is there any indication that the learners perceive that they have a choice of identities from Mathews’ ‘cultural supermarket’?

As discussed in section 2.4 above, Mathews has described the idea of individuals being at liberty to select from a range of identities from the ‘cultural supermarket’, rather than having their culture determined for them by the culture inherent in the group of people to whom they belong [MATHEWS 2000]. Here the learners were living in British culture with various degrees of integration. Some very definitely saw

themselves as foreigners, for example “when I talk to English people I’m just sometimes I’m nervous or scared” [2:11:21-2]; and “I lived in the former Soviet Union very closed country and I’ve never er had any possibility to communicate with any foreigners and now when I I nearly forty I’ve got er chance er to get some new knowledge for me it was very stressful for me [3:6:129-133]. In contrast, there were some indications of a willingness to embrace aspects of British or other cultures, for example, “[Jan] sometimes we see one another in car boot sale” [1:8:19]; “I like this country and my family my wife she like to live here in England” [1:10:28], and “I would like to stay another year because my my idea was to open a Caribbean restaurant here” [3:1:105-6]. One learner wanted to export the teaching style from the class back to the Czech Republic [2:13:42-44]. Two learners, [Jerome], who had already lived in France and Canada, and [Andreas], who had lived in Italy and Venezuela, mentioned a wish to move to other English speaking countries, Canada and New Zealand respectively, indicating that those who had lived in more than one continent before coming to Britain had a more global approach to culture. For example, [Jan], who had lived in Hong Kong, the Netherlands and the Caribbean, was integrating into British society through Spanish classes and car boot sales, and formed a close relationship with [Andreas]. Thus the ‘cultural supermarket’ perspective was present in the class, but was more apparent in those learners who already had a wider experience of different cultures.

7.1.4 What is there in the data that can be measured against Thompson’s definition of culture?

In section 2.4 above a variety of different approaches to defining culture were appraised, and one definition was selected as being most pertinent to addressing culture in the language classroom. Thus the definition adopted in the present study is, “the pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms, including actions, utterances and meaningful objects of various kinds, by virtue of which individuals communicate with one another and share their experiences, conceptions and beliefs” [THOMPSON 1990]. Therefore in order to identify the culture of the class, we must identify the means by which the learners communicate with each other.

Firstly I have considered the way that the learners communicated with each other through their actions. One choice they made through their actions was where to sit, and the observer’s seating plans showed whether they sat together or alone. The conclusions to be drawn from the plans are that the learners were well integrated, sitting close together, and in mixed nationality combinations.

Another form of action relates to the learners' interaction with each other. The observer, in interview, used language depicting movement, dynamism and energy when describing how the learners behaved. For example at the beginning of the class, "I saw them enthusiastically greeting each other" [Obs.Int:17], and, "you get obviously people who came together and so they would be distinctly together to begin with but then they'd get to interact with other people" [Obs.Int:28-30]. The observer also refers to learners bringing new people to the class [Obs.Int:32-39].

This observation was partly borne out by [Ham-Ei]'s comments in interview 1:

H: Yes yes I do know [Soon-Keum] um since they came to England I met them I met them at the church here (.) so she told me of this class so I came [1:8:13-14].

The observer describes the learners' behaviour whilst they were working together, when they would talk off the subject and making social arrangements, for example:

and when they were put in pairs to work together, them talking about the task in hand, but also talking about other things, and um sometimes you'd actually see them when they were supposed to be doing activities actually making social arrangements as well (.) um in the class [Obs.Int:17-21];

and communicating with learners from other groups:

there was definitely inter group working, yes, I mean so you would get um, not all the time, but you would get people kind of talking across groups (.) um and maybe part of this was a clarification thing [Obs.Int:118-121].

Also, the observer commented on the learners' enthusiasm for the work as well as friendly interaction:

they were also enthusiastic about working in pairs, working in groups, um and going off to work in groups together to do a particular task; it might be a written task or something, but but the the emphasis was on cooperation [Obs.Int:282-4].

The observer watched what happened during the breaks:

during that coffee break and (I) observed them during that time and and that was interesting in that they they definitely had friends who they were keen to talk to

during the coffee break, and the making social arrangements would go on then and the talking to each other, but it wasn't just people from the same nationality talking to each other, it was people from different nationalities, but it was obvious sometimes that they relied on this class to actually pick up relationships with people [Obs.Int:190-6];

and at the end of the class:

I can remember being aware of who who they left the class with at the end and often they would all get together and go off in mixed nationality groups and you could hear them talking about where they were going to go together, and and and the kind of things they were going to do, and then they were obviously developing a relationship outside the class. [Obs.Int:196-201].

Thus the actions that marked the culture of this group were primarily enthusiastic and communicative.

The observer's comments also reflect the utterances in the group, for example, "they looked to ah (.) the teacher for clarification or they looked to each other and just kept asking each other and worked it out between them" [Obs.Int:112-3]; and "they were constantly in communication with each other" [Obs.Int:263]. The observer also discusses how [LI] and [Mariam] involved the other learners in personal problem-solving:

One Chinese woman who obviously had psychological problems used to bring her was bringing her employment problems along to the class to talk to people about um you know and that's a sign that that that this class was serving a real social function as far as she was concerned, um and and the Korean woman who I've already mentioned was getting support from the class to do with the job that she got (.) um at Marks and Spencer (.) um

I: The Kenyan woman

A: Yeah yeah the Kenyan woman um and wanted to talk to people about that ... other people would bring in their kind of cultural things or things they were doing outside the class I mean one one South American Venezuelan was a footballer I think and so he was talking I could hear him talking about that and um difficulties that people had yeah um the other Venezuelan man had er problems getting a job he was qualified as a doctor but but he was aware that his language skills were not good enough for him to practise as a doctor in this country [Obs.Int.:337-355].

These examples of utterances indicate that the culture of the group was sufficiently secure and trustworthy for learners to be comfortable discussing problems that were not related to learning, and to look to each other for help and support.

Tangible symbols of the common culture were rare, although learners all brought the same equipment to class; most drank coffee or smoked during the break, and at the last class of term the learners shared food: “[Andreas] had made a pizza and at the end of the class several of the learners took group photos, which everyone joined in with” [TL14].

7.1.5 Coleman states that “the construction of the *meaning* of the English language classroom must be culturally embedded” [COLEMAN 1996]. What does the culture of this classroom indicate about its ‘meaning’?

A culturally embedded approach to meaning promotes the view that every society creates its own meaning for its own institutions, including education; the outworking of such an approach for the present study is that the ESOL classroom in one cultural context may legitimately have different referents, requirements and roles from an ESOL classroom in another context. Coleman suggests that a practical approach to addressing classroom research with such a perspective may include both examining traditions with care and seeking to understand them, and being alert to the possibility that learners are using learning resources outside the classroom [COLEMAN 1996].

There is some data to indicate that the learners in this class were using both other English classes and other people to further their English learning. For example, [Susan] mentioned one learner who was attending all the free classes she could, and went on to say that others did the same [Susan:324-336]. The significance for the present study is that the classroom was viewed by at least some group members as having functions other than as a learning environment; social aspects of the classroom culture are discussed in more detail in section 7.2. The different functions of the class, although having the potential to give rise to conflict within the group about the meaning, role and requirements of the class, did not do so.

7.1.6 Is it possible for the adults in this group to construct and see the world through culturally different eyes, that is, different from their own culture? Does the data give any insight into this?

The presence of mixed nationality friendships in the class indicates that there is sufficient communication between the learners for there to be some understanding

of culturally different viewpoints. One would expect such an experience to develop over time as the learners came to know each other better. Therefore it was not surprising that the first interview produced little evidence of the learners seeing the world from a culturally different position. On the contrary, there were indications of some learners deriving security from their own national cultures. For example [Minjo] and [Eva] stated that they enjoyed the company of friends of their own nationality [1:6:18 and 1:15:15], and [Magalet] said that she preferred French music and for this reason was not impressed by English night clubs [1:13:23-24].

In the second interview there were more indications that the learners could gain from being in a mixed nationality group; three learners said specifically that they liked to learn more about the others, their lives, their experiences and the countries they came from. The fact that other learners were from different backgrounds and had had different experiences was given as a reason why group learning was productive, for example:

we get different idea from different students ... exchange experience or exchange knowledge [2:1:32,34];

you can discuss things with other people you improve your English and you um get to know more about the other students and their life [2:2:39-41],

and

I'm working with people from other countries ... it's good for me [2:13:33,34].

One learner contrasted the ease of friendship in the group with the difficulties of making friends within the external English culture ("English people more cold" [2:12:20-25]), and another referred to the kindness of the other group members [2:13:40]. [Susan] too explored the idea that groups were beneficial because they exposed the learners to the differences among them, echoing the comments made by the learners about this.

The third interview indicated that all seven learners in the sample felt at ease in a mixed nationality environment. [Olga] explained how she had found communicating with foreigners stressful at first, and how this had become easier for her as she had developed relationships [3:6:126-134,139-141]. She linked her difficulties to her having come from the USSR, a formerly closed country.

Anomie is an imbalance between cultural goals and institutional means, as discussed in section 2.4. Srole's theory of anomia has to do with the dysfunctional relation of individuals to their social worlds, alienated from political, cultural and economic systems, and institutionalised social norms and values [SROLE 1956]. Orru's theory of anomie centres on "the functional integration of individuals with their social worlds" [ORRU 1987 p.141]. A third approach is 'value-anomie', looking at possible configurations within a certain cultural or individual value-orientation. It was concluded above that one might expect evidence of anomie in the context of the present study, partly because at least some of the learners were experiencing a mismatch between their ability to communicate and the demands of the social worlds in which they were living. I have therefore looked for examples from the data that would tend to suggest the likelihood of anomie, and I have found the following indications that it might have been present in this class.

(a) [Li] The teacher's log records, "I suspect [Li] is less likely to form relationships with the others than most. She approached me and asked if I would visit her at home. I explained how busy I was and was non-committal. I think something may be bothering her." [TL2]. This view of [Li] is supported by the observer's comments in interview that, "one Chinese woman who obviously had psychological problems used to bring her ... employment problems along to the class to talk to people about" [Obs.Int.337-9]. This form appears to be anomie in relation to wider society rather than to the class specifically.

(b) [Jerome] gave indications in his own words that he was suffering from a mismatch between his own personal culture and the culture of the class, throughout the term. In his first interview he says, "we lost the time when we are too much people is is better when you take the note" [1:16:39-40]. In his second interview he states, "I don't like working with er some people I prefer working with myself ... maybe in England you have a different kind of learn learning ... In French is different ... sometimes um there are too much noise is not very good for concentration" [2:17:20, 51-2, 65]. There is conflicting data which indicates [Jerome]'s verbal dissatisfaction may be superficial. The teacher's log records: "[Jerome] was happy, laughing and sociable. [Carolina] and [Olga] were fighting over who should work with him." [TL11]. Two weeks later, however, "[Jerome] moved seat when [Nobuko] arrived and sat next to him; he went to sit on his own." [TL13].

(c) [Filis] appeared content and integrated during the term studied, but in her third interview there were some intimations that she was frustrated by the class:

I want a different er lesson

T: Yeah

F: And I want to learning different words because I always learn same words same lessons and I'm not speaking everything just sometimes I understand people but I'm not speaking

T: So did you do things in groups where a few students talked to each other in English

F: Yes we are speaking to each other but just we are understand each other

T: Yes

F: When we speak to English people we are just listening we are not understanding [3:5:17-24].

This frustration could mark an increased linguistic awareness and show that the learner is progressing, but it also appears to denote a mismatch between aim and activity which is a sign that the class is not succeeding, for this learner at least. Sadly it is likely to be the learner who experiences the class failure, rather than the teacher.

7.1.7 Kramsch believes that dialogue between learners has the potential to shape a new culture. Does the data support this?

Section 2.5.3 presented Kramsch's model of culture creation through dialogue. That is, "in the foreign language class, culture is created and enacted through the dialogue between students and between teacher and students. Through this dialogue, participants not only replicate a given context of culture, but, because it takes place in a foreign language, it also has the potential of shaping a new culture" [KRAMSCH 1993 p47].

Firstly, the observer's data indicates that the culture of the class is in part created through dialogue, through the learners communicating about language learning, social arrangements and problems. The example of social dialogue below is taken from the observer's description of the beginning of the class:

Yeah yeah I I think hm particularly at the beginning of the class with the first exercise this was often evident in that they would be terribly keen to see people again who they might not have seen for a few days and sometimes I would observe them getting their diaries out and making social arrangements um especially during the first activity although this was something that went on throughout the class th- this kind of social involvement [Obs.Int.135-40].

The teacher's log echoes the observer's comments:

“[Ham-Ei], [Li] and [Hookyoung] were discussing recipes” [TL3].

The observer gave as an example of learners supporting each other,

the .. woman who I've already mentioned was getting support from the class to do with the job that she got [Obs.Int.315-7].

This was supported by the teacher's log:

[Mariam] started her new job today (she left half way through the class). She was nervous, but several of the others obviously knew about it and were wishing her well. [TL6].

Other examples of similar dialogue can be seen at [Obs.Int.15-19, 89-90, 124-9, 175-190]).

Secondly, the data reveals experiences in the class that the learners found to be 'new' or unfamiliar. Such novelty and unfamiliarity informed their perceptions of the class, so that a new culture was being shaped through the dialogue created when the learners exposed themselves to each other's thoughts, feelings and ideas. For example,

[Vahideh] said she had a headache. She also wanted to tell the class about a television programme she had watched and which had horrified her because it had shown executions of women. [TL7],

and

you can meet different country nationality and you can ask everything about their country ... how is their hard life [1:11:55-7],

and

[Minjo] had brought Korean national costume to show everyone [TL13].

It is arguable that a new culture of this kind, built on the learner's dialogue, will be formed in any classroom where the learners express themselves to each other.

7.1.8 Are there any indications of cultural imperialism on the part of the authority figures in the study?

By 'authority figures' I refer to those individuals who appeared to the learners to hold the balance of power in the class; that is, the teacher, and to an extent, the observer. I have also examined the data obtained from [Susan] in this regard.

Although it is difficult to discern elements of 'imperialism' as such from the teacher's log, there are notes which could indicate cultural assumptions or misunderstandings, for example, [Elizabetta] is labelled "attention seeking"; [L] wanted the teacher to visit her at home, and this was perceived as a problem. In week 5 I speculated whether Iranian learners had been put off attending by the war with Afghanistan, but this subsequently appeared not to be the case. The observer referred to one learner as "the Thai woman who was married to a British person"¹ when the learner in question had British nationality. These examples do not indicate overt racial prejudice disadvantageous to the learners, but I would argue that they are signs of subconscious cultural assumptions which would inevitably affect the way relationships were conducted in the classroom, and thus affect its culture.

Although [Susan] became involved with the class after the main study was concluded, some of her comments are informative of the kind of general assumptions that can be made about learners on the basis of their racial, religious or ethnic background. For example, she said that where learners showed discrimination based on religious principles she felt she had no right to interfere, but colour prejudice was unacceptable [Susan:64-7]. She also said that she assumed that EFL learners, unlike ESOL learners "came from an educated background" [Susan:266-7], and referred to herself as "trying to get (the ESOL learners) into a way of taking some responsibility" [Susan:306-7].

From these relatively small indications I believe it would be inaccurate to rule out any possibility of cultural imperialism in the setting of the present study.

7.1.9 Interim conclusions based on research question 2

In summary, the conclusions to be drawn from the data in response to research question 2 are as follows.

(a) The perceptions of the individual learners in relation to their own identity

The learners defined themselves according to their political nationality, regardless of where they had lived or their ethnic background, apart from one learner who had taken British nationality but seemed unsure about whether the term 'British' described herself accurately. For this learner, [Mariam], changing nationality did not seem to cause her to redefine herself. As regards the nationalities of others, most learners were aware of the range of nationalities represented, although some made assumptions about other learners that were incorrect. This could be an indication that nationality was not a very significant factor for the learners, or it could demonstrate a lack of close relationships with other learners in the first few weeks of the term. It was clear that some learners were more aware of the learners who came from countries near to their own country, as shown by [Magalet] and [Song Bo] in the first interview.

(b) Does learning a foreign language involves an alteration of the learner's self-image?

From the data collected it appears that learning a foreign language may cause learners to experience communication problems, triggering negative feelings and frustration. This in turn affects the way the learners feel about themselves and the way they relate to others. However, it is also clear from the data that the learners used English enthusiastically in order to communicate; self-image was not damaged to the extent that communication was impaired. The sociable and enthusiastic behaviour of the learners in class tends to the conclusion that they enjoyed the image of themselves as English speakers.

(c) Is there evidence of learners appropriating Mathews' 'cultural supermarket' model?

The class contained some learners who saw themselves very much as foreigners in Britain and others who were more relaxed about choosing from different cultures. Individual learners who had lived in more than one continent before coming to Britain adopted the cultural supermarket approach, for example, [Jan], [Andreas] and [Jerome].

(d) Factors that accord with Thompson's definition of culture

The class appeared to have a culture of its own, in accordance with the definition of culture adopted.

(e) What does the culture of this classroom indicate about its 'meaning'?

The culture of this class indicates that it had social functions for the participants as well, or instead of, learning functions.

(f) Do the learners in this class manage to view the world from a different cultural position from their own?

An interesting progression emerged from the learner interview data. The first interview, at the beginning of term, showed that they found security in their own cultures; the second interview indicated that they were experiencing positive benefits from being in a mixed nationality group, and that there was a feeling of security in the group in contrast to the anxiety felt within the wider British culture. The third interview produced data to show that where relationships were strong there was an ease of communication which aided the learners in seeing each other's viewpoint.

(g) The presence of learner anomie

Although the whole class appeared well-integrated as a group, there was some evidence of anomie among individuals, although it was difficult to distinguish whether it originated wholly or in part from the class, or from the learner's experience of the wider community.

(h) Does the data support Kramsch's theory that the dialogue between learners has the potential to shape a new culture?

There are clear indications from the data that the dialogue used by the learners in the present study communicated issues of importance to them and produced reactions by other learners, such as support or help where it was requested.

(i) Cultural imperialism

The comments of all three authority figures involved with the class in the present study revealed some degree of cultural assumption making, although this was much less evident on the part of the observer than the two teachers. It seems inevitable that cultural assumptions would inform teacher-learner relationships, and thus affect the classroom culture.

Having discussed the data relevant to research question 2 above, I now address research question 3.

Research question 3:

Does working in mixed nationality groups appear to further the social success of the class?

7.2 Does working in mixed nationality groups appear to further the social success of the class?

To address the third research question I have considered the relationships that were formed and the degree of intimacy between learners; the willingness of the learners to form mixed nationality groups; whether the groups that were formed appeared to reflect the friendships that existed among the learners; the apparent social importance of the class for the learners, and what other manifestations there were of social success.

The data collected, set out more fully in Chapter 5 above, includes the learners' stated perceptions of their friendships, given in their Initial Information Forms, sociograms and interview data (Appendices P, S, T, V, W and X). Data about the classroom dynamics comes from the observer's notes, the teacher's log and the interview with the observer (Appendices N, L and O).

7.2.1 The relationships between learners

Closeness in relationships is a matter of degree; it was interesting to note how much the learners appeared to like each other, and whether they chose to spend time with each other outside the class. The first interview included a question about which group members the learners knew before the class started, and their relationships with other learners outside class. Of the 16 learners interviewed, four were not able to name any class members that they had known before the class started, and one other was only able to name his father. Three could name one other learner, and two each named three, four, five and seven. Six said that they did not see any of the others outside class, although only one of these said they had not known anyone when the class began. It appears from this self reporting that, at the time of the initial interviews, only one of the sample [Song Bo] represented herself as socially isolated within the group. The observer's notes show that she was

part of a group each time there were group activities, although she did not work with the same person twice, except for [Abdallah] in weeks 2 and 5.

7.2.2 How willing were the learners to form mixed nationality groups within the classroom?

If we count [Jan], who described himself variously as Dutch, Chinese and British, as Chinese, and we count [Mariam] and [Umaporn], who had both taken British nationality, as Kenyan and Thai respectively, there were six learners who were the only one of their nationality represented in the class. These were [Anita]: Hungarian, [Karin]: Swiss, [Umaporn]: Thai, [Mariam]: Kenyan, [Nobuko]: Japanese and [Olga]: Russian. These learners would have to work with learners of other nationalities if they got onto groups at all. Furthermore, as not all the learners were present each week, others could find themselves the only one of their nationality from time to time. For example, [Filis] was the only Turkish Kurdish learner present in weeks 2, 3, 4, 8, 11 and 13; [Jan] was the only Chinese learner present in weeks 1, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

From the observers' records, we have details of the make up of 146 learner groups and pairs occurring over the 14 week period. 141 of these were composed of at least two different nationalities. Five groups, therefore, comprised learners of the same nationality; these were all pairs and occurred in weeks 7, 12 and 14. Three of these five pairs were of South Korean learners; one was of Turkish Kurdish learners, and one was of Venezuelan Italians.

21 of the groups from the remaining 141 had at least two learners of the same nationality. These occurred throughout the term, in weeks 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12 and 13. In 11 cases the nationality was South Korean; in one group of five in week 2 there were three South Koreans. On two occasions the common nationality was Chinese. Once it was Turkish Kurdish, once Spanish, once French, once Iranian, and on four occasions either Italian Venezuelan or Italian and Italian Venezuelan.

Going beyond the narrow confines of nationality we could group the learners in broader bands: Eastern European, Western European and South American, East Asian, South Asian, and from the Gulf States. This would rearrange the nationality divisions as shown in Table 7.2 below:

Broad Group	Nationalities included
EASTERN EUROPEAN	Czech Hungarian Russian Slovakian
GULF STATES	Iranian Turkish Kurdish
SOUTH ASIAN	Bangladeshi Kenyan (in this case because [Mariam] was originally a Kenyan Asian and was married to a Ugandan Asian)
EAST ASIAN	Chinese (including [Jan]) Japanese South Korean Thai
WESTERN EUROPEAN AND SOUTH AMERICAN	French Italian Italian Venezuelan Venezuelan Spanish Swiss

Table 7.2: Division of the learners' nationalities into broad bands

Apart from the five same nationality groups, 39 groups consisted entirely of learners from only one of the above bands.

The observer's records showed that the learners did form mixed nationality groups when asked to do so by the teacher. In the interview, the observer was asked whether the learners sometimes preferred to stay with people of their own nationality. He observed that the teacher sometimes had to give the instruction more than once, but perceived that this was sometimes because the learners had not understood the instruction the first time.

A: I think some of them tried to stay with someone from their own nationality and sometimes it had to be it had to be said again that it should be somebody from a different nationality I would put that down to one of two things one was linguistic problems of actually understanding that it was supposed to be somebody of a different nationality I think some of them realised it had to be a pair but it took them a little while to realise that it had to actually be somebody who wasn't Korean or um

(.) and then I I think they were all quite happy to do it I I didn't observe anyone really (.) um being totally um um intransigent" [Obs.Int.79-86]

The observer's conclusion was that the mixture of nationalities did not cause a problem within the group.

I didn't observe any people from any nationalities having any problems with anyone from a different nationality I thought it was all quite harmonious and you know you could say that that people from different nationalities mixed with each other quite happily [Obs.Int.73-76].

In interview 2 the learners were asked if they liked working with everyone in the class. This provided an opportunity for them to raise objections to working with learners of other nationalities. In fact, fourteen of the 18 learners interviewed said they liked working with everybody in the class; some were emphatic about this. Of the others, [Karin] did not like working with shy people, [Luigi] only wanted to work with people who were better at English than him, [Jerome] did not like groups at all and [Olga] did not like [Jerome], which was interesting in itself, as she had previously competed for his attention (see 7.1.6 (b)). Thus, in naming their dislikes, the learners did not display any overt racism.

However, although, like the observer, I was not aware of any discomfort between learners of different nationalities, [Susan] in interview was able to give examples of racist incidents, for example,

No I've only once had to tell a lady I'm not going to work with him (.) and I said (.) afterwards I said why and she said well you know he's from India and I said what's the problem with that then well you know and I said well I didn't know but I didn't pursue it any further I knew exactly what she meant [Susan.71-4].

Despite an apparent absence of communicated racism in the class, it was clear that learners were aware of racism in society,

[Filis] told me that her 13 year old daughter suffers racism at school [TL4].

The data collected is insufficient to establish whether the relationships within the class helped individual learners to combat the racism they experienced outside the class; this would be an interesting and useful area to explore further.

7.2.3 Do the mixed nationality groups seem linked to the friendships that have developed among the members of the class?

Presumptions about learner friendships in a mixed nationality class include the supposition that those with the same first language may make friends with each other, partly because of the ease of communication, and partly because of a shared culture. Another assumption, from the literature on groups [DÖRNYEI & MALDEREZ 1999] is that classroom interaction promotes learner relationships, allowing the learners more opportunities to get to know and like one another than in a more teacher centred learning style. This was picked up by [Andreas] and [Luigi] when they said that conversation between learners had become confined to the breaks.

Below I will attempt to answer the question of the link between the work groups and the learners' friendships by examining the correlation of the data about these two entities. First I will set out a summary of the data that was collected, first about working patterns, and then about learner friendships.

Working patterns

Data was derived from the observer's notes and room plans (Appendix D).

Learner friendships

Data was derived from all three interviews, the Initial Information Forms and the sociograms.

Analysis of the first interview, which was conducted with 16 respondents, 14 of whom formed part of the core group, and which was carried out in the third, fourth and fifth weeks of the term, reveals that in coming to the class, most were already familiar with at least one other person in the class. In the first interview the respondents were invited to talk about others in the class who had already been known to them at the beginning of term. 12 of the 16 could identify other learners that had already been known to them (this does not include [Luigi] who already knew [Andreas] his father, but no one else). 5 of the respondents were Korean; three of these said they had known other Korean learners at the beginning of term, but not learners from other nationalities. One Slovak learner knew other Slovaks; one Italian learner knew other Italians. All the other learners who said they knew others indicated a mixture of nationalities.

Questions about socialising with other learners helps disclose whether such relationships are being made, and to an extent, what significance they have to the learners in relation

to their perceptions about the class. In addition, the teacher's log and observer's notes give some input into what friendships seem to be forming.

Sociogram 1 (Appendix S) shows the patterns of friendships claimed by the learners in the second week of the term. At this point 28 learners had attended the class at least once; 24 were present at that class although not all named friends as part of the sociogram exercise. The learners were asked to write down the names of their friend in the class. Seventeen did so. 8 of the potential pool of 28 learners were not named by anyone as a friend. 6 of these were present at the class, but 5 did not name anybody either, and as this exercise took place at the end of the class it is likely that they left without participating, either deliberately or accidentally. However, one learner [Filis] did take part, enthusiastically naming 5 friends, but being named by no one in return. The number of different friendships recorded in this exercise was 41. 15 of these were reciprocal, and 26 one-way.

Who made friends with who was elicited by self-reporting for sociograms, and the observer's comments in interview, as well as the second interviews with the learners.

Questions in the second interview addressed whether the learners considered that they had friends in the class, how easy they felt it was to make friends in the class and whether anything could be done to make it easier. 17 of the 18 respondents said they had friends; one did not. Two of the Korean students indicated that their friends were mainly other Koreans; an au pair said her friends were other au pairs.

The responses to whether it was easy to make friends were much more mixed. Nine said that it was easy to make friends; seven said it was not; one said it was mixed and one did not know.

Reasons given as to why it was easy to make friends include the following:

Reasons relating to the class:

Yes it really is easy for me because er we are from different countries and we understand easy than we talk [2:3:20,21].

Reasons relating to the personality of the learner:

it's quite easy it depends on yourself if you are a very open person [2:2:31,32].

Reasons relating to language:

I can't speak English my friends for a long time [2:5:13];

Here it quite easy because all the people like me is er foreigner so and we want to come to learn English in this in this class ... we want to talk with the other student like you want to know each other so it's easy to make friend [2:8:27-30];

It's easier for me because we are understanding each other ... because when I speak with English people I never understand" [2:14:22,24].

Reasons given as to why it was difficult to make friends include the following:

I don't have much time [2:1:20];

It's quite difficult in England anyway I used to live abroad and it's the first time I have a lot of problem to get some relationship I feel quite often frustrated about it [2:12:20-22];

I don't like working with er some people I prefer working with myself [2:17:21,22];

it's very difficult for me understand Korean people [2:18:23].

Sociograms 1 and 2 (Appendices S and T) depict the data given by the learners when they were asked directly who their friends were within the class. This question was asked in week 2, when the class had not had much time to get to know each other, and in week 13, the week before the end of term.

In weeks 1 and 2 a total of 26 individuals had attended the class; all were present when the sociogram data was requested. 19 provided the names of at least one friend and one of those who did not provide data [Andrea] was named by other learners. (In fact [Andrea] was comparatively popular, being named by 6 others.) One learner, [Filis], who named 5 friends, was not named by anyone else.

Table 7.3 below shows the distribution of mutual and one-way namings, and the incidence of same nationality and mixed nationality friendships in Sociogram 1.

	Same nationality	Different nationality
Mutual	9	9
Unilateral	2	23

Table 7.3: the distribution of mutual and one-way namings, and the incidence of same nationality and mixed nationality friendships in Sociogram 1.

The second sociogram could have included the names of the 55 learners who attended the class, as all had attended by the date that the data was collected. However, although all 17 of the learners present named at least 2 friends, only 23 were named in total. All 19 members of the core group were named, together with [Siu Wa], [Asha], [Anne] and [Young-Joon]. Those named who were not in attendance were [Magalet], [Ham-Ei], [Young-Joon] and [Hunmin].

Table 7.4 below shows the distribution of mutual and one-way namings, and the incidence of same nationality and mixed nationality friendships in Sociogram 2.

	Same nationality	Different nationality
Mutual	4	25
Unilateral	0	13

Table 7.4: the distribution of mutual and one-way namings, and the incidence of same nationality and mixed nationality friendships in Sociogram 2.

If Tables 7.3 and 7.4 are compared with each other and with the attendance data contained in Chapter 5 above, it appears that mixed nationality friendships are the norm; but this may be more to do with the mixed nationality nature of the class from week to week, rather than indicating a definite preference.

The observer made a point of noting apparent friendships. As well as observing which learners worked together, he continued his observations during the coffee break, and also observed who the learners left with at the end after class:

Oh yes yes well yes I mean I didn't just observe them I didn't just observe them during the class the class was structured in a way that there was a coffee break half way through and I min- I mingled with them during that coffee break and observed them during that time and and that was interesting in that they they definitely had

friends who they were keen to talk to during the coffee break and the making social arrangements would go on then and the talking to each other but it wasn't just people from the same nationality talking to each other it was people from different nationalities but it was obvious sometimes that they relied on this class to actually pick up relationships with people (.) and also um I I I was I can remember being aware of who who they left the class with at the end and often they would all get together and go off in mixed nationality groups and you could hear them talking about where they were going to go together and and and the kind of things they were going to do and then they were obviously developing a relationship outside the class but I got the impression that the the relationships that they had outside the class um started or were rooted in relationships that they started within the class and that a lot of them had met each other there [Obs.Int.186-203].

An attempt to address the question, 'do the mixed nationality groups seem linked to the friendships that have developed among the members of the class?' involves comparing the data collected under the two heads. The friendship data shows the following patterns emerging:

(a) [Andreas] and [Jan]. [Andreas] was Italian, his first language was Italian, and he had previously lived in Venezuela. [Jan] was Dutch, his first language was Cantonese and he had previously lived in Hong Kong. A friendship between [Andreas] and [Jan] is revealed by [Andreas]'s interviews 1,2 and 3, and his second sociogram data. [Jan] named [Andreas] as a friend not only in all three interviews and both sets of sociogram data, but also on his Initial Information Form. It appears that there was a rapport between these two learners throughout the term, which continued after the class ended. The groups data shows them sitting next to each other in weeks 10 and 11, and repeated instances of them working together, as a pair in weeks 9 and 10 and in a larger group in weeks 2, 10, 12 and 13.

(b) [Karin] and [Magalet]. [Karin] was Swiss and [Magalet] was French. [Karin] named [Magalet] as a friend in her Initial Information Form, in the second interview, and in both sets of sociogram data. [Magalet] named [Karin] in her Initial Information Form, in both first and second interviews, and in the first set of sociogram data. (Neither took part in Interview 3, and [Magalet] did not give a second set of sociogram data.) The groups data showed that they sat together in weeks 10 and 11, and in week 12 the observer noted that [Karin] moved in order to work with [Magalet]. It is evident from the interview data that both [Karin] and [Magalet] were au pairs, and had originally formed a relationship because of their work rather than through the class.

(c) [Olga] and [Umaporn]. [Olga] was Russian, having lived in Moldova, and [Umaporn] was Thai. It appears that [Olga] and [Umaporn] formed their relationship through the class. The friendship data shows that [Umaporn] did not name [Olga] as a friend until interview 2, but she then included her in the second set of sociogram data and interview 3. [Olga] named [Umaporn] in interviews 2 and 3 and included her in the second set of sociogram data. [Olga]'s first attendance was in week 7, after the first interviews had been conducted and the first set of sociogram data collected. The groups data showed that they sat together in weeks 11, 12, 13 and 14. They worked in a pair in weeks 7, 12 and 13, and in a larger group in weeks 7, 8, 12 and 14.

(d) [Hookyoung] and [Nobuko]. [Hookyoung] was Korean and [Nobuko] was Japanese. The friendship data shows that [Hookyoung] named [Nobuko] in the second interview and the second set of sociogram data. [Nobuko], who joined the class in week 7, was not interviewed, but named [Hookyoung] in the second set of sociogram data. The groups data showed that [Hookyoung] and [Nobuko] worked together in a pair in weeks 9, 10 and 11, and in a larger group in weeks 7, 10, 12 and 13. The seating plan showed that [Hookyoung] sat next to [Nobuko] in weeks 11, 12, 13 and 14.

7.2.4 What does the social importance of the class appear to be to the learners?

In addressing the social importance of the class, it is worth bearing in mind a view that was quoted above in 2.3.1 above, that "despite the pre-eminence of intellectual aims in learning groups it is often the emotional needs and undercurrents which are most powerful yet most frequently neglected" [JACQUES 2000 p.xiii]. There clearly was a social side to the class. In Interview 1 the learners were asked: 'Do you see any of the other students outside the class?' Of the sample of 16, 7 said they did. Two of these, [Minjo] and [Ham-Ei] referred to seeing others of their own nationality (Korean). One, [Soon-Keum], did not specify the type of social activity. The other four referred to going to pubs, clubs, the library, shopping and meeting for lunch. Some other learners said yes to this question, but on closer questioning appeared to mean that they had come across other group members in an unplanned way. In Interview 3 the learners were asked: 'Have you made friends at [X] that you see outside class?' [Jan] and [Andreas] said that they saw each other; [Umaporn] expressed regret that she did not have enough time to pursue the social relationships that she had made. [Minjo] and [Filis] both referred to several friends

of different nationalities, and [Olga] had recently invited class members to her wedding.

Brookfield [1990] proposed social aims other than friendship for group discussion; these were to help develop a sense of group identity and to encourage democratic habits. The idea of a group identity has been discussed in section 6.1 above. As for democratic habits, the observer mentions the cooperative ethos of the class, and the way in which learners sought help from each other, even from those in other groups [Obs.Int.112-116].

7.2.5 What other manifestations were there of social success?

An important marker of social success is humour. The data provides some examples, such as when [Minjo] cut Andrew's hair, and when Andrew fell asleep in class [TL7].

7.2.6 Interim conclusions based on research question 3

A summary of the findings in relation to the third research question firstly addresses the willingness of the learners to form mixed nationality groups. The observation data shows that mixed nationality groups were formed as a matter of course, and the interview data indicates that the learners did not mind the nationality of the people they worked with, although some had problems with accents. No overt problems of racism were observed by either the teacher or the observer.

Secondly, did the mixed nationality groups seem linked to the friendships that had developed among the members of the class? It appeared that most members of the group knew somebody else there when they joined and by the time the first sociogram data was collected, the number of different friendships recorded was 41. At the time of the second interview 17 of the 18 respondents said they had friends. The friendship data shows patterns that were also present in the groups data.

Thirdly, the social importance of the class to the learners was mixed, but Brookfield's social aims for groups [BROOKFIELD 1990] appeared to be present.

Fourthly, other manifestations of social success included the existence of humour within the class.

Having addressed the culture of the classroom, the next chapter will examine the impact of mixed nationality groups on the learning that took place there.

Footnotes

1 The observer points out, quite reasonably, that, as he was not party to the information in the learners' initial information forms, he was identifying the learner by the only nationality 'tag' that he was aware of.

Chapter 8: The impact of mixed nationality groups on the learning in the classroom

Chapter 6 addressed the effect of learner relationships on class dynamics, and Chapter 7 discussed the influence of mixed nationality relationships on classroom culture, and evaluated the social success of the class. In this chapter the fourth and fifth research questions are addressed, reflecting on whether group work increases learning, and whether there are any adverse implications associated with learning English in a mixed nationality group.

The data collected in respect of questions 4 and 5 is set out more fully in section Chapter 5 above. It includes data about the learning styles and preferences of the learners, from the learner interviews (Appendices V, W and X), and the age questionnaire and self-assessment forms (Appendices U and Q). Data about the learning behaviour that took place in the class is gathered from the teacher's log, observer's notes and the interviews with the observer and the replacement teacher (Appendices L, N, O and M).

Research question 4:

Does mixed nationality group work have an impact on the learning that takes place in the classroom?

8.1 Does mixed nationality group work have an impact on the learning that takes place in the classroom?

8.1.1 Overview

In seeking to determine whether there is any relationship between the mixed nationality nature of the groups and the learning that take place takes place within them, I have chosen to address six related questions, which derive from work by Crandall [CRANDALL 1999], which has been discussed in section 2.6.3. The questions are as follows:-

- What do the learners in the present study need in order to function well in the group?
- What evidence is there that the learners are scaffolding each other's learning, providing increased support enabling the learners to move towards independence (Crandall point 7)? This question includes consideration of the accuracy-fluency debate in English teaching.

- Is there any evidence of opportunities for learners to develop cross cultural understanding or increased learner-centredness and learner direction in the classroom (Crandall's points 3 & 4)?
- Does the fact that this is a mixed nationality group contribute to the learners' process motivation?
- Is there any data to suggest that anxiety is present which is linked to the mixed nationality situation, and if it is, is it having any effect on the learning process in this class?
- Were there other factors about this group, apart from nationality, having an impact on the learning in the classroom?

Below I use the data collected to answer each of these questions in turn, and draw out conclusions from the findings.

8.1.2 What do the learners in the present study need in order to function well in the group?

In section 2.5.1 above we have seen that Le Page defined 'sociolinguistic competence' as that which the individual needs to know in order to operate as a member of a particular society (LE PAGE 1978 pp39-41). In order to assess the learning taking place in the group, and the factors influencing it, it is helpful to start from the position of identifying what the learners need to know in order to function within the class. Making this identification involves reflection on the class culture, discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

In every language class there may exist a tension between the culture of the learners and the culture of the target language. Such tension is influenced and formed by a variety of factors, such as lack of understanding and ignorance of other cultures, misconceptions, apathy and prejudice. In the mixed nationality ESOL class, the tension is not between two cultures, but many, because the learners' cultures differ from each other. Tension may be quite predictable between, for example, Kurds and Turks or Bosnians and Serbians. A more indirect form of tension may arise through a conflict of different cultures of learning. Just as every learner of English can be said to have an 'idiolect', so they can also be said to have an 'idioculture of learning' and this feature is not as immediately visible as their national or language background. I have tried to avoid making assumptions about the cultures of learning from which the learners come, and I have also tried to avoid presumptions as to which learning methods will be most acceptable to them. National stereotypes do not necessarily reflect the experiences of these individuals. To attempt to find out what the learners need in the classroom in order to function well in a group I have examined what they have said or implied about their cultures

of learning, and the views that they have expressed about their preferences. Interview questions that elicited responses in this area included "Do you prefer working with others or on your own?" in interview 1; "Is working in a group helpful or not?" and "Is there anything you would change about the class?" in interview 2, and questions as to the best way to learn English, the relative importance of teacher and learners, and whether they would change anything about the class, in interview 3. I have also included the perceptions of the replacement class teacher, [Susan].

One might expect learners from Western European and Latin American countries to be more used to and thus more comfortable with communicative teaching and learning practices than learners from South East Asian countries. Similarly, older learners might be expected to be familiar with more traditional methods of language learning than younger people. Given the range of ages and national backgrounds represented in the class, it seemed probable that a wide range of learning cultures would be represented.

In the first set of interviews, five of the sixteen learners interviewed had been educated in Western Europe and Latin America; four of them expressed a preference for group work, but the other, [Jerome] had a strong preference for working alone. In interview 2 [Jerome] commented on the difference between French and British teaching and learning methods, indicating that his preference stemmed from the culture of learning that he was used to.

In interview two 15 of the 18 learners interviewed found working in a group helpful, two did not and one said that working in a group with others who were better at English than them was helpful, but not otherwise. Reasons given that were related to learning included the idea that discussion helped improve English, that groups made learning easier, that the need to communicate forced the learners to use the language, that group work was motivating and that they could ask the others in the group for help. The other two learners who did not like group work stated distinct preferences for other learning styles; one preferred listening and the other preferred listening and making notes. In addition, not everyone agreed that group work facilitated communication, for example, "hard to speak in a group" [Int.2:5:19].

[Susan] gave an example of a problem arising from a clash of learning and teaching cultures, that occurred because of a lack of familiarity on the part of the learners:

the other day I had a classic you know you know these jigsaw you know that you have the questions they're different and you have to answer to fill it all in (.) they couldn't get that at all and I suddenly realised the reason was none of the people that were there had ever done it before [Susan: 167-172].

She also spoke of differences of interpretation arising from cultural differences:

we were doing something like you know er second conditional this was last year if you know if you saw something in the street what would you do right and it was it the one that I normally do with EFL is you know are you a good citizen (.) didn't think about it actually bit of a hurry grabbed it up went down everything went OK until we got into the idea they didn't realise so a good citizen was I want a British passport (.) so this idea of public you know

A: Yeah

S: Doing things wasn't citizen citizen citizen citizenship and it was a passport issue so they started saying well you know I'll be very good and I won't get into trouble [Susan: 410-418].

[Susan], when asked what learning activities the learners seemed to enjoy most, replied that they liked talking to each other [Susan:302-3], supporting the learners' stated views, but also said:

they do like a nice Murphy grammar exercise (.) but I don't actually give them that many ... it's normally out of context (.) and it's normally a sentence ... it's safe ... I do do that but ... it's normally as a consolidation [Susan:304-311].

These reflections indicate [Susan's] awareness of the clash between her lack of enthusiasm about such exercises as 'out of context' and 'safe', and the learners' preference for them; she managed the conflict sensitively by allowing a limited number of such exercises to be done, and tried to contextualise them as far as possible. These observations about learners and cultures of learning, are measured against the learners' stated attitudes towards group work in section 1.8.4 below.

In determining what the learners in the present study needed in order to function well in the group, Brookfield sets out intellectual aims for group discussion, as follows [BROOKFIELD 1990]:

- (i) to engage in exploring a variety of perspectives
- (ii) to help discover new perspectives
- (iii) to emphasise the complexity and ambiguity of issues, topics or themes
- (iv) to help recognise the assumptions behind habitual ideas and behaviours
- (v) to increase intellectual agility
- (vi) to increase active listening.

Such aims help determine the behaviour that may be most helpful to the learners, and I have considered whether these goals were being achieved in the class studied. The data collected does not provide much, if any, insight into points (iv) and (v), and point (vi) seems an inevitable by-product of a communicative language class. However, the ways in which the learners engaged with each other in negotiating meaning (see, for example, [Obs.Int.286-90] on the learners' enthusiasm to learn new material, and [Obs.Int.275-80] on their willingness to listen to each other) indicated the presence of points (i) to (iii).

8.1.3 What evidence is there that the learners are scaffolding each other's learning, providing increased support enabling the learners to move towards independence (Crandall point 7)?

(a) The aims of cooperative learning

Working in pairs and groups to perform language learning tasks and activities is a form of co-operative learning, models of which have been given by Slavin [1990], Kagan [1994] and Johnson & Johnson [1994]. Rather than describe the detail of each model in turn, I summarised their shared characteristics in Figure 2.3 above. I next consider whether the data for the present study affirms these models in by providing evidence of the following shared characteristics:

- (i) positive interdependence;
- (ii) face-to-face group interaction;
- (iii) individual and group accountability;
- (iv) the development of small group social skills, and
- (v) group processing, that is, reflection on the group experience.

(i) positive interdependence

Interdependence can be inferred from the data on friendship and groups. Sociogram 1 shows 19 mutual friendships, and sociogram 2 shows 34. The observer's groups data shows many of these reflected in the patterns of learners who worked together.

In interviews 1 and 2 the learners gave reasons why they enjoyed group work, if they did. The reasons connected with learning included the possibility of the others in the group providing help, showing a degree of positive interdependence between learners, for example:

when I don't understand the lesson I ask my friends and my teacher er and they are helping me [2:3:27,28];

sometimes I I can't spelling difficult with spelling sometime I ask other people to help [2:11:33,34];
they help me [2:14:37],

and

I can't understand something they explain to me so sometimes understand [2:15:40,41].

There were also indications that learners thought that they benefited from working with partners who were more proficient, for example, "I like to work with partner speaks more than me best" [2:9:31], and this principle certainly accords with the concept of scaffolding. Where learners worked in 'uneven' pairs, that is, where one learner was more proficient than the other, that learner was scaffolding their partner. Inevitably this can result in dependence by one learner on another, rather than interdependence. To promote scaffolding of all the learners, each individual would need access to partners with a range of abilities; the observer's records show that this was the case here.

It would be interesting to explore the relationship between learner interdependence and personality characteristics, but this is beyond the scope of the present study.

(ii) face-to-face group interaction

Face to face interaction was usual in the class situation. The observer estimated that, on average for each class, the teacher spoke for twenty per cent of the time and that the learners were free to speak for the rest of the time, but,

the ethos of the class was such that I think if they'd kind of wanted to interact with the teacher when the teacher was speaking there would have been no problem with that [Obs.Int.269-71].

The learners appeared to value the opportunity to speak to each other. In interview 2 most respondents found working in a group helpful, discussed at length in section 6.1.2 above. It is possible that the amount of time available for learner speaking diminished after the end of the study, when there was a change of teacher. It was interesting to note the learners' comments in Interview 3 when they reflected on the whole academic year. For example, [Jan] stated that practising speaking was very important to him [3:2:85-9], but that in the class "the time is not long enough for speaking" [3:2:95-6]. [Minjo] thought there was more conversation at the Wednesday class than at other, similar classes, but [Filis] also said that there was

not enough time for speaking, and [Umaporn] said that the learners spoke to each other only during the breaks. This does not accord with [Susan]'s observation that the learners liked talking to each other [Susan:302-3]. In fact, [Susan], when asked how much of the class was taken up by the learners speaking, replied "today I would have said it was about eighty per cent" [Susan:217]. Although this comment referred to a class subsequent to the one studied, she implied learner talk was important in any ESOL class she taught. The disparity in the recollections of the teacher and the learner in this regard may indicate that perceptions differ, depending on the participant's role in the activity.

Addressing face to face contact from another perspective, [Olga] emphasised how much easier she found it speaking English face to face than by telephone [3:6:39-47].

(iii) Individual and group accountability

Individual learners were responsible for their own learning: attending the class, participating in it and doing homework. There was a degree of group accountability, in that where learners worked in pairs or groups they were required to give some form of feedback. This could be to the teacher as she went round the groups, monitoring progress, or it could be verbal comments in a whole class setting, or the handing in of a piece of written work. Thus learners were aware that their individual input had an impact on the achievements of the small group they were in. However, this system did not ensure that all group members were equally involved in and contributing to the work, and it is clear from the interview data that this was not always the case, for example:

I prefer to work with someone who with someone who speak who likes to talk and isn't very shy and can't speak anything [2:2:43-5].

The above comment reveals that shy or quiet learners abdicated learning to the others in their group, allowing the others to provide scaffolding, but avoiding doing so themselves.

(iv) the development of small group social skills

Although there were examples in the interview data of group members offering help to each other (for example, [2:14:36-7], [2:15:40-1]), the data does not provide much to support the existence of this characteristic in the class.

(v) group processing

All three sets of interviews with the learners provide an insight into the group processing that occurred; individuals gave clear indications that they were reflecting on the group process and evaluating it. There also seemed to be some progression in the outcome of those reflections over time. In interview 1 some of the comments on group working showed reservations that appeared to be less pertinent by the time of interview 2. For example, [Karin] initially expressed the view that learning in groups was easy but did not lead to 'perfect' English:

T: Good do you think talking to the other students helps you to learn English

K: Yes I think it's it is probably the easiest way to learn English but um not for er perfect English because they they are not speaking perfect English [1:1:19-21],

whereas by interview 2 she was much more enthusiastic:

K: Yes I think it's very helpful because you can discuss things with other people you improve your English and you you um get know more about the other students and their life [2:2:36-8].

Similarly, [Umaporn] appeared rather diffident in interview 1:

T: Yeah do you prefer working in a group with other students or would you rather work on your own

U: Well both sometimes enjoy get to know one another

T: But you like to work on your own a bit too

U: Yes I will yeah [1:7:31-4],

but more positive in interview 2:

U: Yes help helpful yeah

T: Can you say why

U: Why because we get different idea from different students (.) yeah it's very helpful when I get something which I don't know somebody knows or he can tell another exchange experience or exchange knowledge [2:1:26-30].

In both these examples the learners had concrete examples of why group work was helpful to them, showing that they had reflected on their own experiences as the term progressed.

Other reflections in interview 2 include the fact that groups make the learner speak English, "...if I am alone I don't speak to other people um just I don't and this way it's better to learn with the relationships this way" [2:6:38-39], and that they provide

opportunities to make friends, "you speak to people and practice English and you can make friends" [2:10:32].

[Jerome] had reflected on why the learning style of the class did not suit him, and was able to compare it with his experiences of French education:

... maybe in England you have a different kind of learn learning everything in a group or in English in French is different usually we don't we don't work in together the teachers puts every courses lessons on the board we write... [2:51-54].

By the time of the third interviews the learners had finished the class; their reflection here had been able to take account of all their experiences throughout the year. The outcome showed a thoughtful but mixed response to group work.

J: I er I really want to learn conversation because er if example in writing you can practise in your home at home and er reading you can practise you can read much more but conversation you have to speak you have to practise and that's I think no way to do it yourself at home so yeah the conversation speaking is more

T: Speaking helps you most [3:2:83-87].

[Jan]'s comments above show an appraisal of what can be gained only from the support of others; learning alone at home, even if it is preferred, will not provide what is needed. In contrast, [Minjo] below highlights the other aspect of groups; that a large group may impede participation:

T: Would it be easier just you on your own with a teacher

M: Maybe or two or three or yeah

T: So a small group

M: Yeah small group yeah small group I think better we talk more we discuss yeah in big group not much a chance to talk just listening so small group I think better some too many people (?) fifty people teacher sometimes sometimes less than that maybe 15 sometimes maybe 20 sometimes twenty it depends with a small group I think better yeah [3:4:102-109].

[Filis] disclosed a different problem; she questioned the use of repeated practice with the same people as being helpful preparation for communication with native speakers:

T: So did you do things in groups where a few students talked to each other in English

F: Yes we are speaking to each other but just we are understand each other

T: Yes

F: When we speak to English people we are just listening we are not understanding

T: Right so speaking to other students is not good enough

F: Not good yes not good

T: Did you find the other students easy to understand

F: No no no it's a (?) because er always we are the same group same students always we speak each other with same students [3:5:21-29].

(b) Uses of cooperative learning

There is a difference between examining the aims of cooperative learning, and considering how it can be used. Regarding the latter, Crandall suggests the following rationale for using cooperative learning [CRANDALL 1999 p233-4]:

- (i) to reduce learner anxiety, because they are given the opportunity to try out the language on each other first;
- (ii) to promote interaction, the learners taking on the role that was the teacher's, traditionally;
- (iii) to provide comprehensible input and output: the members of the group have to understand each other in order to perform the task;
- (iv) to increase the learners' self-confidence and self-esteem, and
- (v) to increase the learners' motivation.

Co-operative learning was used in the class studied because of a more general belief in the benefits of the communicative approach. In retrospect, I have measured the data against Crandall's rationale, to see if it holds good.

(i) To reduce learner anxiety

The presence and effects of learner anxiety are discussed in detail in section 8.1.6 below. Because not many learners indicated feelings of anxiety, it was not easy to trace a reduction from the data. However [Minjo] spoke about the anxiety she felt speaking to English people, and the comparative ease of communicating in the class [2:11:23-9].

(ii) To promote interaction

Several learners commented in interview on group work promoting interaction, for example:

you speak more you talk more with each other [2:2:22];

in this class I must speak English to understand them [2:6:21], and

we want to talk with the other student like you want to know each other [2:8:29-30].

One contentious issue in language teaching is that of the relative merits of accuracy and fluency. Promoting interaction in the target language is more likely to increase fluency than accuracy, and both learners and teachers vary as to whether they wish to promote this or not. For example, [Susan] actively encouraged group discussion:

I have to explain to them the benefit and one of the things I always say is that you're not this isn't real life you're never going to sit probably very often have a one to one conversation you're going to be in a group and you're gonna meet different people and you're not going to do a work sheet unless you fill up a form [Susan:115-9].

However, she was not satisfied with communication per se; she wanted accuracy as well. This attitude could be considered a feature of linguistic imperialism (see the discussion in section 2.4.5), for example:

there are some students that have got um you know fossilised mistakes and they are I mean they've been to [x] once one student I think in particular has been to [x] you know her for years and years and she still is talking completely incorrectly (.) although she's communicative very efficient because I understand exactly what she says but her grammar is all over the place now somebody like that you need very much one to one 'cause you need to unravel all the mistakes because obviously as she's speaking she thinks it's quite correct 'cause that's what she's heard (.) and at home she does it the same thing (.) because her daughters' here and she does the same mistakes and I asked her do you speak English at home or Korean and she said no no when my husband's around we speak English (.) so there they are at home speaking English (.) completely wrong um nothing right wrong word order wrong grammar

A: But you say she's communicating

S: Oh yeah I can understand exactly what she says and that's the problem isn't it because you'll never get they'll never get above I mean she could never really get a good job (.) even though she can communicate because outside they'll think that you know she can't speak English properly even though you understand them [Susan:367-384].

It appears that [Susan] did not consider the ability to communicate so that one is 'exactly understood' sufficient for this learner¹, and in this extract she seems to share the views of David Blunkett on the relationship between English and employment (section 2.2 above). It is interesting to compare [Filis]'s comments:

F: [Susan] us- she usually er teach with foreign er job

T: Yes

F: How can we find a job

T: Oh yes

F: How can we talking with the (.) job

T: Like an interview

F: Yeah
T: Yeah was that useful
F: Yes
T: Have you got a job
F: No
T: Do you think you could get a job now
F: No (.) because I never work [3:5:52-64].

[Filis] said in the course of this interview that she needed to communicate, and appreciated another class that taught her what to say at the doctors, how to use the telephone and how to ask for directions. Her motivation appeared to be focussed on life skills rather than employment prospects, and fluency was clearly her goal rather than accuracy (see section 8.1.5 below for a more detailed discussion of motivation). Whilst the two goals of fluency and accuracy do not have to be opposing, it cannot be denied that some learning activities will promote one rather than the other, and thus this is an important issue in planning cooperative learning.

(iii) To provide comprehensible input and output

There was a distinct conflict here between the views of learners who found it easy to understand each other in a mixed nationality group, and those who simply could not understand each other's accents, and, possibly, grammar. For example, compare:

it's very helpful because you can discuss things with other people you improve your English and you you um get know more about the other students and their life [2:2:39-41], and

sometimes you can't understand different accent [1:7:28-9], and

it's very difficult for me understand Korean people [2:18:23].

This relates back to the discussion about the relative merits of fluency and accuracy and the importance of communication.

(iv) To increase the learners' self-confidence and self-esteem

Three specific comments can be made about self-confidence and self-esteem in relation to the present study. The first is that the responses to group work and making friends were generally positive, and this may be indicative of high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem already present in the group. The second is that although some learners showed an increase in self-confidence over time, this cannot be directly attributed to cooperative learning on the data available. The third is that

some learners displayed a lack of self-confidence and self-esteem despite their involvement in cooperative learning activities.

An example of the second point is a comparison of [Andreas]'s comment on his level of English in the first interview:

I think other student more they speak English better than me [1:10:35-6],

with his concerns about the lack of progress in the class at [Y] in the third interview:

It's the same when I I began last year um in [Y] now is the same course no change no different no progress [3:1:83-4].

An example of the third point made above is shown in [Soon-Keum]'s comment, "my pronunciation is horrible" [2:15:26].

(v) To increase the learners' motivation

There did appear to be some evidence that cooperative learning increased motivation for at least some learners, for example,

is helpful and you know I think actually motivat- ... motivating because all of us we have we have different mother tongue so the English is the only way for us to understand to communicate so I think it's really motivating [2:12:35-39], and

Oh yeah I love it yeah I really enjoy it because we we can do er different things or we join together [3:2:21-2].

(c) Indications that scaffolding was not taking place

Following the learner comments on providing comprehensible input and output, there is some indication that mixed nationality co-operative learning was not helpful, in that the learners picked up each other's mistakes, and also in that they did not always understand each other:

A: Um (.) not not directly what I could say is if you had a person from a nationality who spoke with a particular accent or in a distinctly unclear way it must be quite difficult for a person from another nationality either not to pick that up in a way or be influenced by it but also to understand them accurately

I: Did you see that happening did you observe that as a problem

A: Yes I think I did yes because um (.) I think you would definitely see misunderstanding between people and a lot of looking for clarification [Obs.Int.104-110].

8.1.4 Is there any evidence of opportunities for learners to develop cross cultural understanding or increased learner-centredness and learner direction in the classroom (Crandall's points 3 & 4)?

Having drawn some conclusions about learners and cultures of learning (section 8.1.1 above), those can in turn be measured against the learners' stated attitudes towards group work, with a view to ascertaining whether cross-cultural understanding or learner-centredness appeared to be developing. The learners were asked about their attitudes to group work in interviews 1 and 2. In considering the responses, it should be remembered that a number of factors could have influenced their attitudes. The first of these factors was the preference of some learners to learn by doing group activities as opposed to identifying with a culture of learning that accentuates the teacher-learner relationship to the exclusion of the learning relationship between learners. A second factor was whether the learner being interviewed perceived that the group was going to be of help with their individual learning or not. A third factor might have been racism, as the teacher stressed each week that the groups formed should be of mixed nationality. Other factors include the learners' individual personality traits; whether they enjoyed speaking, which group work tends to demand, and their relationships with those with whom they were required to work.

In the first interview the learners were asked if they liked working in groups. Twelve respondents liked group work fairly unequivocally; three liked group work but also enjoyed working on their own, depending on the nature of the activity, and one preferred to work alone. It can be presumed that these responses reflected not only personal taste and experiences within the class, but also were indications of the learners' individual learning cultures that they were bringing into the class. In interview 2 the respondents were asked if they found working in groups helpful. 14 said they did. Two said they preferred working alone. Two had mixed feelings.

The reasons given for liking group work included both learning and social factors. The social factors have been discussed above in section 7.2.

In the class studied there were opportunities for learner-centredness and learner direction. However, because the learners came from diverse national and cultural backgrounds, a wide range of learning styles were present. Conflicts in learning

styles reduce the cope of learner-centredness, and the diversity that helps generate cross-cultural understanding also impedes the learners having freedom to develop their learning practices as they would wish.

8.1.5 Does the fact that this is a mixed nationality group contribute to the learners' process motivation?

As has been shown in section 2.6.5 above, motivation in an educational environment can be presumed to be formed, at least in part, by the learners' hopes and wishes in terms of what they may experience in the class and what they will ultimately achieve. However, as discussed above, little is really known about how the views that the learners bring with them to the class affect learning the events that take place in the classroom. We have also seen that goal theory explains motivation in terms of learners seeking to attain particular ends, whether short-term or long-term, concrete or idealistic [DÖRNYEI & OTTO 1998] and that Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a clear link between human motivation and action [MASLOW 1954].

In the present study, motivation was expressly stated by most learners as instrumental rather than integrative.

In my examination of learner motivation I have used not only the commonly accepted distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation, but have also tried to apply Dörnyei's process-oriented approach [DÖRNYEI 2001].

The issue of who holds the power in the classroom is a particularly keen one in the English language classroom. The English language has been labelled an instrument of imperialism, and controversy surrounds how it is taught and what form of English is acceptable. When observing the dynamics of the class in this study, one concern is whether an external culture is being imposed upon the learners which detracts from their own cultures. We have seen above that cultures of learning vary, and that sometimes the learning styles expected by the teacher surprise the learners.

The current view is that there are 'Englishes' rather than one standard English. The theory of second language socialisation [ROBERTS 2001] emphasises that the language learnt by ESOL type learners is both functional, in a particular social context, and personal, bound up in the learner's own identity and their efforts to identify with the culture in which they are living. The form of language used must therefore be bound up with the individual's motivation for learning. Some of the learners in this study have work related motivation, and thus one would expect the

English they use to reflect the language they need for work. Listening is clearly a key skill for some, understanding what is being said to them. Almost all were more concerned about communicating within their own situations than acquiring Standard English.

Data about motivation was gathered in the first interview, and also in the self assessment forms completed by the learners at the beginning and end of the term. The learners' stated motivation for attending the class was not necessarily their actual or only motivation, and this needs to be taken account of in analysis. Particularly when being interviewed by their teacher, as here, it may have been difficult for respondents to admit to a non-learning aim. Therefore, clues as to motivation have also been drawn from other comments made by the learners, not in direct response to this question. In the course of the initial interview the sample of 16 learners were asked about their reasons for coming to the class. All were able to give at least one specific reason. These were learning English or improving their level of English, speaking or communicating, to help them in current or imminent work, to help them in future work, and for daily living. One wanted to improve her English to help her husband, one wanted to improve her writing skills, and one wanted to improve his English in order to emigrate to a country where English was one of the languages spoken.

The most obvious answer to the question about why a learner came to class is that they wanted to learn English. Two respondents said this without elaborating. Such an answer may be what the learners thought the teacher wanted to hear, seemed self-evident, and was not difficult to formulate. One of the respondents, an au pair, had already been approached by me regarding the suitability of the class for her; her English, at the start of the first term, was of a higher level than that of most of the others in the class, and because she was an au pair she was technically supposed to attend an EFL class. I had suggested an intermediate level EFL class rather than the pre-intermediate ESOL class she was attending. For that reason her response seems somewhat disingenuous.

Seven other learners who stated that their motivation for attending was to improve their English, gave more considered replies, specifying skills that they wanted to improve. These responses either focussed on particular areas of learning, such as:

Well I really really wanting to learn about the writing of English in proper way you know grammatically in sentence in paragraph [1:8:22,23];

or on the need to perform particular tasks or functions in English, for example:

I want to talk to the other person in England...I want to speaking and hearing understanding [1:3:22,24].

Seven learners stated that they had a need for English. These ranged from work related reasons, to needs relating to their position in the wider community. The work related explanations demonstrated an instrumental motivation:

I need to my job [1:5:20];

I need help my husband office work [1:6:25,26];

I come to class because I want to learn to speak English because er I would like to work here in England I'm medical doctor and I know that England needs medical doctor [1:10:27-29];

For my job is helpful you know I can I find it hard to speak English and write so I can find a job [1:11:43,44],

and

I learn just to er learn for my future because I I would like to to do ...tourism so I must I must learn to speak very well English [1:13:26-28].

In interview, [Susan] stated that the learners' motivation was their need for "a decent level of English" in order to get work. She said that the learners had either been told this by others or perceived it themselves. She singled out work with computers as most popular, and this was borne out in part by one of the learners [3:4:141]. However, she did not seem to have discerned any other possible motivations, except that she mentioned the desire for British citizenship in another context [Susan: 455-463]. What she did note is that ESOL learners are not solely concerned with the improvement of their language skills:

they've got busy lives they've got other pressures [Susan:528].

The other reasons for coming to the class given by the learners in answer to this question were also instrumental, for example:

because we living here we need the language ... for er doctor for speaking telephone for er um understanding news and newspaper and er yes for my daughter because it's parents' meeting [1:12:26-28]

and

Because I want to go in in other country where they speak two language French and English [1:16:28,29].

but some disclosed an integrative motivation as well:

my wife she like to live here in England [1:10:30]

and

I would like to build up my English for ... communication with the local people because I think I will be living here for ever [1:14:18-20].

It is of some interest that [Filis], when comparing the class studied with another class that she attended regularly, clearly felt that the concentration on social functions for daily life, such as giving directions, was of more value than the concentration on skills to be used in finding work. Although she said the latter was helpful she sounded unenthusiastic, and said she was unlikely to get a job anyway because she had never worked [3:5:64]. By contrast she was much more animated in describing the lesson content of the other class [3:5:153-161].

It would appear from the learners' comments about group work that they were motivated to practise speaking English. The fact that groups provided a vehicle in which to practise speaking was mentioned in interview 2, for example:

it's more more easy to learn (.) if I am alone I don't speak to other people um just I don't and this way it's better to learn with the relationships this way [2:6:40-42];

you can discuss things with other people you improve your English and you um get to know more about the other students and their life [2:2:39-41],

and

I can communicate a lot of people and my language I need to use my language [2:7:47,48].

It is commonly held among teachers that learners are more likely to speak the target language if it is the only language in which they can communicate with each other. This attitude was verbalised by [Susan]:

they'll all speak English 'cause that's going to be the common language [Susan: 101-102].

It was also reiterated by [Jan]'s comments on his experience of learning Spanish [3:2:55-59]. Despite some problems with the group of Czech learners, who were

disruptive by speaking Czech to each other, and who had to be told not to ([Susan: 278], [3:1:33-48]), [Susan], on reflection, decided that adult learners tended to use the target language anyway:

they have enough sort of manners not to really speak in their own language if two of them is there they don't normally do that I am amazed [Susan: 104-106].

Thus the data discloses a high degree of process motivation, with the mixed nationality nature of the class a contributing factor.

8.1.6 Was anxiety present in this group; if so did it appear to be linked to the mix of nationalities, and was it having any effect on the learning?

(a) Was anxiety present in the group?

The observer described the class in general terms as 'confident' and 'relaxed'. However, he did note anxiety, "if there were activities ... where the language might not be terribly clear for them, it might introduce some anxiety or misunderstanding" [Obs.Int.287-9].

[Olga] described feelings of anxiety. She described her feeling at first as "like stone" [3:6:120-121] because she was not relaxed, but stressed that a friendly teacher was helpful to the learners initially [3:6:175-182]. This makes an interesting contrast to the record of [Olga]'s first attendance at the class by the teacher, "The Moldavian woman was not at all shy and said at the end she had enjoyed the class" [TL7].

(b) If anxiety was present, did it appear to be linked to the mix of nationalities?

[Olga] definitely attributed her feelings of stress to having to communicate with foreigners [3:6:126-131], but this was the only unequivocal statement to this effect in the interview data. Most learners, when asked if they were happy to work with everyone else, in Interview 2, said that they were, and this is borne out by the observer's data.

(c) Did the anxiety have any effect on the learning taking place in the class?

This is a difficult issue to reach any conclusion about from the data collected. It appeared that the learners did not experience talking to each other as a stressful activity, and did not experience much anxiety in the relaxed environment of the classroom.

8.1.7 Were there other factors about this group, apart from nationality, having an impact on the learning in the classroom?

(a) The learners' beliefs about their progress

The summary of the initial and final assessment forms at Appendix N shows that, for the group of seven learners who completed both forms, there was a greater perception that their skills had improved rather than diminished, but that generally they felt that their skills had remained the same. Table 8.1 below sets out a summary of these perceptions.

Skill	Number of learners who appeared to feel that they had improved	Number of learners who appeared to feel that they had stayed the same	Number of learners who appeared to feel that they had deteriorated
Reading	1	6	-
Writing	3	3	1
Speaking	2	5	-
Understanding what people say	3	3	1
Spelling	-	7	-
Grammar	-	7	-

Table 8.1: Summary of the learners' self assessment forms

In Interview 3 the learners commented on the progress they had made. [Andreas] believed he was making progress [3:1:30]. [Jan] considered his English to be "much better" [3:2:115-7]. [Umaporn] conceded that she had improved "a little bit" [3:3:53]. [Minjo] said that she had definitely improved [3:4:130-134]. [Olga] also said that she has improved but only that she thought so; she attributed this improvement to her psychological state [3:6:117-124]. Only [Filis] said that after the change of teacher she "didn't learn anything" in the class [3:5:2-3].

(b) Age

It is debatable how significant a factor age is in language learning. A questionnaire about age was administered to a group of 12 of the learners, who were aged between 18 and 48 (see Appendix U). Asked how they defined themselves, those aged between 18 and 30 described themselves as 'young', and those aged between 39 and 48 described themselves as 'middle aged'. They were asked how they perceived the ages of the others in the group. Those between 18 and 25 perceived

the others as older than them; those aged 30 and 33 perceived the others as of a similar age to them, and those aged between 39 and 48 perceived the others as younger than them.

It is interesting to note the perceptions of this group about the optimum age for learning a language. All of them considered that it was better to be young. The 18 year old defined the optimum age as between seven and 20; therefore she fitted into this. Three said that it was easier to learn a language for children, and one said the best age was between 15 and 18; she was 30. The 46 year old said the best age was under 20.

However, the observer, when asked about the influence of age and gender, thought that age was significant in this group because the older learners seemed more confident and more communicative than the younger learners. In contrast, he did not observe that gender created a barrier in the group, despite the gender imbalance.

I: Could you say anything about age or gender

A: (.) I think um (.) in this particular group I think age was a factor because I think the older people were more confident than and and and and and talked more especially in groups than than than than the younger people (.) I don't think that's always the case but I think it was with this group (.) um and (.) and as far as gender's concerned well I think it was a pretty female dominated group anyway because I I I can't remember the figures but from what I can remember there were a lot more women than men (.) um (.) but (.) but I think they when they were in pairs and things they mixed across genders without too much reluctance

I: One teacher has talked to me about difficulties sometimes with Muslim students men not wanting to work with women did their appear to be anything of that kind in this class

A: No no there didn't no

[Obs.Int.245-256].

The observer's impressions are echoed by [Minjo] explaining why she liked another class:

T: Why do you think it's easier at [F]

M: I think my age is easy because they're old they're married and they're mainly the same ages better talk

T: So they're easier people

M: Yes easier people yes my age yeah [3:4:47-51].

It appears that whether or not age is relevant to the ease with which an individual learns a new language, it may well be pertinent to how the learner feels in relation

to the other learners, and this is an area which it would be useful to explore in more depth.

(c) Status

Another factor, apart from age and gender, which might have had an impact on the learning in the classroom was the status of the learners taking part. This was a mixed group; some of the learners were typical ESOL students who had made their home in this country permanently and needed to improve their English skills. Some were refugees. Some were more temporary residents in Britain, such as au pairs or the partners of students at the University. The observer felt that status made a difference to the individual's attitude to learning in the class, with the less permanent residents taking the learning less seriously.

I: Again I mean ESOL is often thought as very targeted at refugees in this particular group refugees were in a minority but is there anything you'd say about them

A: Um (.) yes I I I think they saw learning English and ESOL as more part of their their life here whereas I think people who were not permanent like au pairs partners of students and things it was much more like an interesting thing to do along the way and maybe get an English qualification before they went back but it wasn't a kind of part of as much a part and parcel of life

[Obs.Int.416-422]

Interestingly, the observer reflected that the different attitudes to learning had an influence on the learning groups that were formed.

I: Did that make a difference to how they worked

A: Well yes I think so I mean it did in terms of some of the au pairs definitely I think worked with other au pairs and some of the more temporary people worked with other more temporary people and some of the more permanent people worked with more permanent people I think sometimes but also I think at the end of the day I wonder if the ones who were here more permanently were much more interested in coming along and forming forming relationships in some ways and the ones who were here for less (.) er for a shorter period of time were much more in a way concerned about getting on with their English a bit and maybe getting a qualification before they went back (.) but then there was definitely overlap between the two [Obs.Int.423-33].

(d) Distractions

The main distraction disclosed by the interview data was other uses for time; in Interview 2 [Umaporn] explains that it is hard for her to make friends with the other learners because she has to work.

8.1.8 Interim conclusions based on research question 4

It would appear from the data collected that mixed nationality group work had an impact on the learning in the class, mainly because of the need for the learners to communicate with each other in English. Questions have been raised about the accuracy of the learning, given that the learners were all making errors. The data showed that the learners had regular and frequent opportunities to scaffold each other's learning. However, other than through the interviews, the data collection instrument did not record to what extent this was taking place. Although there are indications of opportunities for learners to become increasingly learner-centred and develop cross cultural understanding, there is no direct link in the data between this and the learning taking place.

Although the mixed nationality nature of the group seems to have been a crucial factor in the learning taking place, other factors, particularly motivation were also very relevant.

Having considered the impact of mixed nationality groups on learning, I turn to consider below whether the mixed nationality nature of the class may have had adverse effects.

Research question 5:

Are there any ways in which mixed nationality learning relationships affect the class adversely?

8.2 Are there any ways in which mixed nationality learning relationships affect the class adversely?

In this section of the chapter I review the data used in all the other sections to determine the negative implications for the learners in mixed-nationality English groups.

8.2.1 Were any costs of being a group member present in this group? If so, do they appear to be related to the mixed nationality nature of the class?

In his model of what it meant to be a group member, Douglas identified the following costs:

- (i) stultification;
- (ii) reducing all group members to the same level of performance;

- (iii) stress as a result of increased anxiety due to the expectations of the other group members;
- (iv) reinforcement of prejudice;
- (v) attacks against group members who appear to be different from the others, and
- (vi) rejection of some members by the rest of the group [DOUGLAS 1995].

All of these have the potential not only to affect learning adversely, but also to cause relationships to deteriorate and increase anxiety among group members, and therefore I looked for evidence of all six costs. I found that the research instruments used had not elicited any data to address indicators (ii) performance reduction, and (v) attacks based on difference. Although the self assessment forms, and to some extent, the interviews, gathered the learners' perceptions of their learning progress, no more objective record was taken against which to measure this. A further study could use data on learning attainment to extend the conclusions reached.

The indicators where there was some relevant data were these:

For indicator (i), stultification, [Filis] suggested that there was a limit to the benefits of group learning in a language class because the learners always talked to the same people and therefore became used to them, the implication being that they learned to understand each other, but that this did not help them communicate in wider society.

F: Yes we are speaking to each other but just we are understand each other

T: Yes

F: When we speak to English people we are just listening we are not understanding

T: Right so speaking to other students is not good enough

F: Not good yes not good [3:5:22-6].

This suggestion of stultification certainly seems to be connected to the mixed nationality nature of the group; the learners managed to negotiate together a form of English by which they could understand each other, but not native English speakers. However, it seemed to relate to some but not all of the learners; for example [Andreas] stated that he considered the best way to learn English was to speak, and he gave an example of a situation with native English speakers [3:1:166-9].

For indicator (iii), stress, anxiety in learning has already been discussed in section 8.1.6 above. There was no indication from the data that the feelings of stress referred to by Douglas were present.

Indicators (iv), prejudice, and (v), attacks, would seem to suggest racial discrimination in the context of a mixed nationality group, although without excluding other factors. There were a few small signs that could indicate racial prejudice, although these are not sufficiently conclusive to be treated other than tentatively. One was the frequency with which learners said they could not understand Korean accents. Another was the naming of learners of some nationalities as friends, but not others. A further study could follow up this area in a more direct way, as in the present study scope for expression of prejudice was given, but the learners' feelings about this area were not explored in depth.

Indicator (vi), rejection, may have been present to some degree, as the sociograms give an indication that some group members were, if not actually rejected, certainly not very popular. The sociogram data is discussed in detail above at section 6.1.2. In the first sociogram [Elizabetta], [Francesco], [Fatima], [Vahideh] and [Fillis] seem isolated. In sociogram 2 [Soon-Keum] was relatively isolated, but it appeared that for the whole class, relationships had flourished and extended over the term. The reasons for the apparent rejection of some learners may be linked to race, or to personality or other characteristics. A further study could pursue reasons for the popularity of some learners and the lack of popularity in others.

8.2.2 Do Douglas's factors deterring groups working effectively appear in this data?

Douglas maintains that factors deterring groups from working effectively include the following:

- (i) disagreement about ways to deal with the issues;
 - (ii) unreasonable or excessive demands made by other groups;
 - (iii) dominating or unpleasant members;
 - (iv) high degree of self-oriented behaviour;
 - (v) the group in some way is seen to be limiting the 'outside' satisfactions of its members;
 - (vi) the negative assessment of the value of membership made by significant people outside of the group;
 - (vii) overt competition with other groups unless the group is in a winning position;
 - (viii) other groups exist that are better able to meet the needs of members.
- [DOUGLAS 1995 p128].

Below I have measured the data collected against these factors, and attempted to elicit whether, if they were present, they were linked to the mixed nationality nature of the class.

Item (i), disagreement about issues, would have been measurable had more data been collected on the learners' direct communications with each other. The learners did not indicate that they had problems with each other, when interviewed, with a few exceptions. This could indicate that relationships were very good and disagreements few, or it could result from reluctance by the learners to appear negative about each other, especially as they were being recorded. The teacher's log and the observer's notes do not record that any learner disagreements were noticed. Item (ii), unreasonable or excessive demands, could not be assessed from the data.

Item (iii), the presence of dominating or unpleasant members, did not seem a problem from the teacher's log, nor from the observer's notes or interview comments. However, to explore this fully, it would have been helpful to have tried to obtain data of the learners' interactions with each other when no one was observing them. The difficulty lies in how to achieve this, as recording of groups, such as that carried out in the pilot study, would be likely to have caused the learners to be more inhibited and careful in the way they behaved.

The data on learner motivation, discussed above in section 8.1.5, indicate that item (iv), self-oriented behaviour, was present in the class, although there are no clear links between this and mixed nationality learning.

There was insufficient data to measure the presence of items (v) (limitation of 'outside' satisfactions), (vi) (negative assessment of the value of membership from outside the group) and (vii) (overt competition), but these are all areas where further research could be of value.

In contrast, item (viii), whether there were other groups able to meet members' needs, was addressed in the data collected. In the second interview, 18 respondents were asked to comment on whether the class studied was different in any way from other English classes attended, either in the past or concurrently. Two had no point of comparison, but all the others were able to cite differences. These can be grouped into differences of teacher, teaching style, class content, class size and layout and level.

The comments comparing teachers ranged from negative about other experiences:

the class in Switzerland was very bad because the teacher was very bad he couldn't speak English at [2:2:6,7];

and

there they are the teacher they learn to to give to give the class ... It's not the same [2:18:12,13,17];

to ambiguous:

The language centre was OK but you have lot of different teacher and they all want to learn they would like to be teacher and some of them some of them were very good and some of them are very bad [2:2:12-14];

and

In France I learned English but with a Spanish teacher and the teacher explained in French not in English [2:6:15,16];

to positive:

English teacher um was very clever teacher just er he she had never been in different country she learned English just with books [2:7:9-11]; and

the teacher's very good [2:15:12].

The comparisons of teaching style included:

in Moldova I I've just got my homework exercise and during the English classes I listen to tape [2:7:16,17];

Because different teacher and ... the style from Monday teacher ... like you I really enjoy like er because some game to us and we can learn to play using in English [2:8:17-19]; and

maybe in England you have a different kind of learn learning everything in a group or in English in French is different usually we don't we don't work in together the teachers puts every courses lessons on the board we write [2:17:53-56].

These reveal some preferences for a different teaching style from that used in the class at [X].

The comparisons of class content indicated that the Wednesday class at [X] had more oral communicative contents, but less grammar, than most, and thus whether the comparisons were favourable or not depended on the learner's preferred learning style and motivation:

we have more conversation [2:9:7];

the class at the University of [X] different because is a lot of grammar a book ... and here is more friendly games and explain something is more speaking [2:10:12,13,15,16];

now in this class you can speak grammar sentence everything [2:11:8,9]; and

what do you teach is different from other teacher um teach more the grammar yes it's more group work [2:12:11,12].

The comparisons of the class size and layout indicated that [X] was experienced as noisy and busy:

[X] College is different the classroom is different I think everybody is sitting behind a table the teacher in front of the class ... (here) the classroom is not like in a proper school" [2:2:16,17,22,23];

I can have English class alone just with my English teacher er now maybe little harder because English teacher has er more attention just to me [2:7:41-43];

the number of the pupils some other lessons we are less [2:12:9,10]; and

more class with a table and a chair it's more quiet I think we have too m- too much people [2:17:10,11].

The comparisons of the level of difficulty included:

a lot more difficult [2:1:7]; and

in college it's very difficult ... it's harder it's first certificate [2:13:9,14].

In asking whether the mixed nationality nature of the class underlay any of these responses, it is a given factor that learner responses are driven by the cultures of learning that the learners came from. At [X] the learners were experiencing a different culture of learning with other learners from different cultures, and comments about teaching styles and class organisation reflect that. The comment about the teacher who spoke French draws a clear distinction between a mixed and

a single nationality class, and there are more oblique national differences relating to preferred learning styles that contributed to the comparisons.

8.2.3 Is there evidence of a lack of enjoyment in communicating or attempting to communicate with people from other cultures?

It has been suggested that one adverse effect of learners forming mixed nationality groups is that they might not enjoy the cross-cultural communication involved:

Many people do not actually enjoy communicating, or attempting to communicate, with others, especially with people from other cultures, [ALLWRIGHT & BAILEY 1991].

This idea is discussed in section 2.6.3 above. The clearest example of such feelings was given in the third interview where [Olga] described how she had not felt comfortable when she first came to the mixed nationality English class, but that this feeling had ameliorated after two weeks [3:6:139-141]. Section 7.2.1 above explores this area, and it is difficult to conclude from the teacher's or the observer's observations, or from the learners' statements in interviews, that there was a significant lack of enjoyment; rather, the reverse was true. A further study might go on to investigate why this was the case, by using direct questions to the learners about what they like and dislike about cross-cultural communication. Another method for collecting data would be observation of the way that learners of different nationalities behave towards each other in class; asking whether they minimise discomfort by avoiding situations or discourse that they predict will be problematic.

8.2.4 Interim conclusions based on research question 5

There may be some, slight, costs to the learners of being in a mixed nationality group, and the mixture of nationalities may deter the learning groups from working effectively. However these conclusions are tentative because the data collected for the present study is insufficient. It may well be that other classes existed at the time of the class at [X] that would have better met the learners' needs, but the data does not indicate that this was linked to [X] being a mixed nationality group.

Having summarised my conclusions from this section above, in the next chapter I will discuss the conclusions derived from the whole study.

Footnote

1 Interestingly, although [Susan] rates accuracy highly and is concerned about learners whose errors are fossilised, the transcript of her interview reveals many spoken grammatical errors; this is a facet of her way of speaking rather than a lack of knowledge. It can be argued that inaccurate grammar is an incontrovertible feature of spoken English, which need not impede communication.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

I embarked upon this research project hoping to discover more about what happened in a mixed nationality adult language classroom. My aim was to investigate what effect communicative practices between learners of different nationalities had on a range of factors, including the learners' motivation and feelings about themselves and the class, the relationships that were formed and the learning that took place. My interest was practitioner based; I wanted to discover whether the benefits of mixed nationality teaching appeared to outweigh the disadvantages. My teaching experience had been instrumental in my forming the view that where learners were only able to communicate with each other in the target language, the native speaker teacher had an easier task, but I was uncertain whether the situation was as beneficial for the learners as for the teacher.

The area of exploration touched on several different disciplines. Issues relating to the learners' national and cultural identities embraced sociological and anthropological ideas; the effect on the social and educational aspects of the class of the learners working together in groups raised questions of sociology and psychology; whilst an examination of what effect the learners' experiences are having on their learning involved educational and linguistic concepts. A review of the wide range of relevant literature enabled me to pose five questions that I felt were key to the area I wished to explore. I then designed instruments for collecting data that seemed appropriate, and tested them by conducting a pilot study. Having adapted the data collection methods slightly, I conducted the main study, and analysed the data collected using the five key research questions to provide a basic framework for the analysis.

There has been little other research specifically focussed on the field of the present study. I have therefore had to devise an appropriate and exploratory methodology. The data sample collected for the present study has been used to explore issues and methods related to the research questions. The findings of the present study have not only answered the research questions, but have also contributed to a wider understanding of the topic and of the methods in which it can be researched.

Below I reflect on what conclusions can be drawn from the data collected, addressing each key question in turn, and identifying how each area of the research makes a substantial and original contribution to current understanding of the topic.

I then discuss ways in which the study might be improved and developed, the implications of the research findings for practice and policy, and the implications for further research.

9.1 What impact do the relationships that learners form have on classroom dynamics?

9.1.1. Conclusions

My attempt to answer the first research question commenced with an analysis of the cohesiveness of the class as a group, using Douglas's model. Measurement of the data against Douglas's model showed that because of the teaching strategy, it was inevitable that the members had to interact with each other in order to perform the learning tasks. The learners appeared to enjoy interacting. From the sociograms it was apparent that some learners were engaged in more contact than others. The degree of contact between the learners changed over time, with some learners increasing in popularity, and others decreasing. From the observer's data it seemed that the members of the group invested energy in the group. The group members could be said to have gained from their membership of the group, at least socially, and their social relationships motivated them to communicate with each other, which may have facilitated their language learning, in terms of fluency if not accuracy. The communication was also meaningful in the sense that they were communicating about themselves and their lives. The relationships between the members were close, in that the learners appeared to like each other and some spent time with each other outside the class. There was some evidence to indicate pride and satisfaction with the group, particularly through learners introducing new members.

The group used the target language as a common language in communicating with each other, but where there was a shared first language, it was observable that smaller sub-groups emerged. The use of the target language also detracted from the cohesiveness of the group, in that the level of ability in English determined their effectiveness at communication. A sense of obligation and responsibility among the group members could be discerned from actions that members took in order to assist the group, but there was some evidence that individuals' needs were not being met by the group.

There was some indication that at least some of the feedback the learners were providing to each other was positive rather than negative. The learners were physically proximate to each other during the class, and the layout of the room contributed to this. The learners shared a common purpose, and although there was a wide range of motivating factors, there was convergence among the group. There were some indications of areas of dissatisfaction that skilled leadership could have addressed and there was some disruption caused by the fluid nature of the group. The relaxed atmosphere within the classroom can be interpreted as a sign that the members perceived that there was safety within the group. There were indications that the learners who attended regularly considered both the class and the smaller groups efficacious. Although there appeared to be a high degree of cohesiveness in the class, the model itself does not seem wholly adequate to address the paradoxes in such a group that may detract from its cohesiveness. Nevertheless, it is significant that a class with both a wide diversity of nationalities, and with a substantial sub-group made up of one nationality (Korean), appeared to be a cohesive unit.

Next I looked at whether the learners' likes and dislikes had an effect on their relationships and the class dynamics. The likes and dislikes most prominent from the data related to communication within the group; likes encompassed relationships between learners; dislikes included not being able to understand each other and having to work with people who were quiet or unfriendly. Clearly the mixed nationality nature of the group contributed to the difficulties of understanding, and presumably also to the satisfying relationships.

Then I considered whether Douglas's rewards of working in groups appeared to be present in the class. They did, and in addition, there was an indication from the interview data that the learners were rewarded by the differences between them that they experienced in the class. I would conclude from the data collected that the group of learners in the present study had good learner relationships, generally, and that these contributed in a positive way to the class dynamics.

9.1.2 Contribution to our understanding of this topic

Although the dynamics of learning groups have been studied extensively, the factors that determine the dynamics of the language classroom have not been explored as thoroughly. In the present study, the data collected about the impact of the learners' relationships on the dynamics of the class revealed that the

relationships were complex, and operated on different levels. Indicators of trust and safety, together with affirmation and support, showed that this type of learning group could provide a positive affective experience. However, tensions, introduced by factors such as the lack of a shared language in which to communicate effectively, meant that relationships were also problematic. The present study shows a clear link between the learners' success at communicating in the target language and the degree of positive feeling in the relationships between them, which seems significant in determining the classroom dynamics. It is also evident from the present study that, because learner relationships are transient and changeable, the classroom dynamics will not be constant, but continuously evolving.

9.2 Does the formation of mixed nationality relationships in the ESOL classroom affect the classroom culture?

9.2.1. Conclusions

To address the second question I looked at issues relating to culture which might be discernible in this class.

I examined the learners' perceptions of the relationship between their nationality and their identity. The learners defined themselves according to their political nationality, regardless of where they had lived or their ethnic background, apart from one learner who had taken British nationality but seemed unsure about whether the term 'British' described her accurately. For this learner, [Mariam], changing nationality did not seem to cause her to redefine herself. As regards the nationalities of others, most learners were aware of the range of nationalities represented, although some made assumptions about other learners that were incorrect. This could be an indication that nationality was not a very significant factor for the learners, or it could demonstrate a lack of close relationships with other learners in the first few weeks of the term. It was clear that some learners were more aware of the learners who came from countries near to their own country, as shown by [Magalet] and [Song Bo] in the first interview. It would seem inevitable that the learners' self view would have contributed to the classroom culture in some way.

I then asked whether learning a foreign language involved an alteration of the learner's self-image and found that it caused at least some of the learners to experience communication problems, triggering negative feelings and frustration.

This in turn affected the way the learners felt about themselves and the way they related to others, and thus the class culture.

I next considered whether there was any evidence of the learners having appropriated Mathews' 'cultural supermarket' model, and found that the class contained some learners who saw themselves very much as foreigners in Britain and others who were more relaxed about choosing from different cultures. It appeared that individual learners who had lived in more than one continent before coming to Britain leaned more towards the cultural supermarket approach, for example, [Jan], [Andreas] and [Jerome]. If this approach was shared by a majority of the learners it would have implications for the class culture. One defect of the present study was that the data collection instruments were inadequate to measure how prevalent the cultural supermarket approach was.

I concluded that the class appeared to have a culture of its own, in accordance with the definition of culture adopted, and that the culture of this class indicated that it had functions for the participants other than learning functions. I then attempted to investigate whether the learners in this class managed to view the world from a different cultural position from their own, and an interesting progression emerged from the learner interview data. The first interview, at the beginning of term, showed that they found security in their own cultures; the second interview indicated that they were experiencing positive benefits from being in a mixed nationality group, and that there was a feeling of security in the group in contrast to the anxiety felt within the wider British culture. The third interview produced data to show that where relationships were strong there was an ease of communication which aided the learners in seeing each other's viewpoint.

I looked for signs of anomie and concluded that, although the whole class appeared well-integrated as a group, there was some evidence of anomie among particular individuals. However it was difficult to distinguish whether it originated wholly or in part from the class, or from the learner's experience of the wider community. This issue could be clarified in a further study. There were also clear indications from the data that the dialogue used by the learners in the present study was used to communicate issues of importance to them, and produced reactions by other learners, such as support or help where it was requested.

In looking at the classroom culture, I also surmised that the comments of the three authority figures involved with the class in the present study, the observer and both teachers, revealed some degree of cultural assumption-making. This was much less evident on the part of the observer than the two teachers.

9.2.2 Contribution to our understanding of this topic

There is little written on research into the influence of nationality-related factors on relationships within the language classroom. Nationality factors may relate to the self-image of the learner and to the learner's view of others. The findings in the present study indicate that nationality-related factors are indeed an influence on the relationships between learners of different nationalities. Self-image in the individual learner is affected by nationality, experience and awareness of other nationalities, and by the process of communicating in a foreign language. The mixed nationality group in the present study appeared to provide a positive environment, enabling its members to take on other cultural perspectives in viewing the world, but it also triggered some feelings of anomie amongst its members. Thus the data disclosed that the strengths and problems of learning in a mixed nationality group are interlinked, not easily separated, and therefore complex to address.

9.3 Does working in mixed nationality groups appear to further the social success of the class?

9.3.1. Conclusions

Having concluded that the class held significance for the learners beyond its learning function, it was relevant to explore its social significance. I investigated how willing the learners were to form mixed nationality groups. The observation data shows that mixed nationality groups were formed as a matter of course, even enthusiastically, and the interview data indicates that the learners did not mind the nationality of the people they worked with, although some had problems with accents. No overt problems of racism or nationalism were observed by either the teacher or the observer, although this does not mean racism and nationalism were not present.

I then asked whether the mixed nationality groups seemed linked to the friendships that had developed among the members of the class. There was conclusive evidence of friendships; by the time the first sociogram data was collected, the number of different friendships recorded was 41. At the time of the second

interview 17 of the 18 respondents said they had friends. A comparison of the friendship data with the working groups data shows patterns that were present in both.

I also concluded that Brookfield's social aims for groups appeared to be present, and that there were other manifestations of social success within the class, including the existence of humour, much of it in English. It appeared that the class had a distinct social function, linked to the mixed nationality learner relationships existing within it.

9.3.2 Contribution to our understanding of this topic

There has been little, if any, research carried out in the area of Further Education, addressing the impact of mixed-nationality learning groups on the social relationships that learners have with each other. The emphasis on educational attainment outcomes, and the linkage of these to course funding, have not encouraged research into social outcomes, possibly erroneously, as it is arguable that social factors affect learner retention. The present study indicates that the social success of the group was indeed linked to its mixed-nationality profile, and was not incidental to it.

9.4 Does mixed nationality group work affect the learning in the classroom?

9.4.1. Conclusions

Following investigation of the social function of the class, it was necessary to explore the impact on the learning in the class. I considered the possible effects of mixed cultures of learning. The data indicated a positive response by the learners to communicative language teaching practices, despite one learner apparently rejecting them (although remaining in the class throughout the term). It appeared from interview 2 that there was a prevalent belief that discussion not only helped improve the learners' English, but was also motivating and made learning easier.

Clearly the mixed nationality group work must have some effect on the learning, because of the need for the learners to communicate with each other in English. I looked for evidence that they were scaffolding each other's learning, and concluded that this was happening, at least in part through the existence of interdependence which could be inferred from the data on friendship and groups. The reasons given

by the learners for enjoying group work included the possibility of the others in the group providing help, and indications that learners benefited from working with partners who were more proficient. There was also evidence of face-to-face interaction in the class situation, and there appeared to be a degree of group accountability, through the giving of feedback. Individual learners appeared to be reflecting on the group process and evaluating it, and their reflections seemed to develop over time. Less positively, there was some indication that mixed nationality co-operative learning was not helpful, in that the learners picked up each other's mistakes, and also in that they did not always understand each other.

The present study did not include the collection of data to establish whether the learners were attaining externally set and objectively assessed goals. I was interested in the learners' own perceptions about whether they were learning. The class studied was a learning forum in which each individual had their own goals and agenda, and I considered that an externally imposed assessment of the learners would not measure whether they were learning what they had come to the class for. An assessment set by me would have demonstrated whether the learners were meeting the criteria that I had set, not their own. The summary of the learners' initial and final self-assessment forms showed their perceptions about whether their skills had improved or not.

Although there are indications of opportunities for learners to become increasingly learner-centred and to develop cross cultural understanding, there was no direct link in the data between this and the learning that was taking place. The mixed nationality nature of the group seems to have been a crucial factor in the learning that was taking place, but other factors, particularly motivation, were also very relevant. Most learners gave instrumental rather than integrative accounts of their motivation, which in some cases was work-related motivation. Almost all were more concerned about communicating within their own situations than acquiring Standard English, and their reasons for coming to the class were learning English, improving their level of English, speaking, communicating, to be helped in current or imminent work, to be helped in future work, and for daily living. It would appear from the learners' comments about group work that they were motivated to practice speaking English.

Some learners appeared to experience anxiety in the class, but this was not prevalent, and some learners who reported feelings of anxiety attributable to having

to communicate with foreigners, but these seemed to be directed towards native English speakers rather than other members of the class. Unfortunately it is impossible to gauge from the data collected whether any anxiety that was experienced affected the learning taking place.

9.4.2 Contribution to our understanding of this topic

Although the theory of scaffolding has been applied extensively, there is a lack of current research into the incidence of scaffolding in mixed-nationality adult language learning. The findings of the present study indicated that the learners perceived that they benefited from working in groups with individuals whom they believed to have a higher level of the target language than them. However, they felt that working with learners of other nationalities also produced errors and communication difficulties.

9.5 Were there any ways in which mixed nationality learning relationships affected the class adversely?

9.5.1. Conclusions

The data suggests some evidence of stultification, anxiety and learners rejecting each other as arising from the mixed nationality nature of the class, but all the signs of these are limited and not wholly conclusive. There were a few, tentative, signs of racial prejudice, but not of overtly racist behaviour. It appeared from the sociograms that some group members were not very popular. The data collection instruments did not address a variety of factors that have been suggested as likely to deter groups from working effectively, and it would have been helpful to have been able to consider these factors. The conclusions from this part of the study are inevitably partial.

Finally, in addressing adverse effects, it has been suggested that learners in mixed nationality groups might not enjoy cross cultural communication. There was little evidence for this, other than the temporary feelings of one learner [3:6:126-134].

9.5.2 Contribution to our understanding of this topic

Little research has been carried out into the extent to which adult learners enjoy the cross-cultural communication necessitated by mixed-nationality classes. The present study sought to discover whether mixed-nationality classes had any adverse effect

on the learners. The findings indicated that this aspect of their learning was enjoyable, and there was little, if any, evidence of adverse effects.

9.6 The relationship between the five research questions

The research questions were formulated to investigate what effect communicative practices between learners of different nationalities had on what happened in the classroom. The supposition was that the relationships that were formed would affect the learners' motivation, their feelings about themselves and the class, and the learning that took place. As a practitioner, I wanted to discover whether the benefits of mixed nationality teaching appeared to outweigh the disadvantages. The first research question, 'What impact do the relationships that learners form have on classroom dynamics?' sought to elicit the links between individual relationships and group dynamics. This led directly to an exploration of the group culture that arose from the individual and group relationships within it, thus the second question was, 'Does the formation of mixed nationality relationships in the ESOL classroom affect the classroom culture?' In an educational context, group activity can be focused both on learning and on social aims, reflected in the third and fourth questions, 'Does working in mixed nationality groups appear to further the social success of the class?' and 'Does mixed nationality group work affect the learning in the classroom?' The first four questions explored the impact of the relationships that the learners made on different aspects of the group dynamics and culture; the fifth question, 'Were there any ways in which mixed nationality learning relationships affected the class adversely?' addressed specifically the possibility that there might be negative effects arising from the nature of the class. Thus the five questions followed on from each other and contributed to a coherent whole.

9.7 Ways in which the study might be developed and improved

There was insufficient scope in the present study to explore all the issues raised above in as full a way as might be helpful. In section 9.9 below I propose suggestions for further research. In this section I suggest ways in which the present study could be modified.

In addressing the impact of learner relationships on class dynamics, the present study used longitudinal data, gathered over one term, with additional interviews at the end of the academic year. The group of learners studied were following a course which lasted for one year. To investigate the area more thoroughly it would be useful to gather data on a group of learners who were working together for more

than a year. An elongated study would also make it easier to measure the development of friendships and the social success of the class,

In examining the effect of mixed-nationality relationships on the classroom culture, consideration was given to the degree to which individual learners adopted the 'cultural supermarket' approach. Those who had lived in more than one continent before coming to Britain leaned towards this approach more than those who had not. The scope of the present study could be extended to attempt to measure whether this approach was shared by a majority of the learners.

An objective measure of 'learning' was deliberately omitted from the present study. To expand the data collected and the scope of the study, the learners' degree of attainment over the course of the study could be recorded, by testing in accordance with the course aims.

Little evidence was found of possible adverse effects of using mixed-nationality groups in language teaching. However, the data on this was collected by interviews with the learners conducted by the teacher. To investigate negative responses and incidents, the data collection methods could be redesigned to allow for learner feedback in a more neutral way, either by interview with an independent person, or written responses, or by observation of classroom incidents.

9.8 Implications for practice

From the above the following implications for the practice of language teaching can be deduced. Firstly, transient and changeable learner relationships affect the classroom dynamics, therefore syllabus design, including consideration of the methods and materials used, should take account of the influence of relationships on dynamics.

Secondly, language teachers with mixed-nationality groups of adults should be aware of the affective features of such a group; the potential for the learners to experience trust, safety, affirmation and support, together with the tensions that are introduced by factors such as the lack of a common language.

Thirdly, teachers also need to be aware, and perhaps make sure that the learners are aware, that along with the interest and excitement generated by them taking on other cultural perspectives in viewing the world, there is scope for the learners to

experience feelings of anomie. Thus, language teachers should be alert for sign of cultural stress, and develop strategies for reducing it.

9.9 Implications for policy

The present study indicates that the social success of the class was linked to its mixed-nationality profile, rather than being incidental to it. Policy decisions in teaching ESOL in Further Education need to take account of the relationship between affective factors and motivation, and the present study shows a positive link between the mixed-nationality nature of the learning group and the learners' motivation. In devising strategies for recruitment and retention of learners, neither the social success of a particular type of class, nor the factors that affect motivation, should be ignored.

The findings of the present study indicate that the learners perceived a benefit to themselves in working with others who have already reached a higher level than them, but did not always see benefits in working with those at a lower level. There are policy implications from this finding for the use of communicative language learning strategies, and if they are to be used, thought should be given as to how best to communicate the benefits of such strategies to the learners.

9.10 Implications for further research

The scope of the present study gives rise to diverse areas for further research; below I have summarised the main issues that have been shown to require further investigation.

Learner relationships

There were indications in the present study that relationships with learners of other nationalities were more accessible than relationships with native English speakers. It would be useful to explore whether the formation of close mixed-nationality relationships in the classroom provide a disincentive to the formation of relationships with native speakers, and thus impede the use of native speakers to improve communication skills.

Anomie

Whilst there was evidence of anomie among particular individuals at certain times, it was difficult to distinguish whether it originated wholly or in part from the class, or from the learner's experience of the wider community. Further study is needed to

clarify the causes of anomie in mixed-nationality groups, and exploring what can be done to reduce any adverse effects on the learning process, as far as possible.

Scaffolding

The present study has explored learner perceptions about scaffolding and revealed that the learners perceive benefits from working with those who are more advanced. An exploration is needed as to whether scaffolding takes place in language classes, so that all benefit from the process. Such a study could be extended to measure learner perceptions against actual attainment.

Learner-centred approaches

Current ESOL policy in the UK combines an approach centred on learners' needs with prescribed targets of a more universal nature. Research is required to ascertain firstly, whether learner-centred approaches increase learning, and secondly, what constraints the corporate needs of a mixed-nationality class impose on genuinely learner-centred approaches.

APPENDIX A: LEARNERS' CONSENT FORM

APPENDIX A: LEARNERS' CONSENT FORM

**This is a form for you to sign.
It allows the teacher to do some research on this class.
The research is to help other teachers teach, and to help students learn.**

**The language on the form is quite formal.
Don't worry about it.
Ask if you don't understand it.**

**ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES - WEDNESDAY CLASS
INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS**

The teacher at the Wednesday ESOL class will observe and keep some written records of what happens in the class. These records will be used as part of a research project carried out by the teacher, under the supervision of the Department of Educational Studies at the University of York.

You will not be identified by name in these records. No personal details will be disclosed. You are entitled to see the records on request. The classroom observations may be published.

The identity of individual students will not be revealed either in the teacher's records or in any written thesis or published document.

**ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES - WEDNESDAY CLASS
CONSENT FORM**

I understand that when I attend the Wednesday ESOL class at [X] the teacher may keep written records of what happens in the class.

I understand that these records may be used as part of a research project carried out by the teacher, under the supervision of the Department of Educational Studies at the University of York.

I consent to the teacher keeping records and I understand that details of individual students will be kept confidential and no personal details will be disclosed. I also understand that I am entitled to see any part of the records that is about me, on request.

I understand that the research findings may be published, and I consent to this happening.

Name.....

Signature.....

Date.....

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION FROM THE
LEARNERS' INITIAL INFORMATION FORMS FOR THE PILOT
STUDY

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION FROM THE LEARNERS'
INITIAL INFORMATION FORMS FOR THE PILOT STUDY

Learner name	male / female	age	nationality (country of origin)
Adriana	F	31	Brazilian
Ahmed	M		Iranian
Ana	F	30	Spanish
Beate	F		German
Belma	F		Turkish
Celine	F		French
Elke	F	37	German
Feng	M	19	Chinese
Francesca	F		Italian
Franco	M		Italian
Gabriella	F		Italian
Georgia	F	24	Hungarian
Gianna	F	29	Italian
Gloria	F	25	Spanish
Hale	F	23	Iranian
Hea Jin	F	24	S. Korean
Helena	F	18	Swedish
Imrana	F		Iranian
Jean-Luc	M		French
Karl	M	42	Chinese
Karolina	F	23	Hungarian
Klong	M	20	Thai
Latifa	F	39	Egyptian
Luca	M		Italian
Lucia	F	21	Czech
Ludmilla	F	25	Slovakian
Magdalena	F	22	Czech
Manuel	M	29	Spanish
Maria	F	27	Belgian
Nasreen	F		British (Kenya)
Nikola	F	25	Hungarian
Paolo	M		Italian
Patricia	F		French
Richard	M	21	Hungarian
Rosa	F	24	Slovakian
Saisuree	F	37	Thai
Saskia	F	19	Hungarian
Siraj	M	35	British (Pakistan)
Sonja	F		Czech
Teresa	F	20	Italian
Yueling	F		Chinese
Yvonne	F	27	French
Zhen	F	17	Chinese

APPENDIX C: TEACHER'S LOG FROM THE PILOT STUDY

APPENDIX C: TEACHER'S LOG FROM THE PILOT STUDY

Week 1: 12 September

There were 20 learners in the group today (not all will show up on the register). When they came in at the beginning of the class some of them obviously knew each other; this seemed to be in same nationality groups. I particularly noticed 2 Chinese learners sitting together, 2 Czechs, 2 Slovaks and a number of Hungarians. The learners who seem to know each other also seemed to be sitting together. I also noticed quite a few learners on their own at the beginning, not speaking to anyone else.

When I first asked the learners to ask each other for information it was quite clear that they asked the people near them first; in some cases, clearly people they already knew. They did begin to move around more than they needed to get information their friends didn't have (it was an exercise where they had to find someone else in the class with the same answers to questions as them; the questions were such as, 'What is your favourite colour?', 'Where would you like to go on holiday?').

I asked the learners to work in pairs and again they chose people near them. I directed pairs at one stage but they did not all pair as asked; I did not correct this

I asked them to pair with a learner with a different first language; the Hungarians and Czechs/Slovaks seemed to work together, but not exclusively. A Thai man and a Hungarian man (who already knew each other from a previous English class) worked together throughout the class. A Czech woman with a high level of English and a Chinese man who seemed to be struggling paired in the last exercise and seem to be working together effectively.

During the pair work no one seems to be being left out, although some took longer to find partners than others. An Iranian woman did not work with a Chinese (Hong Kong) man sitting near her who was without a partner, but waited for a woman to come to her from across the room; this might be to do with gender and culture.

What I noticed most today was that the existing friendships were influencing working pairs, and same nationality and proximity were both factors in learners choosing partners.

Week 2: 19 September

Today we had four 'new' learners in the group (one had moved up from the beginners' group she had been in last week). One has attended other classes and knows some of the other learners. The other two were the only ones from their country in the class, and neither knew any of the other learners. A few of last week's cohort were not present today. The activities today involved several pairs and one exercise in groups of three. At the beginning of the class I asked the learners to find out everybody else's names in a limited amount of time, and I didn't notice anyone finding this difficult to do. The two men who worked together last week [Klong] and [Richard]) also worked together this week. When I asked the learners to get into threes I told them to find people they had not already worked with in this lesson. These two men stayed together, and included a third man. The new man [Siraj] (the only one from his country) did not appear to actively seek partners, but waited for people to come to him. NB from previous classes with this man, I am not sure he always grasps verbal instructions immediately; he is often ready to say he understands but then does something different. So I

am not sure that his not seeking out partners is deliberate. None of the learners appeared reluctant to work with others. Again, Eastern Europeans seem to choose each other when they could. At the end of the class, a group of about eight learners were talking together outside as I left; they were of different nationalities (I remember Chinese, Korean, Hungarian) and appeared to be exchanging written information. One of them gave me a short (friendly) verbal exclamation of what they were doing as I walked past, but I did not catch it.

Week 3: 26 September

This week there were 22 learners, two of whom were new. It was quite a lively class, and people seem to be mixing. I set several exercises for pairs and one for groups of three or four. For the group exercise I set the tape recorder running at one table, told the learners about it, and said that one group should work there, but I didn't mind which. One learner went to sit at that table immediately and was joined reasonably willingly by two others. I had to speak to some groups that had got too large and ask them to regroup, but I didn't specify how. I did not notice anyone having difficulty in being accepted in a group or a pair, although at one stage I saw two learners without partners and directed them to each other. One [Beate] was looking for a partner and the other [Feng] did not seem aware he hadn't got one. During the break I noticed the Chinese learners speaking to each other. [Klong] seemed enthusiastic to work with a Hungarian woman ([Nikola]) today.

Week 4: 3 October

There were 19 learners today. One was attending for the first time. The topic was making arrangements using prepositions of time and we looked at how to invite someone to do something with you, how to accept, and how to refuse politely. Most of the time they worked in pairs and to some extent I directed them as to who to work with. Initially I just said pairs and they all worked with others sitting near them. For the next exercise I asked them to find someone they didn't know well, and I did split one pair up ([Klong] and [Feng]) because I felt that they did already work together quite often. I directed [Karl] and [Latifa] to work together because neither had partners, and I sent [Klong] to the other side of the room in search of a partner. Then, because of the nature of the exercise, I wanted to be sure they were working with someone entirely different, so I gave them numbers and told them to work with their equivalent number. This was done by counting round the room, repeating the numbers once. I did not encounter any resistance to these pairings. It resulted in the two Thai learners working together; I monitored them and they seem to be speaking English throughout. When [Siraj] realised he was paired with [Ahmed] he exclaimed with pleasure, and I noticed that as they were sitting together [Ahmed] had his arm round [Siraj]'s shoulders. I then paired them by numbering them again, again because I felt it was appropriate for the activity that they should be thoroughly mixed up. Again pairs formed fairly happily.

Today there seemed to be a very relaxed and friendly atmosphere. At the end, when I asked everyone to fill in a report form about who they had worked with they seemed uninhibited about checking each other's names.

Week 5: 10 October

There were 18 learners today; two had not attended before. I asked them to write on a piece of paper the names of their friends in the class. Not all of them did this because I asked them to do it at beginning of the class and some of them were late.

During the class I asked them to work with the person sitting next to them; then with a different partner; then in threes. There did not seem to be any resistance to doing this.

Week 6: 17 October

This week there were 25 learners, one of whom had not attended before. [Klong] arrived during the break halfway through the lesson. During the lesson the learners were working in pairs. Initially they seem to choose people sitting near them. Later on I asked them to arrange themselves in alphabetical order of first name; they did so and when they next chose partners this affected who they chose because they again seemed to select people near them. For once exercise I split the room in half and asked them to choose a partner from the other half. For the final exercise I asked pairs to team up with another pair; some managed this but some obviously misunderstood the instruction and simply formed a different pair.

At the end of the class three of the learners, [Hea Jin] and two others, seem to be exchanging addresses. After class I observed [Saisuree] and [Hea Jin] sitting together on a park bench, writing.

Week 7: 7 November

This week there were 18 learners (the city was partly impassable because of flooding). One [Paolo] had moved up from the beginners' group, and three were new ([Yvonne], [Manuel] and [Francesca]). One was new this year but had attended class last year ([Gabriella]). The initial exercises involved the learners working in pairs and then changing partner; in the second half of the lesson they worked in groups of three. The groups were self selected, but one seemed particularly unsuccessful. [Zhen] seemed to be taking little part and [Siraj] seemed to want to do a different activity. [Paolo] seemed to latch onto [Karl] and stayed with him for most (all?) of the exercises. [Yvonne] and [Francesca] seemed to be included very quickly, and were exchanging addresses with other learners after class. There was some nationalistic tension caused by a question in an exercise asking them to compare Spanish and Italian food. [Gabriella] (Italian) and [Gloria] (Spanish) became quite heated. [Gabriella] told me I would have avoided the problem if I had made the comparative British food.

Week 8: 14 November

Today there were 18 learners, one of whom [Sonja] had not attended before. They seemed rather quiet and the pace seemed slow at first, but by the end they had become very lively. We did an exercise where the learners, in groups of three, asked everyone else in the class the answer to a question (e.g. what is the most popular country for foreign visitors?) I noticed that [Ahmed] appears not to join in actively sometimes e.g. sometimes he sits away from the others; he does not readily engage in interaction and seek other learners out. He did not seem very active during this exercise; just before the end I asked if he had asked

everybody yet and he went off to do so hurriedly (and apparently willingly). In another exercise, where the learners were arranging themselves in a particular order, he appeared to wait until he was told where to go. He seems to like working with [Siraj]. [Rosa] and [Ludmilla] seem to work together a lot. One activity was a game. Both [Saisuree] and [Klong] (in different groups) seemed very competitive. [Georgia] did not come for the class, but arrived at the end to take a class photo, as she is returning to Hungary on Saturday. She seemed to be arranging a party which other learners were going to. There was a lot of social interaction at the end of the class as learners were leaving.

Week 9: 21 November

Today numbers were lower (16) and four of the learners were there for the first time ([Nasreen], [Belma], [Jean-Luc] and [Yueling]). All the newcomers except [Jean-Luc] were already known to me. At the end I discussed with him the option of changing to a different class, as his level is higher than most of the rest of the group.

The first activity was done in pairs; I had to direct several learners to others who were without partners as they either did not grasp that they had to pair up, or they were reluctant to do so, maybe out of shyness. At one stage [Sonja] seemed to want to work with [Ludmilla] or [Rosa], but they were effectively leaving her out and working together.

In the final activity today, which was a paired writing exercise, I directed [Nasreen] and [Siraj] to work together; this was because they can both be quite burdensome as partners, [Nasreen] because her reading and writing skills are still elementary and [Siraj] because he often seems to be doing something other than that which he is instructed to do; they seemed to be reasonably happy working together.

In exercise 2 I got the learners to get into threes and then I ask them to change again because I was concerned that some of the groups would not work as groups; particularly [Sonja], [Ludmilla] and [Rosa], because [Ludmilla] and [Rosa] seemed to be excluding [Sonja]. So I told them to change again, and make sure that they were with people that they hadn't been with before. In fact, they did not all change; [Nasreen] and [Gianna] and [Jean-Luc] and [Belma] stayed together.

Week 10: 28 November

There was one new person this week [Franco]. There were 17 altogether. Ramadan has started and at least three of the learners are Muslim. One said he was fasting.

This week I specified that learners should not work in pairs where both spoke the same first language. I also moved some students into threes.

There was marked reluctance to sit at the table with the tape recorder for the last exercise.

I was conscious of being quite excited about the prospect of another job which I had just heard about; as a result I was more relaxed than usual and perhaps less aware of what the learners were doing.

At the end of the class one of the learners invited anyone who wanted to go for a coffee with her; there seemed to be a lot of social interaction among them today.

Week 11: 5 December

Today there were 17 learners; one [Patricia] had not been before. [Karolina] who has not been for some weeks came and told me at the end that she is going back to Hungary for Christmas soon, so she will not be in class for some weeks. [Fatima] was also there after a few weeks' absence; she told me she has been having a bad back. There were only two exercises where the learners worked in pairs; but one where they had to talk to a number of other people to get information. They seemed lively and sociable today. I noticed that [Karl], [Klong] and [Paolo] wanted to work together. Once when I told them not to work as a three [Paolo] went to join [Celine] and [Helena] (both very attractive) even though there was no chair so that he had to stand up. We were doing the passive which some of them found difficult to grasp; the more advanced learners were helping the others very noticeably, particularly [Elke] who helped first [Nasreen] and then [Fatima]. There was a lot of social interaction in the break and at the end, though [Saisuree] seems keener to interact with me.

Week 12: 12 December

There were 15 learners; it was Elke's last week and [Imrana] was new (she came with [Belma] and [Yueling]). [Gabriella] was very tired because of late nights at the restaurant. [Nasreen] looks much better and gave us a Christmas present. They generally seemed cheerful today and appeared to be mixing together well, although [Belma] and [Imrana] seemed reluctant to be split. There was a lot of interaction at the end of the class.

Today I had to start the interviews, and I was still not sure how to decide. I interviewed [Elke] because she is atypical in age and does not seem to have one person or group of people that she works with all the time. I also chose [Nasreen] because she has a totally different ethnic background from the others in the class, and also she has particular obvious needs in the group, ie she lives here permanently and wants friends (it's not a temporary situation she just has to put up with for a short time), and her reading and writing is very poor so she relies heavily on the other learners to help her. [Elke] mentioned in her interview that she would have liked to have made friends with [Fatima]; this struck me as quite sad as I know [Fatima] would like friends, but [Elke] is going back to Germany permanently.

Week 13: 19 December

Today we started with a group of 10 which rose to 12. At first they seemed quiet but by the break they had become very lively. [Klong] gave everybody chocolate at the break. We also had biscuits, as it was the last class of term, although this was not so good for the three Muslim learners who were keeping Ramadan.

[Belma] and [Imrana] seemed to want to stay together as much as possible, and [Belma] was very quiet. In the second exercise, where the learners were supposed be in pairs, I had to direct two learners to work together because they were the only two left without partners and they did not seem to want to pair up (or perhaps they just hadn't noticed that there were an even number of people and thought they needed to be in a three).

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE OF PILOT STUDY INTERVIEW
TRANSCRIPTS

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE OF PILOT STUDY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Key:

(.) pause

{ simultaneous speech

(laugh) speaker laughs

(laughter) both parties laugh

(?) inaudible

Interview 1: [Elke] (Germany)

1 I: Do you remember the first time you came?

2 L: The first time

3 I: Mm hm

4 L: Not really (.) two months ago September was in September (.) no I'm sorry

5 I just remember you say hello and sit down (laugh) or maybe I told you that I

6 came from Future Prospects yeah

7 I: Did you know any of the other students

8 L: No

9 I: So everyone was {was new (.) yeah

10 L: {mm everyone

11 I: How did you can you remember how you felt about the class when you joined

12 L: It was nice I enjoyed it because there were so different cultures {it was

1 I: {mm

14 L: Quite interesting

15 I: Mm hm had you been in that kind of class before

16 L: Um no well I um I worked as an instructor in Germany and um there were

17 different cultures too

18 I: Mm hm

19 L: So I was er used to different cultures and enjoyed it always

20 I: Mm hm do you like this kind of learning

21 L: Yeah the group learning you mean {yeah also the different aspects it's

22 I: {mm

23 L: Very um you use differing methods different different methods that I like

24 I: Mm

25 L: It's not boring because every couple of minutes there was (laughter)

26 I: How about changing the people you work with do you like that or is that hard

27 L: No I think it's important because you have to er to learn a language you
28 have to um talk with different people (.) yeah you try to understand and it's
29 not always easy to understand people you know (?) if you're always in the
30 same group (.) the advantage to be in the same group is you get closer to
31 people may maybe the conversation gets deeper

32 I: Mm

33 L: That's why I would prefer a closer group on the other hand er it's more
34 important to speak with {different nationalities

35 I: {mm (.) that that's interesting yeah do you like
36 working alone would you rather work alone sometimes

37 L: Um I think we can do that at home (laughter)

38 I: Are there other people in the class you don't much like working with

39 L: (.) No and there's alw- if there would be anybody I could always er avoid
40 working with them so there's no pressure to {(?) people you don't like

41 I: {that's good

42 L: I had no problem

43 I: Good good that's important Is it um like the way you've learnt English before

44 L: Well I learnt in school

45 I: Mm

46 L: It's different because there are different cultures and I get a better
47 understanding because um er (.) it's more difficult to understand people
48 from Thailand or with their accent than from people from France for example
49 um yeah for my job I think it's good to er listen to different accents because
50 that's what could happen to me (laughter) yeah

51 I: Yeah

52 L: Was that an answer to question what what was the question

53 I: Er I can't remember is it is it the way you've learnt English before {or is it

54 L: {Mm

55 I: different from the way you've learnt English before

56 L: Um yeah because I learnt English in the eighties it's twenty years ago and
57 it was in school they were all German and I think it's a little bit more
58 different but er yeah

59 I: Have you made any friends here

60 L: Not really I think I like [Latifa]

61 I: Yes

62 L: I never met her outside

63 I: Mm hm

64 L: I I was always too shy to ask could we met there or there two weeks ago it
65 was the first time we went together to a coffee

66 I: Mm hm

67 L: With some of the group (.) um with some people from the group but
68 usually I didn't have done (?) yeah but I think that was my part I could have
69 asked and I didn't ask it was all too maybe I'm a little bit older than most of
70 them that's also

71 I: Do you find that a bit of a barrier

72 L: Sometimes yes yeah

73 I: Do you know why that is

74 L: Um well they have different I'm not interested in nightclubs or something.
75 like that (.) the reason why I joined the group was that I could er (.) that I
76 could meet people and maybe make friends but I don't know why there was
77 no time for me too because I work all days the other days of the week and
78 I've got two other appointments in the evening (laughter) and weekends
79 that's the only time I have time but for example (Latifa) has a husband and
80 I I didn't ask her because I was thinking she's doing something with her
81 husband leave that there

82 I: Yes

83 L: Mm (laugh)

APPENDIX E: SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION FROM THE
OBSERVER'S NOTES FOR THE PILOT STUDY

APPENDIX E: SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION FROM THE OBSERVER'S NOTES FOR THE PILOT STUDY

Week 3:

Exercise 1 (pairs)

Hungarian	Chinese	Thai	Chinese	German	Pakistani	Egyptian	Czech	Slovakian	Italian
Czech	Brazilian	Chinese	Hungarian	Spanish	Hungarian	Hungarian	Czech	Slovakian	Hungarian

Exercise 2

It was less clear which pairs the learners were working in as they talked to others round them. A Korean learner moved to sit next to a Slovak learner but the Slovak ignored her and worked with another Slovak learner who was already sitting next to her.

Exercise 3 (fours)

Egyptian	Hungarian	Chinese	Slovakian	Chinese	Slovakian
Thai	Hungarian	Chinese	Spanish	Chinese	Korean
Hungarian	Czech	Brazilian	German	Iranian	Italian
Czech	Pakistani	Hungarian		Hungarian	Hungarian

The Czech students deliberately moved to sit next to each other. The teacher gave a lot of guidance initially, such as "don't work in a group with students who speak the same first language as you", and "choose a partner you haven't been with already". During group feedback a male learner (Thai) was poking a (Hungarian) female learner's hair with an pen. She did not seem to mind.

Week 5:

Exercise 1 (pairs)	Ahmed Karl	Gianna Saskia	Beate Celine	Gloria Nikola	Ludmilla Rosa Magdalena
	Lucia Siraj Saisuree	Georgia Latifa			
Exercise 2 (pairs)	Ahmed Karl	Gianna Saskia	Beate Celine	Gloria Nikola	Ludmilla Rosa Lucia
	Siraj Saisuree	Georgia Latifa	Klong Magdalena		
Exercise 3 (pairs)	Gianna Saskia	Ludmilla Rosa	Lucia Magdalena	Klong Saisuree	
Break	Beate Celine	Ahmed Karl	Nikola Georgia	Latifa Saskia	Ludmilla Beate
	Magdalena Lucia Hea Jin	Gloria Ludmilla Rosa	Rosa Lucia		
Exercise 4 (pairs)	Ahmed Klong	Gianna Magdalena	Beate Rosa	Gloria Ludmilla	Lucia Hea Jin
	Siraj Karl	Saisuree Georgia	Latifa Saskia	Nikola Celine	
Exercise 5 (threes)	Ahmed Lucia Siraj	Gianna Magdalena	Beate Gloria Ludmilla	Hea Jin Saisuree Georgia	Latifa Karl Klong
	Nikola Celine Rosa				

Additional comments:

Not everyone worked in pairs in exercise 3; some chose to work alone.

During the break there was some overlap with the learners from the beginners' class.

Teacher's comments in exercise 5, "[Klong] needs a partner, [Ahmed] needs a partner".

Week 6:

Exercise 1 (pairs)	Latifa Elke	Karl Nikola	Gloria Ahmed	Celine Siraj	Georgia Saisuree	Zhen Saskia
	Gianna Ana	Teresa Magdalena				
Exercise 2 (pairs)	Latifa Karolina	Elke Teresa	Karl Zhen Feng	Gloria Celine	Georgia Magdalena	Siraj Saisuree
	Gianna Saskia	Nikola Ahmed Erfan	Lucia Hea Jin	Rosa Beate		Ludmilla Ana
Exercise 3 (pairs)	Latifa Rosa	Elke Saisuree	Karl Siraj	Gloria Nikola	Ahmed Erfan	Zhen Feng
	Gianna Ana	Teresa Karolina	Georgla Beate	Lucia Magdalena	Rosa Hea Jin	
Exercises 4 & 5 (pairs)	Latifa Elke Siraj	Karl Gianna	Nikola Lucia	Hea Jin Saisuree	Georgia Ana	Celine Magdalena
	Klong Teresa	Ludmilla Gloria	Karollna Zhen	Feng Saskia	Rosa Ahmed	Beate Erfan
Exercise 6 (2 pairs joining together)	Latifa Elke Nikola Lucia	Karl Gloria Hea Jin Saisuree	Celine Saskia Feng Magdalena Siraj	Georgia Ana Klong Teresa		

Additional comments:

In exercise 3 [Karl] was talking to [Zhen] and [Feng].

In exercise 6 [Siraj] swapped groups.

Teacher's directions about grouping:

"I'd like you o choose any partner now." "Can you all get into a pair." "Do that bit with your partner and do that bit with somebody else." "Have you got a partner?" "No you don't need to change partner." "So, [Ahmed], if you'll work with the person next to you and with your partner you work in a three." "I want you to look round the room; I want you to look at each other and choose a partner you haven't worked with already."

Week 7:

Additional notes:

Teacher in exercise 1 said' "Get into different pairs; I'd like you o get a new partner; rearrange yourselves."

Exercise 1 (pairs)	Siraj Klong	Beate Manuel	Magdalena Latifa	Karl Paolo	Lucia Yvonne
	Georgia Elke	Rosa Ludmilla	Gloria Gabriella	Saisuree Francesca	
Exercise 2 (pairs)	Siraj Magdalena	Klong Latifa	Beate Francesca	Karl Paolo	Elke Yvonne
	Georgia Lucia	Rosa Gloria	Gabriella Ludmilla	Saisuree Manuel	
Break	Lucia Georgia Elke	Paolo Gloria	Gabriella Francesca		
Exercise 3 (threes)	Siraj Magdalena Latifa	Beate Manuel Francesca	Yvonne Elke Gloria	Rosa Ludmilla Gabriella	Saisuree Lucia Georgia
	Klong Karl Paolo				

Week 8:

Exercise 1 (threes)	Siraj Karl Ahmed	Rosa Ludmilla Elke	Yvonne Magdalena Sonja	Gianna Gloria Gabriella	Lucia Saisuree Celine	Klong Paolo Francesca
Exercise 2 (pairs)	Klong Gloria	Gianna Elke	Yvonne Gabriella	Magdalena Ludmilla	Paolo Ahmed	Sonja Saisuree
	Lucia Celine	Rosa Francesca	Siraj Karl			
Exercise 3 (threes)	Klong Celine Lucia	Paolo Rosa Yvonne	Francesca Gloria Ludmilla	Gabriella Ahmed Elke	Gianna Siraj Karl	Lucia Sonja Saisuree

Teacher instructions:

Exercise 1 – "Get into six groups please."

Exercise 2 – "Choose a partner, any partner."

Exercise 3 – "Get into groups of three – organise yourselves."

Week 9:

Exercise 1 (pairs)	Gianna Nasreen	Sonja Karl	Rosa Ludmilla	Klong Francesca	Siraj Yueling
	Jean-Luc Belma	Celine Helena	Gloria Saisuree		
Exercise 2 (threes)	Francesca Saisuree Klong Karl	Yueling Rosa Sonja	Celine Nasreen Gianna	Ludmilla Gloria Helena	Siraj Jean-Luc Belma
Break	Gianna Saisuree Celine	Karl Saisuree	Francesca Klong	Siraj Jean-Luc	Yueling Belma
	Sonja Ludmilla	Gloria Rosa			
Exercise 4 (pairs)	Gianna Belma	Nasreen Siraj	Sonja Celine	Rosa Klong	Karl Francesca
	Jean-Luc Yueling	Ludmilla Gloria	Saisuree Helena		
After class	Klong Celine (arranging to meet later)	Helena Celine	Gloria Celine (Gloria saying "Where is Klong?")		

Teacher's instructions:

Exercise 1 - "I'd like you to get into pairs." "Have you got a partner?" "You need to be in pairs." "[Sonja], who's your partner?" "[Karl] will you be partners with [Sonja]?"

Exercise 2 - "I'd like you to get into different groups of three." "Actually I want you to change round; I want you to be in groups with people you haven't been working with." "You want to work in a four; that's OK; we need one group of four. Now try and do this as a group."

Exercise 4 - "Choose a partner you haven't been with today." "Sit somewhere you can see the television." "A different partner." "You haven't changed? Well you should have changed. Who can do a swap?"

Week 10:

Exercise 1 (pairs)	Celine Yueling	Franco Helena	Belma Francesca	Lucia Gabriella	Elke Nasreen
	Ludmilla Rosa	Magdalena Siraj	Karl Klong		
Exercise 2 (threes)	Celine Yueling Lucia	Franco Helena Gabriella	Belma Francesca Sonja	Magdalena Ludmilla Elke	Siraj Rosa Nasreen
	Karl Klong				
Exercise 3 (pairs)	Yueling Belma	Lucia Gianna	Antonio Magdalena Helena	Celine Sonja	Siraj Nasreen
	Ludmilla Elke	Rosa Klong	Francesca Karl		
Exercise 4 (threes and fours)	Yueling Belma Lucia Gianna	Antonio Magdalena Helena	Celine Sonja Nasreen	Ludmilla Elke Siraj	Rosa Klong Francesca Karl

Week 11:

Exercise 1 (pairs)	Helena Lucia	Celine Magdalena	Feng Saisuree	Nasreen Elke Klong	Sonja Karolina
	Belma Latifa	Patricia Franco	Karl Paolo		
Exercise 2 (pairs)	Latifa Elke	Sonja Nasreen	Celine Helena Paolo	Patricia Lucia	Saisuree Karl
	Franco Belma	Klong Feng	Karolina Magdalena		

Teachers instructions:

Exercise 1 - "Now I want you to work in pairs. Choose a partner, one of the people you've been writing about." "Choose a partner, any partner. I don't want people to work in threes; I want them to work in twos."

Exercise 2 - "Choose a different partner and ask them ..." "Are you in twos?" (To Paolo) "Choose a pair and join it to make three."

Week 12:

Exercises 2 and 3 (pairs)	Franco Yueling	Celine Gianna	Gabriella Lucia	Patricia Helena	Imrana Belma
	Elke Sonja	Nasreen Magdalena Klong			
Break	Celine Helena Sonja Lucia Klong				
Exercise 4 (threes)	Franco Belma Gianna	Klong Patricia Elke	Nasreen Sonja Magdalena	Celine Yueling Gabriella	Imrana Helena Lucia
After class	Celine Helena	Gabriella Magdalena	Imrana Belma	Celine Lucia	Lucia Magdalena
	Elke Nasreen	Magdalena Klong	Imrana Belma Yueling	Celine Sonja Lucia	Patricia Celine
	Elke Nasreen Gabriella	Helena Lucia	Gabriella Elke		

Exercise 4 – “First get a partner.” “You can have a three, there are 15 of you.” “I’d like you in threes this time.” “Try and find someone you haven’t just been working with.” “Find someone exciting.” “Who is not in a three? Nearly everybody isn’t at the moment.” “You need somebody.” “Are you a three? You were a three.” “We have three twos.” “We’ll have to split you up because you worked together before.”

Week 13:

Exercise 1	Karl Klong	Helena Belma Imrana	Gabriella Franco	Yueling Gianna Nasreen	
Exercise 2 (pairs)	Belma Yueling	Franco Karl	Klong Helena	Imrana Gianna	Gabriella Nasreen
Exercise 3 (fours)	Gabriella Belma Yueling Lucia	Karl Klong Franco Helena	Imrana Nasreen Gianna Sonja		

APPENDIX F: PILOT STUDY SOCIOGRAM 1

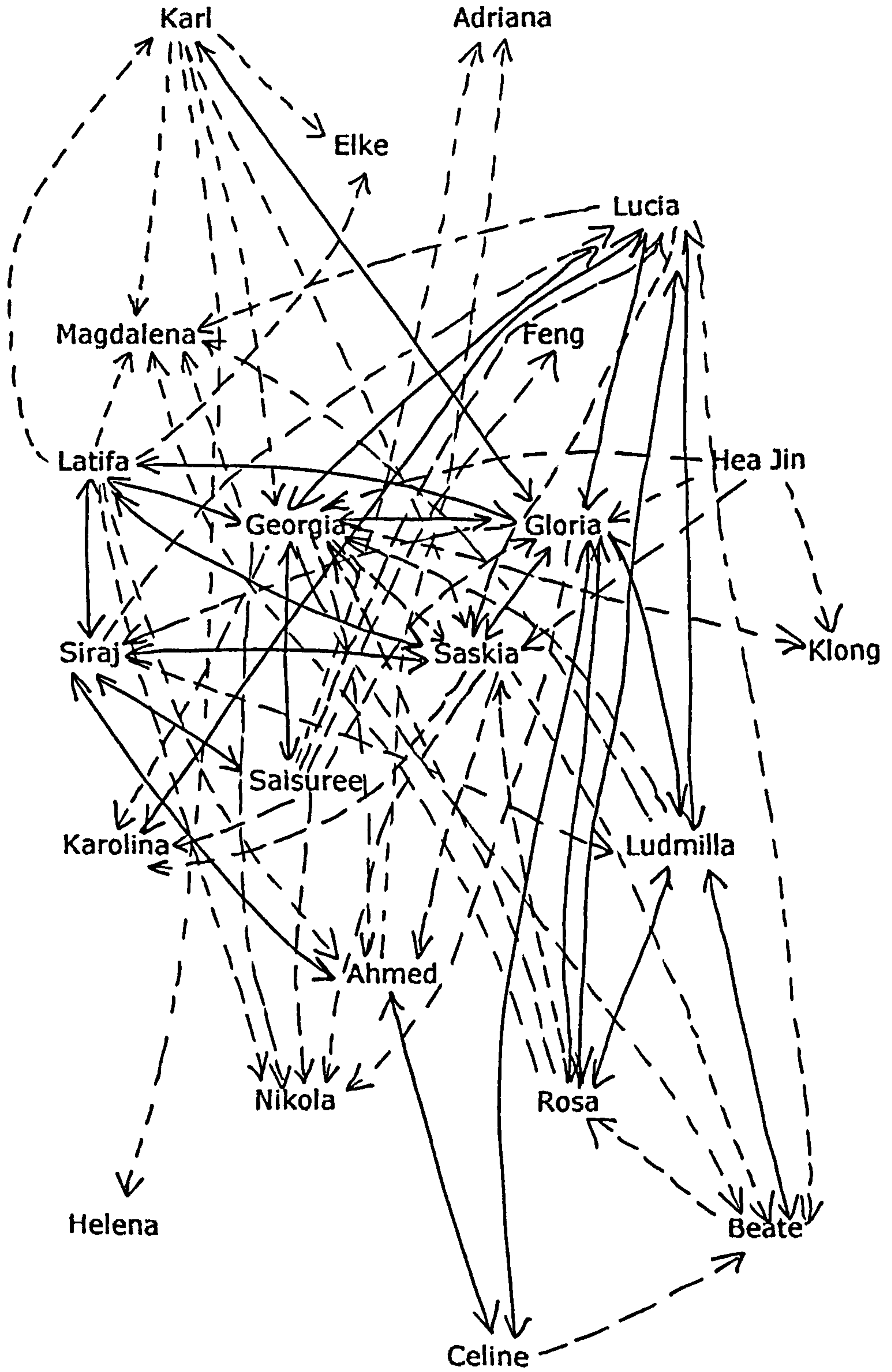
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APPENDIX F: PILOT STUDY SOCIOGRAM 1

Key:

A - - - - -> B = B is named by A

A <- - - - -> B = A and B name each other



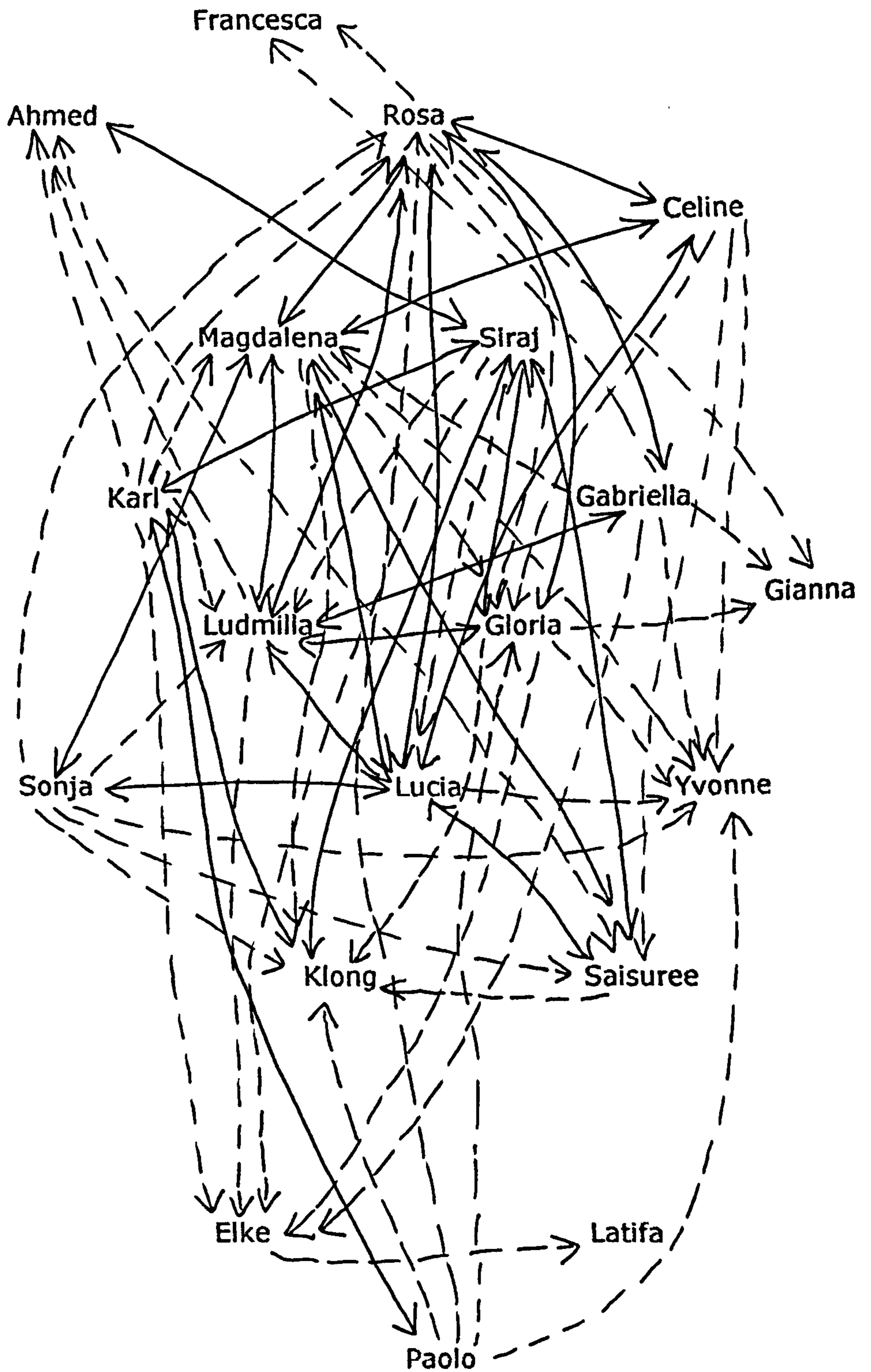
APPENDIX G: PILOT STUDY SOCIOGRAM 2

APPENDIX G: PILOT STUDY SOCIOGRAM 2

Key:

A - - - - -> B = B is named by A

A \longleftrightarrow B = A and B name each other



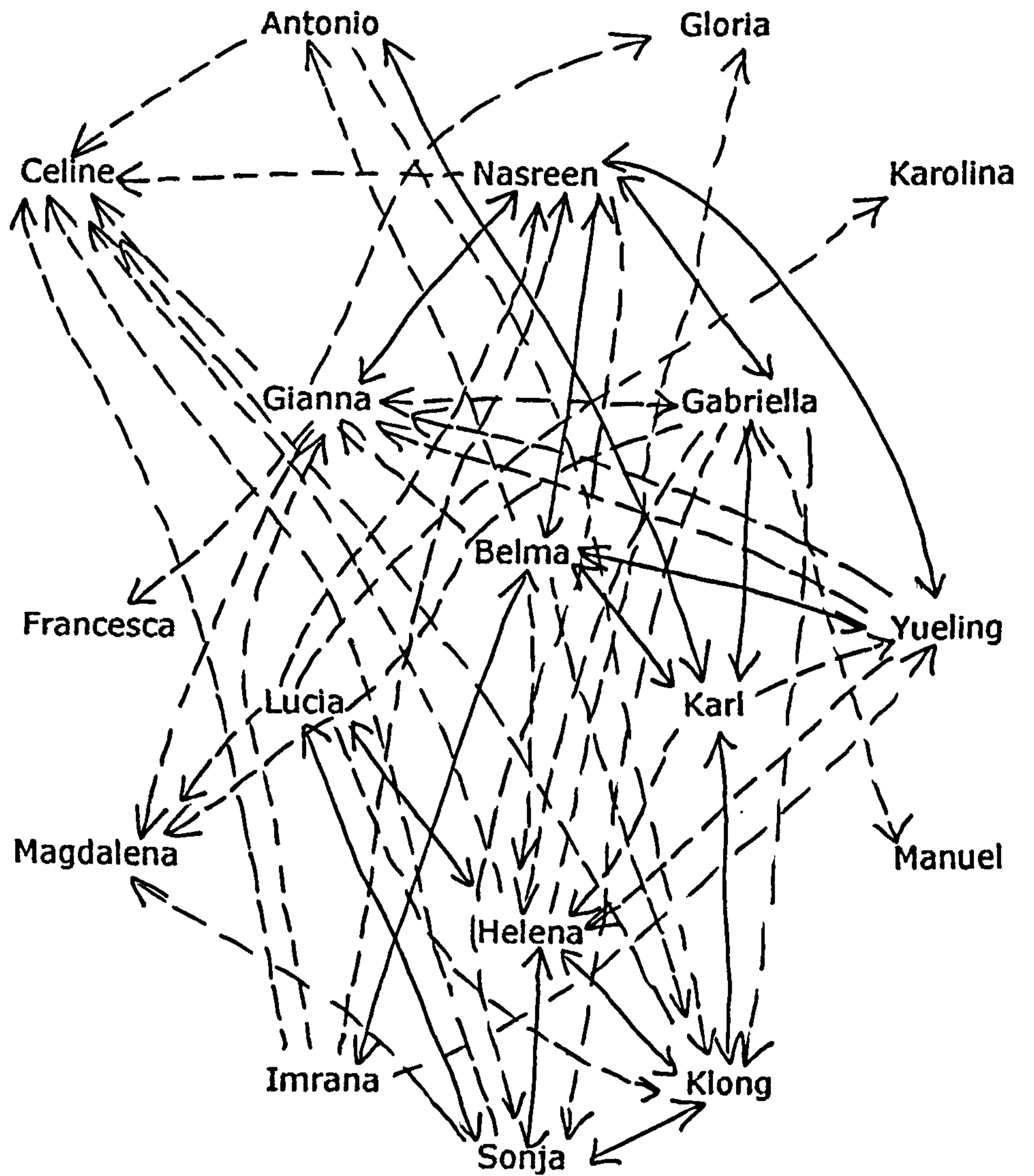
APPENDIX H: PILOT STUDY SOCIOGRAM 3

APPENDIX H: PILOT STUDY SOCIOGRAM 3

Key:

A - - - - -> B = B is named by A

A \longleftrightarrow B = A and B name each other



APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW CHECKLIST FROM PILOT STUDY

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- 1. Do you remember when you first joined the class? How did you feel about the other students?**
- 2. Do you like doing things in pairs and groups, or would you prefer to work alone? Why?**
- 3. How is this different from the way you've learned English before?**
- 4. Do you have any friends here?**

Checklist for prompts:

- 1. 1st Impressions: other students - known/unknown**
- how describe? strange/same/different etc.
- 2. Ideas about learning: pairs/groups/alone**
non-native speakers help/hinder
others in class: likes/dislikes
- 3. Previous experiences: places, age, regimes etc.**
- 4. Friends: who? doing what?**

APPENDIX J: SAMPLE OF PILOT STUDY GROUP WORK TRANSCRIPTS

APPENDIX J: SAMPLE OF PILOT STUDY GROUP WORK TRANSCRIPTS

Transcription of group work 2

Key

A = [Karl] B = [Klong] C = [Paolo]

} = speaks simultaneously

(?) = inaudible

1. A It's me [Karl] [Klong] and
2. B [Paolo]}
3. C [Paolo]}
4. A All right OK look at this example I think Japan is safer than New York
5. B America
6. A I know I know problem
7. B They never stop it keep go on on and on one after another one I mean why
8. why is it now because you like it
9. A I think to American are more polite than English people
10. B I don't think so I don't think so New York Paris Liverpool so we have to make
11. a sentence OK
12. A A similar sentence
13. B I think I think Paris
14. A Paris is more beautiful than New York
15. B Oh yeah
16. A Well I don't know because I never been there
17. B (?)
18. A OK I think that you have to be because
19. B You know night club thing you know a lot of trouble going on down there
20. A Italian food or Spanish food is
21. B We have to write
22. A I think Paris is more beautiful than New York
23. C Heh heh this is a problem the second question eh
24. B Italian food is (laughter)
25. A You have to say something
26. B You have to say because I never
27. C No because I feel the Italian food is always pasta because Spanish food is
28. very different for example the typical plate of Spain is the Paella and the

29. omelette the the Spanish food is very for example the best food the best
30. people to cook food is the North Spain
31. A OK
32. C Is good
33. B OK
34. C I don't think so
35. B No is OK I know
36. C Italian food is the best food
37. B No no because I don't really know much about food
38. C (?)
39. B OK It much better
40. C Spanish food and wine is very good Spanish wine maybe the Spanish wine
41. and the French wine are the best wines in the world

APPENDIX K: SUMMARY OF THE DATA FROM THE CLASS REGISTER FOR AUTUMN TERM 2001

APPENDIX K: SUMMARY OF THE DATA FROM THE CLASS REGISTER FOR AUTUMN TERM 2001

(members of 'core group' are in bold)

	Name of learner	Week number														Total attendances
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
1	Abdallah	/	/	-	/	/	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	/	6
2	Andrea	/	/	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
3	Andreas	/	/	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	13
4	Anita	/	/	-	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
5	Dipok	/	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
6	Elizabetta	/	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
7	Francesco	/	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
8	Hookyoung	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	14
9	Hunmin	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	-	-	/	-	-	-	9
10	Jan	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	14
11	Juan	/	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
12	Karin	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	13
13	Luigi	/	/	/	/	/	-	-	/	-	-	-	/	/	/	9
14	Magalet	/	/	-	/	/	/	-	/	-	/	/	/	-	-	9
15	Minjo	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	-	12
16	Sofia	/	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
17	Umaporn	/	/	/	/	-	-	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	12
18	Fatima		/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
19	Fillis		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	12
20	Li		/	/	-	/	/	-	/	/	-	-	-	-	-	6
21	Louise		/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
22	Mariam		/	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	-	-	-	/	9
23	Pierre		/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
24	Song Bo		/	/	/	/	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
25	Soon-Keum		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	-	-	/	/	11
26	Vahideh		/	-	-	-	-	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
27	Anne			/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	/	/	/	-	4
28	Ham-Ei			/	/	/	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	-	-	9
29	Kristi			/	/	/	/	/	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
30	Eva				/	/	/	-	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
31	Jerome				/	/	/	-	/	/	-	/	-	/	/	8
32	Lenka				/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	9
33	Mujibur				/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
34	Parvaneh				/	-	-	/	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
35	Saleh				/	/	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
36	Sang-Kwan				/	-	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	/	9
37	Shamim				/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
38	Asha					/	/	-	-	/	/	-	/	-	-	5
39	Carolina					/	/	-	/	/	-	/	/	/	-	7
40	Gianplacido					/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
41	Siu Wa					/	/	/	-	/	-	-	/	/	-	6
42	Antonio						/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
43	Eugenie						/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
44	Marcella						/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
45	Ayhan							/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
46	Monika							/	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
47	Nobuko							/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	8
48	Olga							/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	8
49	Omar							/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
50	Isabella								/	/	-	-	-	-	-	2
51	Isadora								/	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
52	Julio								/	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
53	Roberto								/	/	-	-	-	-	-	2
55	Young-Joon								/	-	/	/	/	-	-	4
54	Ibrahim								/	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total learners:		17	26	17	25	24	26	19	29	21	16	17	18	17	13	

APPENDIX L: TEACHER'S LOG FOR MAIN STUDY

APPENDIX L: TEACHER'S LOG FOR MAIN STUDY

Week 1: 12 September

This was the first class of term. There is no beginners' teacher, although this may change when we see how many students enrol. Today 17 attended; there were others on the register who did not attend. I knew 6 of them already; I had taught 2 of them before. Some of the class was taken up with form filling and explanations. I gave the students the consent forms to sign. We also managed an activity in pairs, and another which involved them all talking to everyone in the group, or more or less. They were trying to find the names of people who, for example, had been to Japan, or who had no brothers and sisters. They were generally quick to speak to each other, though they didn't always understand each other. They seemed to manage to speak English during the break, as I requested. Some of them already knew each other, and two girls, [Andrea] and [Karin], were making social arrangements during the class activities.

Week 2: 19 September

Today there were 23 learners, of 12 different nationalities. I gave them the questions for interview 1 to look at towards the end of the lesson, so they made a point of finding out each other's nationalities. Some learners found it difficult to be sure of their nationality: [Mariam] is British but tends to say she's Kenyan because that is her original nationality; she doesn't seem sure she can call herself British. [Umaporn] has now got British nationality but used to be Thai. [Jan] is from Hong Kong but has Dutch nationality through living in a Dutch Caribbean state. At first the learners were a little quiet, although friendly with each other. The focus of the class was questions, and the class soon became noisy as the learners asked each other questions and answered. They worked in pairs and no one seemed to have any problems finding someone to work with. I asked them to do one activity in groups. I prescribed the groups by giving each person a number. Each group carried out the activity (building questions out of word cards) and every learner played a part in their group. Because of the recent terrorist attacks in the USA and the presence of several Muslims in the class, I made the focus on different nationalities overt and everyone joined in the exercise and discussion. This was an attempt to discourage any covert racism that might be lurking. There seemed to be no problems, and [Vahideh] was able to tell the class a story about an American man who had driven his car into a Mosque. I suspect [LI] is less likely to form close relationships with the others than most. She approached me and asked if I would visit her at home. I explained how busy I was and was non-committal. I think something may be bothering her. Last week [Elizabethta] was very attention seeking and complained (a) that she didn't understand and (b) that [Abdallah] didn't understand when he was working with her. There was none of that today.

Week 3: 26 September

Today there were 17 learners. Three were new - [Ham-Ei], [Anne] and [Kristi] . There was very little group work today. I managed to interview x of the learners. They just about managed to answer the questions that had been pre-prepared. Despite the lower numbers the class was lively, and the learners seemed to be getting on well together, although [LI] still seems a bit isolated. When I asked them if they knew everyone's names, and got them to say who they knew, everyone seemed to know [Mariam], which pleased her. [Karin] said it was difficult to learn the others' names because she could not pronounce them. In the break [Karin], [Andrea] and [Anne] were smoking together outside. They are all au pairs. [Ham-Ei], [LI] and [Hookyoung] were discussing recipes. All the Korean women left together.

Week 4: 3 October

Today there were 25 learners. They worked in threes at one point and there were a pair, one of whom [Abdallah] was quite weak, so I split the pair and put them

with 3s to make 4s. There were 2 new men from Bangladesh who found it hard to do the work - they came late. I did a few more interviews. Several of the 25 were there for the first time. [Mariam] has got a job with M & S and is worried about her N.I. number. [Karin], [Mariam] and [Filis] left together. I walked with them some of the way. [Filis] told me that her 13 year old daughter suffers racism at school. In the final (writing) activity I let them choose whether to work in pairs or on their own.

Week 5: 10 October

There were 24 learners today, and 4 new ones: [Nadine] who was in the class last year, a Chinese man (knows [Jan]), a Kurdish woman (knows [Filis]) and an Italian man (who soon made friends with [Luigi]). They worked in threes on an exercise on clothes vocabulary and seemed to work together reasonably well. [Abdallah], who is a beginner, seemed to be being looked after by some of the older women; he is now quite confident about volunteering answers. Two beginners who came half way through last week have not come back. [LJ], who I thought might not come back, was there this week; she seemed quite cheerful, but she sat far away from the board and said she could not see. The new Kurdish woman is quite weak at English; at first she sat with [Filis] whom she knows, who translated for her; later she worked with others and seemed to be managing. When I asked her later she said she had not understood everything. I interviewed two students who said there were Japanese students in the class, although there are not. [Jerome] made it clear in his interview that he prefers to work on his own, and finds group activities a bit of a waste of time. He can present as distant but I have taught him before and like him, so he copes. [Mariam] is very cheerful because she starts work next week. It is interesting that none of the Iranian learners came this week. Is this connected with the bombing of Afghanistan that started this week?

Week 6: 17 October

25 learners. We are now getting consistently large groups so that I can teach using large group methods, which I prefer. One was new and came because she wanted to talk to me about getting a job in a law firm. She took up rather a lot of time during the break and at the end that I would rather have spent with the others. There was a new Italian woman who has been coming on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but may change to Wednesday, as she seems to like the interaction. She asked Andrew if she could come on Wednesday instead of Tuesday. There was also a new Italian man. [Luigi] was away playing football at the University. We did work in pairs asking questions and using the past tense; this seemed to work reasonably well. As it was the final week of the half term and we were reviewing the work we'd done, I asked all the learners who had done the homework from two weeks before to read part of it out. Some of it was quite personal (e.g. one woman getting engaged). Generally they read it out well and the other learners listened quietly and were supportive. [Mariam] started her new job today (she left half way through the class). She was nervous, but several of the others obviously knew about it and were wishing her well.

Week 7: 31 October

There were 19 learners today, including two new Turkish men and a new Japanese woman and a Moldavian woman, who all participated very well. There was also a new Slovakian woman, who was a bit quieter. I had been concerned that the Iranians were not attending, and worried if it was because of the war. However [Vahideh] and [Parvaneh] were back, and seemed relaxed. [Vahideh] said she had a headache. She also wanted to tell the class about a television programme she had watched and which had horrified her because it had shown executions of women. [Vahideh] is the only female Iranian learner in the group who does not wear a head covering. The Moldavian woman was not at all shy and said at the end she had enjoyed the class. [Umaporn] was back from Thailand and a bit jet lagged. The class felt quite different without [Andreas]. [Minjo] had cut [Ham-Ei]'s hair. During the break (and into the second half of the lesson) she cut Andrew's. The men in the group were very interested; the women thought it was amusing. They

also thought it was amusing when Andrew fell asleep during the first half of the lesson.

Week 8: 7 November

Today there were 28 learners including a new Korean woman and several new Spaniards. It was a very lively and noisy lesson, involving quite a lot of movement and people in groups talking to other groups. At one point I asked learners to get into 2s and 3s and I told some learners which groups to be in, because they were late coming back from their break and the groups had already formed. I asked one [Kristi] to choose a 2 and join them, but instead she joined a 3 and made 2x2. Because we needed 12 groups (not 13) I moved her to form a 3 with a 2. The learners I directed were [Karin] and [Magalet]. I noticed interaction between [Karin] and [Mariam], trying to arrange to meet, before class started.

Week 9: 14 November

Today there were 21 learners, although one was [Filis]'s husband and left after a few minutes. (He has been before in previous years but is clearly unenthusiastic. [Filis] wants him to come because she wants him to get a job.) I noticed that two of the Spanish students, [Roberto] and [Isabella], sat together, and that [Filis], her husband and [Asha] (also Kurdish) sat together. Initially the group were quite quiet but they worked together willingly. Some get into pairs with friends, like [Karin] and [Carolina], whilst some are more diffident, like [Jerome] (who has indicated he does not much value working with others) and [Siu Wa], who often has to be allocated a partner. Both participate well, though, and they are friendly. I asked them to write down the names of the people they had worked with. The observer noted the pairs they had worked in, but the learners also swapped partners in one activity, and also worked informally with those they sat next to some of the time, so I do not expect the two records to tally exactly.

Week 10: 21 November

There were sixteen learners. I noted that in the break [Nobuko], [Young-joon], [Minjo] and [Sang-Kwan] were in a group; [Filis] and [Lenka] were talking together.

Week 11: 28 November

Today there were 17 learners. They had all been before. [Jerome] was happy, laughing and sociable. [Carolina] and [Olga] were fighting over who should work with him. [Young-joon] is becoming much bolder at speaking to me in English. [Karin], [Magalet] and [Anne] are very much a group. The Koreans, [Umaporn] and [Nobuko] are friendly and like to work together - although [Ham-Ei] seems more keen to mix. I had to tell [Hookyoung] and [Sang-Kwan] not to work with other Koreans on one or two occasions. Andrew and I took photos; this did not cause any difference in behaviour.

Week 12: 5 December

Today there were 16 learners, again there was no one new. The first exercise I gave them was for them to work on individually, nevertheless some voluntarily formed pairs to do it. In the first pair activity I deliberately put [Carolina] and [Filis] together because [Carolina] seemed to be finding it hard to find a partner. In a later activity I separated [Karin] and [Magalet]. They clearly wanted to work together, but did not resist being split up. Today we took photos again.

Week 13: 12 December

Today there were 17 learners. I noticed that [Jerome] moved seat when [Nobuko] arrived and sat next to him; he went to sit on his own. At one stage 4 of the 5 male learners were sitting together and only [Luigi] was with female learners. Today I took data for a sociogram. [Minjo] had brought Korean national costume to show everyone. [Mariam] could not come to class but left a plant and a Christmas card with the caretaker.

Week 14: 19 December

Today there were 13 learners, no new ones, but [Abdallah] was back after long absence. I had to give some help once in getting the students into different pairs, but this was not resisted. [Andreas] had made a pizza and at the end of the class several of the learners took group photos, which everyone joined in with.

APPENDIX M: INTERVIEW WITH [SUSAN] THE TEACHER WHO
TOOK OVER THE CLASS AT [X] IN JANUARY 2002

APPENDIX M: INTERVIEW WITH [SUSAN] THE TEACHER WHO TOOK OVER THE CLASS AT [X]
IN JANUARY 2002

18 September 2002

Conventions:

A = Interviewer

S = [Susan]

{ = speaks simultaneously

(.) = pause

(?) = unintelligible

1. A: OK so I know you've been teaching ESOL classes at [X] for about two years
2. S: Yup that's right
3. A: Um I'd like to talk to you about teaching ESOL particularly mixed nationality groups which I presume
4. the ESOL classes are
5. S: Yes they are yuh yuh
6. A: Um taking last year (.) ESOL classes at [X] what nationalities were represented there
7. S: Um we had the European a lot um Czech French Spanish Swedish Italian
8. Portuguese Greek um and then we had a few from Bangladesh a couple from India
9. and a lot from Turkey a couple of Iranians a couple of Middle Eastern students and
10. Chinese Korean Japanese
11. A: So it was a very wide range
12. S: It was a very wide range yup yup a very wide range
13. A: Would you say it was a wide range of ability as well as nationality
14. S: Yes to a certain extent becau- but we only take to pre-intermediate um and in
15. fact this year we're being even stricter on that it's beginners who can read and write
16. some English up to a pre-intermediate level
17. A: So that you've got a definite cut off point
18. S: Yes yes
19. A: OK looking at the relationships between the students in class um (.) would you say that they seem to
20. make friends with each other in class
21. S: Yes they do in fact one of our students who's from Moldavia got married the other
22. week and she came in showing her pictures and there was a lot of students there
23. A: At the wedding
24. S: At the wedding yes so they do make um and I've got a Yemeni student who's
25. married to a British um gentleman and he (.) I don't know whether I don't know
26. whether she goes out with him or not I haven't quite worked this out but she was
27. she's now very friendly with a Malaysian lady
28. A: Great so they
29. S: They are meeting outside the classes
30. A: Mm do you feel you're aware of that while you're teaching them who's friends with who
31. S: Yes yes because they tend to want to work together if they're friends

32. A: Do you think their relationships with each other um has any influence over the way they perform in class

33. S: (.) Yes I think so because if they're friendly with each other and they know they

34. they're much better at at speaking activities I mean say I do a jigsaw speaking

35. activity or something like that then they're much obviously if they're friends they're

36. much they get into it more and they feel they can ask each other I don't understand

37. this or what's she asking me or (.) things so yes they do yes oh yes it's a much

38. better atmosphere if they're all friends

39. A: Oh that's good yes um have you ever the other side of that have you ever been aware of any hostility

40. between students or groups of students

41. S: Yes yes it's normally a colour

42. A: Mm (.) can you give me an example

43. S: I've got a Polish is very reluctant to work with a Bangladeshi

44. A: Mm so what do you do about that

45. S: Um (.) what I do is normally rather than pairing them up I put them maybe in a

46. four or a five and gently I mean there hasn't been nobody's ever said to me I'm not

47. go- nobody's ever said to me I'm not going to do it but what students do isn't it

48. have very clever strategies of starting with this and then as soon as you're looking

49. at something else you suddenly realise they've quite subtly shifted themselves so

50. they're in a nice comfortable position and it depends how well I know them (.) I

51. mean now we're starting and I would never at this moment ever force anybody to

52. work together because then they I don't think they'll come back

53. A: No no so you've got to be {careful about student retention

54. S: {Yeah I think when you get yeah when you get when you get

55. (.) and you don't want other people to pick it up I mean if I had an openly racist

56. remark then I would have to address it but {I've never had anything

57. A: {Have you ever no

58. S: No I mean when I taught abroad um in Moslem I've had openly sexist in the

59. British Council I won't work with women I won't be in a class with women but that's

60. then when you're like their your you know their culture you have we just well we

61. accepted it to a certain point

62. A: But you feel that because they're in Britain you can say our policy is equal opportunities or whatever if

63. you need to

64. S: Yes I suppose I don't know if it's double standards actually I feel (.) the

65. prejudice about men and women in a Moslem country is based on the religion that I

66. feel I have no right to interfere with but just because somebody's got a different

67. colour of the skin I don't care where they are I don't feel that's acceptable

68. A: So you would crack down on that but

69. S: I would but very subtly if it was open

70. A: And you you don't really generally need to do that

71. S: (.) No I've only once had to tell a lady I'm not going to work with him (.) and I

72. said (.) afterwards I said why and she said well you know he's from India and I said

73. what's the problem with that then well you know and I said well I didn't know but I

74. didn't pursue it any further I knew exactly what she meant
75. A: Do you find they ever make excuses like I can't understand what they're saying
76. S: No nobody has said that to me no 'cause I must say at the moment um (.) quite
77. a lot of the um (.) I mean the people from er who are non-white so called would um
78. have actually got very good spoken English
79. A: Mm oh well so that wouldn't {stand up anyway
80. S: {So it's not no it's not going to stand up anyway no I
81. haven't no I haven't had that I've had people sort of never say but some students
82. take time don't they to say something they're understanding everything but they
83. don't actually just want to articulate it and then I do try to make sure that I pair
84. them up with somebody or in a group where somebody's going to be sympathetic
85. and take time with them
86. A: So that requires you to know your students pretty well {really
87. S: {Mm mm mm
88. A: Um when you're putting them into pairs or groups and it's a mixed nationality setting can you tell me what
89. you see as the advantages and disadvantages
90. S: Of mix in mixed {nationalities
91. A: {Mixed nationality small group or pair work
92. S: (.) I mean one of them is that that you they'll all speak English 'cause that's
93. going to be the common language and it and with adults it's different than with say
94. teenagers with adults they normally have well they do they have enough sort of
95. manners not to really speak in their own language if two of them is there they don't
96. normally do that I am amazed (.) even at lower level that they are really aware
97. 'cause I think actually they probably have people talking in another language and
98. they find they haven't understood and they don't like it um I think it's I think it's
99. um I think it's it gets them mixing it gets them with different ideas meeting people
100. seeing that other people have different lives (.) the disadvantage is that if you have
101. people that don't have the same I suppose the educational background if you have
102. somebody who is who may never have done group work doesn't understand the
103. idea well we might get into a circle and discuss things because they've never done
104. that
105. A: Mm so how do you deal with that
106. S: Gently (.) I mean I normally at the beginning I explain very care- you know
107. very carefully what we want to do and actually I've got an elementary pre-int I
108. explain why I'm doing it
109. A: And that always works does it
110. S: (.) It always yes I don't know if it always works
111. A: But I mean they don't you don't get people who say I'm not going to learn like that I'm not going to
112. do the activity
113. S: No no no no I never yet I've never had somebody who's said that they won't do
114. the activity I've had somebody who hasn't been convinced of the benefit of doing it
115. and they would like to sit um either with a tape or with a work sheet (.) on their

116. own and have me as one to have the teacher as one to one and then I have to
 117. explain to them the benefit and one of the things I always say is that you're no-
 118. this isn't real life you're never going to sit probably very often have a one to one
 119. conversation you're going to be in a group and you're gonna meet different people
 120. and you're not going to do a work sheet unless you fill up a form (.) and even then
 121. you're going to have to do something with this work sheet 'cause you're going to
 122. have to then you know you're going to have to have some sort of communication
 123. and I think that is I mean it's in lots of things isn't it (.) It is a lot to do with the
 124. background of if they've done any studying or had anything in their own country
 125. and also a confidence you know I know I've got a whole lot of people who are all
 126. working in the same restaurant now I haven't worked out all their power I've got
 127. the boss so I never put him with any of his workers because I just you know I
 128. wouldn't like to I mean you just don't do it they don't do it do they you know
 129. because it's it's inhibiting and I haven't worked out all the other
 130. A: Yeah that that'll be interesting when you see {how
 131. S: {Yes it will be very interesting
 132. A: Yeah yeah um when you're doing say pairs do you give them a free choice about who they work with
 133. or are you a bit more {controlling
 134. S: {Sometimes I give them free I mean like today we set off warming a
 135. little warm up and I just let them choose and then I change them around (.) yeah I
 136. I give them it's like jigsaw you know I give them an A and a B and then I just go
 137. AB AB AB
 138. A: Right so sometimes you tell them and {sometimes
 139. S: {Sometimes I let them do it or sometimes I do say
 140. if I get to know them go and work with somebody that you haven't worked with or
 141. you don't know
 142. A: Yeah so you're saying you can choose but it's got to be somebody
 143. S: Yup yup or sometimes I direct it if it's something sort of complicated I normally
 144. direct
 145. A: How do you decide who to pair them up with if you're directing it
 146. S: Um (.) I do it with (.) um if it's a getting to a sort of an information gap type
 147. thing I normally do it with people they don't know 'cause they you know it's a way
 148. of them getting to know each other also I do it when um (.) somebody who is quite
 149. strong or somebody who's got the hang of it so if somebody has been here the year
 150. before and knows the sort of way that I work the class I'll put them with somebody
 151. new because they'll know how you know in a way how to do the group work but
 152. you see I ha- the other day I had a classic you know you know these jigsaw you
 153. know that you have the questions they're different and you have to to answer to fill
 154. it all in (.) they couldn't get that at all and I suddenly realised the reason was none
 155. of the people that were there had ever done it before
 156. A: Ah
 157. S: And I'd just sort of assumed and that was such a complicated concept for them

158. because they used to potentially the concept of doing their own crosswords
159. A: So what did you do with that how did you rescue that
160. S: Right I had to I had in fact I took it back and I just and I gave them um I I put
161. them together with but I put I gave both the pairs together and said they could
162. look at each other's sheets and try to work it out (.) so what the benefit of actually
163. the lesson was after that I'm not sure bit of vocabulary
164. A: Perhaps it was the techniques {if you do it again they'll have more idea what they're doing
165. S: Techniques yes it wasn't any communicative yes yeah that was that was quite a
166. surprise actually I'd forgotten 'cause I do that quite a I do things like that quite a
167. lot (.) information gap type things
168. A: And presumably that's one of the things about a new ESOL group you've no idea what kind of
169. backgrounds they come from from a learning point of view
170. S: No
171. A: (.) Um (.) have you ever experienced students being so keen to talk to each other that they're not
172. paying attention to what's going on in class
173. S: Yes yes all the time
174. A: Does that tend to be same language group {do they talk in English
175. S: {No no no no tend I'll tell you what it tends to
176. be um (.) if they suddenly realise they've got something in common so you start off
177. and they don't know each other like I had today and they suddenly find out they've
178. got lots of things in common and they don't want to stop and come back they want
179. to (.) keep going and what I normally do is I mean you know I always think it's
180. great and I say this is why we have a break
181. A: Yes
182. S: And that's one of the benefits of having a break
183. A: So they can catch up
184. S: So they can catch up with each other then
185. A: One of the questions I've asked the students which has been very interesting is who they consider to be
186. more important for them in class whether it's the other students or the teacher (.) what do you think about
187. that from an ESOL class point of view in particular
188. S: I think it's both
189. A: Mm can you explain why
190. S: Yes I think that um (.) you can learn from they can learn from each other and
191. they can also in perhaps be well I think they are in a more in a safer environment
192. (.) so in fact they might be quite oh happier especially if they're friends to make
193. mistakes and do things as a group you know and four heads are better than one
194. um (.) and rather than they would be with a teacher but they want a teacher 'cause
195. they think I'm the fount of all knowledge little do they know but they they you
196. know and I think I think they you know they they do need they just need a bit of
197. guidance
198. A: What could you sort of put into words what you think the role of the teacher is in that kind of class
199. S: I think it's I think it's partly directing and partly once they're off then just

200. facilitating and helping but I think especially at the new class they need a a start to
 201. get them going and in a direction and then all the techniques that they do I'm just
 202. helping them out and then at the end I normally do a round up as I've seen what
 203. the problems are and seen if there's common problems (.) I normally bring it
 204. together and either deal with the problems there or like I had today uh was we
 205. were getting into the we're doing present simple and we have have got and the
 206. whole thing about the present perfect came up and I thought oh help so I did say
 207. you know I just had to explain to them that I will come back to it (.) and I will do
 208. so that's (?) balance I think
209. A: Yeah um moving on to to teaching style um first of all could you say with with the ESOL classes how
 210. much time you would spend as a percentage of a class with them actually speaking English them
 211. producing English
212. S: What in an ES what in {an ESOL class not in group work
213. A: {in an ESOL class of say two hours
214. S: Or you mean you don't mean whole class teaching
215. A: Through the whole through the whole class (.) you know through the whole two hours or however long
 216. it is
217. S: How much I'm speaking
218. A: Well no how much they're speaking
219. S: How much they're speaking ooh a lot (.) today if you want today I had a great a
 220. cracking lesson today I would have said it was about eighty per cent 'cause they
 221. got really into it
222. A: Mm hm is that is that something you've always done with ESOL you've always got them to do a lot of
 223. the talking themselves
224. S: Yes and I do you ha- you have to do a lot of group work and a lot of talking or
 225. they do the talking and then a bit of listening maybe to each other and then doing
 226. maybe some exercise on paper but then they discuss the an- you know the answers
 227. among themselves um because it helps with mixed ability other than that you can't
 228. you you know if you've got twenty twenty-five in the class and you've got a whole
 229. load of mixed abilities you can't stand I mean you have to let them go at their own
 230. pace and go that way
231. A: Do you let them communicate with each other in their mother tongue
232. S: (.) Um (.) yes if (.) if they're really not understanding (.) um then I do but I
 233. think normally I can tell whether they're asking something about the class to a
 234. friend 'cause they don't understand than if they're just having a bit of a chit chat (.)
 235. I maybe wrong but I don't think so
236. A: I suppose it depends which language they're speaking
237. S: They rarely very rarely do I had a Turkish young Turkish lady today who was um
 238. explaining the grammar to his to another Turkish lad in English which I was
 239. absolutely astounded
240. A: And was it helping
241. S: Well no 'cause he didn't actually understand but I do think it was very good for

242. her I I just thought it's really good isn't it that she's trying no he didn't understand
 243. but I don't think it was I don't think it was actually her language problem that was
 244. that was right it was the whole concept of of the grammar point we we were doing
 245. that he got totally confused
 246. A: Um if you think about last year's class you saw that all the way through um what was what were the
 247. sort of dominant language groups you had or did you have groups where there were you've said there was
 248. a great mixture
 249. S: Right so we had Czech
 250. A: You had a lot of Czechs did you
 251. S: Seemed to be but apart from that not one dominant no
 252. A: Did the Czechs talk Czech a lot
 253. S: They tended to I had to tell them English only as my catch phrase
 254. A: And did that work
 255. S: Yes
 256. A: Yes
 257. S: Yeah
 258. A: With the [X] classes which were obviously different from say EFL classes at college could you pick
 259. out what you think the most appropriate teaching methods are going to be
 260. S: For ESOL (.) a great mi- a great mixture of all different varieties of approaches
 261. because everybody's coming e- everyone in ESOL's much wider range of how
 262. people learn and how they feel comfortable and (.) um although the motivation I
 263. think is similar 'cause they're living here and they're obviously going to stay here
 264. hopefully um th- it's much more I do it's much more chunks actually
 265. A: Mm hm so is it a chunk of this and
 266. S: I do deliberately do I I plan my lesson I have a chunk of what I want to do and
 267. then I have lots of different extension activities (.) which may be a bit of speaking
 268. for those that want a bit more speaking or some writing for those that writing is not
 269. so good and their reading um whereas the EFL you ass- you assume that they they
 270. all they are come from an educated background
 271. A: Yes so it's a different set of assumptions to begin with
 272. S: Yes it is yeah yeah
 273. A: When you're doing that I mean have you picked up what sort of activities generally students enjoy
 274. most in ESOL classes
 275. S: Ones I get like the chatting (.) and they love finding out about people and
 276. they've all got incredibly interesting histories I think (.) I think they would say that
 277. they do like a nice Murphy grammar exercise (.) but I don't actually give them that
 278. many
 279. A: That's a sort of gap filling one is it where they have {to
 280. S: {Yes yes and it's normally out of context
 281. (.) and it's just normally a sentence
 282. A: And do you reckon they like that 'cause it's easy
 283. S: Or it's safe (.) and they can do it in their own time in one way so I do do that

284. but it's normally ei- it's normally as a consolidation
285. A: Yeah
286. S: Because I think it's important to put a thing in context
287. A: You mentioned their motivation could you sort of describe the range of learner
288. motivations you've picked up as present in the class
289. S: I would say the majority is they want to work here (.) and they have either been
290. told or they've perceived that they're not going to get any decent jobs without
291. having a good level of English
292. A: What sort of jobs do you think they're going for have you any idea what
293. S: Computers seems to be the big thing there they want to work in computers
294. A: Think about the group last year um can you think of anybody who actually got into work or got a job
295. during the class or anything like that
296. S: (.) Only not because of their level of English some people got work in
297. restaurants and fairly casual labour but but you know no I don't actually think (.)
298. um because they don't (.) I mean there is a gap because where do they go when
299. they leave pre- (.) um the pre-intermediate pre- intermediate but that's why [FP] are
300. now coming in and now they're doing English for work
301. A: Right {so they're doing that at [FP] yes
302. S: {And reading and writing so they are now picking them up (.) and some of
303. them will go on to basic skills (.) 'cause there's a you know there's a very close
304. overlap between basic skills and ESOL when you get a bit {better
305. A: {So there's a bit more
306. progression than there used to be
307. S: I think so yeah
308. A: That that that sounds {encouraging
309. S: {Yeah yeah and we are we are organising it more (.) I mean not
310. organising it more but (.) they are (.) you know I I I I am in a sense trying to get
311. them into a way of taking some responsibility (.) so if they don't come I do now I
312. do expect them to tell me and I do when they say I mean they are they've started
313. oh well I wasn't here yesterday can I have what you did 'cause I've told them what
314. wo- it's not just one off lessons it is now a progression so if they can't come that
315. isn't a problem if they're working that isn't a problem but it would be then good for
316. me to explain to them so in the week I recycle a lot (.) so some people come twice
317. a week now will get it (.) not maybe the same area but you know in presented in a
318. different way
319. A: Yes that's kind of like reinforcing
320. S: Yes but the idea is that it goes it goes on and I'm expecting them to come twice
321. a week (.) not just once I want them to come (.) 'cause we've got to get them up
322. higher
323. A: Looking at last year's group again would you say that they improved over the year generally
324. S: Yes
325. A: Or specifically

326. S: Oh yes
327. A: Can you give me any specific instances
328. S: Um well a lot of them actually funnily enough took the PET and KET exams all
329. passed with merit I was astounded well I wasn't astounded I was very pleased
330. because you know formal exams is something that a lot of them haven't done (.)
331. um we've got a a um a Chinese very young asylum seeker she's come on by leaps
332. and bounds but she's accessing every single free
333. A: Yes
334. S: In York (.) so it's not just [x] it's all [FP] so she and she's going to everything
335. A: Do you find that quite a few of the students are going to different classes as well as the college
336. S: Yeah yeah yeah
337. A: Does that seem to be helpful
338. S: Yes
339. A: So you'd you'd encourage {them to do that
340. S: {Oh yes as much as they can
341. A: (.) Um on balance comparing EFL which you've got a long experience of teaching here and overseas
342. with this ESOL that you've come into relatively recently what would you say the major differences were
343. S: (.) Um the spy profiles in other words the speaking or listening is in many cases
344. much much higher than their reading and writing (.) and in EFL you don't have that
345. so much
346. A: So you've got a mismatch
347. S: You've got a big and that's been a real challenge {for me
348. A: {What what have you what
349. have you done to address that
350. S: Um I do more er r- reading exercises um which is probably a lower level of
351. English than they than their spoken and their listening level (.) um and writing very
352. directed writing so we might just write say three or four sentences with some key
353. words that they make a sentence around and again that's much lower than their
354. speaking and listening but it is a big problem with these big numbers it is a real I
355. think that that that's the most challenging thing
356. A: Mm what's your sort of teacher student ratio
357. S: Well at the moment we're absolutely about one in twenty one in twenty five
358. A: What was it like last year
359. S: It it it started off quite high and then it came down to a core um about about
360. one in (.) fifteen I suppose
361. A: Mm hm so that's still quite big {for a mixed ability class
362. S: {Still quite big yeah yeah it is quite big
363. A: If y- I mean you're obviously constrained by what the government says what the college says what
364. you've actually got but if you could have a freer rein with it what would you do if anything differently
365. S: In these classes
366. A: Mm
367. S: I would get them smaller I'd get them much smaller and I would if I could have

368. a target group more (.) so what I would like to do now with the ones that have that
369. have got a much lower level of reading and writing although they're going to [FP] to
370. do reading and writing they need more time and I'd like it would be nice for them
371. to set up another group so we could just look at reading and writing and there are
372. some students that have got um you know fossilised mistakes and they are I mean
373. they've been to [x] once one student I think in particular has been to [x] you know
374. her for years and years and she still is talking completely incorrectly (.) although
375. she's communicative very efficient because I understand exactly what she says but
376. her grammar is all over the place now somebody like that you need very much one
377. to one 'cause you need to unravel all the mistakes because obviously as she's
378. speaking she thinks it's quite correct 'cause that's what she's heard (.) and at home
379. she does it the same thing (.) because her daughters' here and she does the same
380. mistakes and I asked her do you speak English at home or Korean and she said no
381. no when my husband's around we speak English (.) so there they are at home
382. speaking English (.) completely wrong um nothing right wrong word order wrong
383. grammar
384. A: But you say she's communicating
385. S: Oh yeah I can understand exactly what she says and that's the problem isn't it
386. because you'll never get they'll never get above I mean she could never really get a
387. a good job (.) even though she can communicate because outside they'll think that
388. you know she can't speak English properly even though you understand them
389. A: That's interesting
390. S: And I've got two or three of those and they need unravelling it's very very
391. difficult to undo things like that
392. A: What what is your view of same nationality groups I mean would would that be better in a situation
393. like that
394. S: (.) Sometimes (.) yes I mean I I think I think to address specific needs yes the
395. same nationality is very useful (.) because you know where they're coming from
396. and I would have that like an add on
397. A: Yes so you'd do a bit of mixed and a bit of same and
398. S: Yeah
399. A: So what you're really saying is smaller groups and more time with with the students
400. S: With the students yeah
401. A: Anything else you'd change
402. S: Anything else I'd change I'd have more hours I think four hours a week isn't
403. enough (.) um I'd also change you know this idea that married women have to be
404. resident in the UK for a year before they can get free classes
405. A: So it's actually partly the funding rules that make a difference
406. S: Actually yes it is the funding rules and then then there is the there is the whole
407. materials aspect of it (.) um (.) it is quite difficult to get materials and you have to
408. build up your own bank (.) I'll give you an example this is a classic I don't know
409. why I fell into it we were doing something like you know er second conditional this

410. was last year if you know if you saw something in the street what would you do
411. right and it was it the one that i normally do with EFL is you know are you a good
412. citizen (.) didn't think about it actually bit of a hurry grabbed it up went down
413. everything went OK until we got into the idea they didn't realise so a good citizen
414. was I want a British passport (.) so this idea of public you know
415. A: Yeah
416. S: Doing things wasn't citizen citizen citizen citizenship and it was a passport issue
417. so they started saying well you know I'll be very good and I won't get into trouble
418. and I just thought I've gone straight in and there's little things like that that you
419. just you you know it brings home to you that you do need to um be very careful
420. with materials and that's you know that's what the new core curriculum's meant to
421. well it's not meant to writing the new materials but it's meant to be giving some
422. guidance (.) of examples of um activities you can do
423. A: Do you find it helpful the new core curriculum
424. S: Well um I don't know it backwards no I mean i- it is
425. A: What you've seen of it
426. S: Oh yeah what I've seen o- I've been endless training on it it is it is good because
427. it does it does make you really look at your students and really work out how they
428. imp- you know are they progressing and where they're going um and I think if you
429. if you've come in from ESOL which some people have not from a teaching
430. background that have sort of fallen into it in one way and you have never done any
431. training on syllabus or lesson planning or schemes of work yes it is 'cause it's all
432. there for you so but it's quite a hefty have you seen it
433. A: Yeah
434. S: You know it's quite a complicated document to get your way around although
435. once you get the hang of it it's not too difficult but it's quite difficult to begin with I
436. found
437. A: It looks fairly complex to implement for the first year you interpret it and then once you've done it
438. once {and then you then you then know what you're doing
439. S: {Yeah yuh yuh but I think you know I'm just really trying to fit the
440. current scheme of work into the core curriculum (end of tape) ... um particularly
441. relevant to ESOL students very European based you can only take them at a certain
442. point in the year and you have to get the application in in March anybody else who
443. comes in after that isn't any good um (.) this we're not changing the whole thing to
444. get onto a more portfolio um because we've been advised by the Learning Skills
445. Council that the ESOL curriculum is behind you know the basic skills and so
446. nobody's actually made any decision so the advice is don't reinvent the wheel now
447. because something may be coming in for next year
448. A: Oh well that's fair enough yes
449. S: But what I am doing is I'm introducing the Trinity exams (.) because they can do
450. the beginners' spoken
451. A: So they can just do a skill from those rather than

MISSING

PAGES

NOT

AVAILABLE

APPENDIX N: THE OBSERVER'S RECORDS FOR THE MAIN STUDY

APPENDIX N: THE OBSERVER'S RECORDS FOR THE MAIN STUDY

The groups formed by the learners for learning activities:

Week: activity	groups					
2	Andreas Jan Karin Li Louise Sofia	Abdallah Fatima Mariam Pierre Song Bo Vahideh	Anita Fillis Hunmin Minjo Soon-Keum	Elizabethta Francesco Hookyoung Lulgi Umaporn		
4	Andreas Mariam	Ham-Ei Jan Parvaneh	Karin Lulgi Magalet	Abdallah Fillis Jerome Kristi	Anita Hunmin Song Bo	Eva Hookyoung Lenka Minjo
	Saleh Sang-Kwan Soon-Keum					
5	Andreas Gianplacido Magalet	Ham-Ei Jan Saleh	Jerome Karin Kristi	Li Minjo Siu Wa	Abdallah Hookyoung Song Bo	Asha Carolina Marlam
	Eva Fillis Soon-Keum	Hunmin Lenka Lulgi				
6	Andreas Li	Karin Magalet	Abdallah Kristi	Minjo Song Bo	Fillis Hunmin	Eugenie Soon-Keum
	Eva Hookyoung	Ham-Ei Saleh	Jerome Lenka	Sang-Kwan Siu Wa	Asha Marcella	Antonio Carolina
7:1	Jan Minjo	Karin Parvaneh	Soon-Keum Vahideh	Ayhan Fillis	Hookyoung Hunmin	Olga Umaporn
	Nobuko Sang-Kwan	Monika Siu Wa				
7:2	Jan Monika Omar	Fillis Karin	Soon-Keum Vahideh	Hunmin Parvaneh Siu Wa	Hookyoung Minjo Nobuko	Ham-Ei Olga Umaporn
	Ayhan Kristi Sang-Kwan					

Week: activity	groups					
8	Andreas Karin	Jan Kristi Minjo	Hunmin Li Roberto Sang-Kwan	Carolina Mariam Parvaneh	Filis Lenka	Isadora Julio Soon-Keum
	Eva Hookyoung	Jerome Luigi	Ham-Ei Olga Umaporn	Magalet Nobuko Young-Joon	Isabella Monika	
9	Andreas Jan	Carolina Karin	Ham-Ei Li	Filis Mariam	Minjo Umaporn	Lenka Soon-Keum
	Hookyoung Nobuko	Jerome Siu Wa	Asha Olga			
10:1	Andreas Jan	Karin Sang-Kwan	Filis Mariam	Minjo Olga	Soon-Keum Umaporn	Hookyoung Nobuko
	Magalet Young-Joon	Asha Lenka				
10:2	Andreas Hookyoung Jan Nobuko	Asha Filis Karin Magalet	Mariam Minjo Olga Young-Joon	Lenka Sang-Kwan Soon-Keum Umaporn		
11:1	Andreas Sang-Kwan	Hunmin Jan	Anne Karin	Filis Magalet	Hookyoung Nobuko	Umaporn Young-Joon
	Jerome Olga	Carolina Lenka				
11:2	Andreas	Karin Sang-Kwan	Filis Magalet	Carolina Hunmin Jerome	Hookyoung	Umaporn
	Jan Lenka	Nobuko Young-Joon	Ham-Ei Olga			

Week: activity	groups					
12:1	Andreas Jan Luigi	Karin Magalet	Carolina Filis	Minjo	Hookyoung Sang-Kwan	Olga Umaporn
	Siu Wa	Nobuko Young-Joon				
12:2	Andreas Nobuko	Hookyoung Jan Sang-Kwan	Karin Siu Wa	Filis Minjo	Luigi Magalet Young-Joon	Olga Umaporn
	Carolina Ham-Ei					
12:3	Andreas Jan Olga Umaporn	Karin Luigi Magalet	Carolina Filis Minjo	Hookyoung Nobuko Sang-Kwan	Ham-Ei Siu Wa Young-Joon	
13:1	Andreas Jan Jerome Siu Wa	Carolina Filis Karin	Lenka Minjo Olga	Luigi Soon-Keum Umaporn	Hookyoung Sang-Kwan	
13:2	Andreas Nobuko Sang-Kwan	Jan	Karin Luigi	Filis Soon-Keum	Minjo Siu Wa	Hookyoung Jerome
	Olga Umaporn	Carolina Lenka				
14:1	Andreas Jerome	Jan Luigi	Abdallah Sang-Kwan	Lenka Mariam	Olga Soon-Keum Umaporn	Hookyoung Nobuko
14:2	Andreas Soon-Keum	Abdallah Hookyoung Jan	Mariam Olga	Jerome Luigi	Lenka Umaporn	Nobuko Sang-Kwan
14:3	Andreas Luigi	Abdallah Hookyoung	Lenka Mariam	Soon-Keum Umaporn		
14:4	Andreas Sang-Kwan Umaporn	Jan Mariam Nobuko Soon-Keum	Abdallah Luigi Olga	Hookyoung Jerome Lenka		

The seating plans:

21.11.01

Teacher

Marlam				Fillis	
Lenka				Asha	
Olga				Karin	
Minjo				Magalet	
Umaporn				Soon-Keum	Sang-Kwan
Andreas	Jan	Nobuko	Young-joon	Hookyoung	

28.11.01

Teacher

Lenka				Ham-Ei	
Carolina				Fillis	
Jerome				Magalet	
Umaporn				Karin	Young-joon
Olga				Anne	Sang-Kwan
Jan	Andreas	Nobuko	Hookyoung	Hunmin	

05.12.01

Teacher

					Anne
	Carolina			Fillis	
Minjo				Karin	
Asha	Olga			Andreas	
Siu Wa	Umaporn			Luigi	Jan
	Magalet	Young-joon	Nobuko	Hookyoung	Sang-Kwan

12.12.01

Teacher

Minjo

Lenka

Olga

Carolina

Umaporn

Karin

Jan

Siu Wa

Soon-
Keum

Anne

Filis

Jerome

Andreas Luigi

Sang-
Kwan

Nobuko

Hookyoung

19.12.01

Teacher

Jan

Abdallah

Mariam

Lenka

Sang-Kwan

Olga

Nobuko

Umaporn

Hookyoung

Soon-Keum

Luigi

Andreas

Jerome

APPENDIX O: INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW, THE OBSERVER

APPENDIX O: INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW, THE OBSERVER

10 October 2002

Conventions:

I = Interviewer

A = Andrew

{ = speaks simultaneously

(.) = pause

(?) = unintelligible

1. I: OK Andrew so you acted as observer in the Autumn term last year of this ESOL class on
2. Wednesdays at [X] um (.) you made notes as you went along have you got a reasonable
3. recollection of the class
4. A: Yes I have yes yes
5. I: Um in the class last year when you were observing can you recall what different
6. nationalities were represented
7. A: Yes er Hungarians er Czech Republic Slovaks Koreans Thai (.) Chinese mainland
8. Chinese and Hong Kong (.) ah Ru- well not Russian but from a a Russian republic
9. Uzbekistan or somewhere um (.) French (.) German (.)
10. I: One of the things we were looking at in the project
11. A: C- Could I just add to the nationalities Venezuelan
12. I: One of the things we were looking at in the project was student relationships (.) um (.) did
13. you see the students in the classes making friends with each other
14. A: Oh very much so yes yes it was a natural part of the interaction and I think it
15. was (.) a motivation for them coming as well sometimes
16. I: What did you see with regard to them making friends
17. A: Right I I saw them enthusiastically greeting each other and when they were put
18. in pairs to work together them talking about the task in hand but also talking
19. about other things and um sometimes you'd actually see them when they were
20. supposed to be doing activities actually making social arrangements as well (.) um
21. in the class and ah they very much saw it as an opportunity to meet up with
22. people
23. I: Did there seem to be er distinct groups of friends
24. A: (.) Er (.) um (.) yes I think so and some were probably along nationality lines
25. like I think the Koreans were a distinct group of although they interacted with with
26. other nationalities I think they they were a distinct group together and then um I
27. think Asian students were were generally friendly with each other but but they
28. were also friendly with people across nationalities (.) um and then you get
29. obviously people who came together and so they would be distinctly together to
30. begin with but then they'd get to interact with other people (.) um
31. I: Can you think of any examples of that

32. A: Yeah er right um (.) yeah er some of the au pairs from the same nationality
33. would bring new au pairs and introduce them to the group (.) er (.) S- S- Swedes
34. would bring other Swedes er students from the Czech Republic would bring other
35. students from the Czech Republic sometimes er (.) people from the university
36. would bring other people from the university and they'd be together (.) um and
37. then there was a group of Chinese people who came together from Hong Kong
38. who would bring other Hong Kong people and then of course the Kurds would bring
39. er always brought other Kurds and new Kurds and things (.) so so it was quite
40. strong really this (.)

41. I: Were you ever aware of er any hostility between students in the group

42. A: No no I don't think so um (.)

43. I: Do you think that the students' relationships with each other had any influence over their
44. performance in class

45. A: (.) Oh yes definitely because they were eager to be with each other they were
46. keen to be with each other they looked forward to seeing each other and that
47. affected how much they liked working together (.) and you know in particular I
48. think some of them (.) came to class and found the person who they liked working
49. with (.)

50. I: {Can you

51. A: {Liked that person as well

52. I: Can you kind of give any examples of specific learners

53. A: Ah (.) yeah I mean (.) um (.) I I think the the woman from the Russian republic
54. would go and work with the Taiwanese woman (.) and would be enthusiastic about
55. doing that

56. I: Taiwanese

57. A: Thai Thai not Taiwanese from Thailand sorry um and ah (.) the two people
58. from Venezuela would go and work with people from other nationalities and would
59. work in a friendly way I think with a man from Hong Kong and er er

60. I: (.) I was going to ask you about who people chose to pair up with or go into groups to did
61. you when you were watching from what you remember were they choosing the same people
62. each time or were they mixing it up a bit

63. A: (.) Um they they were mixing it up (.) and I think (.) also I think the implication
64. is that when they're supposed to chan- to move (.) to another pair for an activity
65. they'll go and work with somebody else but but they didn't have any problem
66. finding somebody to work with

67. I: Were there any people who wouldn't work with the others or with particular individuals

68. A: Well (.) there was a French student who was a bit reluctant ah but but that's
69. really kind of individual to him I think

70. I: So did he just stay on his own

71. A: No he didn't stay on his own (.) he he did join in but (.) he he always had more
72. of a reluctant manner than than some of them this is from an observational point

73. of view um (.) I didn't observe any people from any nationalities having any
74. problems with anyone from a different nationality I thought it was all quite
75. harmonious and you know you could say that that people from different
76. nationalities mixed with each other quite happily
77. I: When the teacher said (.) go into a group or a pair with someone from a different nationality
78. did they always do that or did they sometimes stay with someone of their own
79. A: I think some of them tried to stay with someone from their own nationality and
80. sometimes it had to be it had to be said again that it should be somebody from a
81. different nationality I would put that down to one of two things one was linguistic
82. problems of actually understanding that it was supposed to be somebody of a
83. different nationality I think some of them realised it had to be a pair but it took
84. them a little while to realise that it had to actually be somebody who wasn't
85. Korean or um (.) and then I I think they were all quite happy to do it I I didn't
86. observe anyone really (.) um being totally um um intransigent
87. I: You observed the learners working in pairs and groups over the term have you picked up
88. any things you'd describe as advantages or disadvantages of mixed nationality pair or group
89. work
90. A: (.) Well obviously I mean if they're mixed nationalities (.) they're not able in
91. ninety nine point nine per cent of cases they're not able to speak in um their first
92. language so it encourages them to speak in English all the time (.) I um um so
93. that that's an advantage (.) as far as disadvantages are concerned (.) um just
94. from an observational point of view (.) I didn't I didn't perceive any
95. {from an observational point of view
96. I: {Where where they spoke or they had to speak in English did you ever observe pairs or groups
97. simply not speaking very much because that was like something they didn't want to do or too
98. difficult
99. A: (.) No I didn't because this was a very communicative group the ethos was one
100. of cooperation and communication people got on and did it and
101. I: People sometimes say that (.) they learn each others mistakes
102. A: Yeah I I could I could go along with that yeah
103. I: Did you observe that happening
104. A: Um (.) not not directly what I could say is if you had a person from a nationality
105. who spoke with a particular accent or in a distinctly unclear way it must be quite
106. difficult for a person from another nationality either not to pick that up in a way or
107. be influenced by it but also to understand them accurately
108. I: Did you see that happening did you observe that as a problem
109. A: Yes I think I did yes because um (.) I think you would definitely see
110. misunderstanding between people and a lot of looking for clarification
111. I: Who did they look to or what did they look to for clarification
112. A: Oh they they they I think they either looked to ah the teacher (.) for

113. clarification or they looked to each other and just kept asking each other and
 114. worked it out between them (.) or maybe they might have looked to somebody
 115. else in the group other than the person they were working with who perhaps they
 116. trusted
117. I: So did there seem to be inter group working as well as {within their own]
 118. A: {Oh yes yeah there there
 119. was definitely inter group working yes I mean so you would get um not all the time
 120. but you would get people kind of talking across groups (.) um and maybe part of
 121. this was a clarification thing
122. I: When you were observing did you get a chance to listen to what the learners were saying (.)
 123. as they spoke to each other
124. A: Mm yes yes I did obviously I heard those who were near where I was sitting but
 125. also I would go round
126. I: Did you observe any of them being so enthusiastic about talking to each other that they
 127. weren't perhaps doing what was required by the teacher or they weren't paying attention to
 128. what was going on with the rest of the class
129. A: (.) Yes yes that that that did happen and I think then some of them would
 130. would um (.) I mean there were two two difficulties in this area I think some of
 131. them would misunderstand the initial instructions and so they would set off and
 132. then be trying to work out how they'd gone wrong (.) and then (.) that's right I
 133. think some of them would be enthusiastic but would have missed the point
134. I: I was thinking more of friendships wanting to talk to each other rather than do the task set
 135. A: Yeah yeah I I think hm particularly at the beginning of the class with the first
 136. exercise this was often evident in that they would be terribly keen to see people
 137. again who they might not have seen for a few days and sometimes I would
 138. observe them getting their diaries out and making social arrangements um
 139. especially during the first activity although this was something that went on
 140. throughout the class th- this kind of social involvement um (.) so sometimes that
 141. would override their um
142. I: When they were doing that were they speaking to each other in English or another language
 143. A: (.) English by and large yeah definitely English really in the class yeah and often
 144. these relationships would cross nationality and so the common language they had
 145. was English
146. I: Did you observe any students any learners translating um for each other (.) or or explaining
 147. things in in their mother tongue
148. A: (.) I think by and large they they really tried not to because they realised they
 149. were supposed to be communicating in English all the time of the class but I think
 150. it happened with the Koreans occasionally and maybe (.) the Venezuelans it did go
 151. on yeah it did go on I think yeah Spaniards might do it to each other and um
 152. Czechs might do it you know it's yeah
153. I: (.) I asked the students who they thought was more most important for them in class the

154. teacher or the other students from what you observed in that class what do you think

155. A: (.) Um well I would say the other students because I think they they their social

156. relationships with the other students but I would also say that they had a strong

157. relationship with the teacher with this particular teacher and identified very

158. strongly with this teacher so I think that relationship was important as well

159. I: Looking at your role as observer did the students build up any kind of relationship with you

160. A: (.) Um (.)

161. I: I mean were you completely outside the class were you an integral part of the class how did

162. you feel your role was perceived

163. A: I think they perceived my role as as someone who was there doing something

164. that was slightly outside of what they were doing although they did include me and

165. they were friendly and would talk to me and ask me if they wanted some

166. clarification of a point because the ethos was friendly but (.) I think I tended to try

167. and detach myself a little bit so I could actually see what was going on so that I

168. wasn't involved because I think if I was too involved I would miss things

169. I: It's often difficult to perceive but do you think your presence changed the way the learners

170. were behaving

171. A: (.) No I don't think it changed it but I think some of them might look at me

172. from time to time (.) um and (.) be interested in what I was doing or wonder why

173. I was writing things down about how they were moving round who they were

174. working with and um but I think this class were confident enough and relaxed

175. enough not to really change as a result of somebody observing

176. I: Before we move on to the next part of the interview is there anything else you'd say about

177. the student relationships

178. A: Yes yes I I would say that that um (.) one of the strong motivations for coming

179. to this class was the relationships that the students had with each other and that

180. the relationships that they had with each other in this environment were very

181. important and I think it facilit- facilitated their language learning and encouraged

182. them to communicate with each other because they were actually motivated to

183. find out about each other to get to know each other to get to know each other (.)

184. and (.) you were asking you asked me did I think it facilitated their relationships

185. I: I just asked you if you had anything else to say about {them

186. A: {Oh yes yes well yes I mean I

187. didn't just observe

188. them I didn't just observe them during the class the class was structured in a way

189. that there was a coffee break half way through and I min- I mingled with them

190. during that coffee break and observed them during that time and and that was

191. interesting in that they they definitely had friends who they were keen to talk to

192. during the coffee break and the making social arrangements would go on then and

193. the talking to each other but it wasn't just people from the same nationality talking

194. to each other it was people from different nationalities but it was obvious

195. sometimes that they relied on this class to actually pick up relationships with
196. people (.) and also um I I I was I can remember being aware of who who they left
197. the class with at the end and often they would all get together and go off in mixed
198. nationality groups and you could hear them talking about where they were going
199. to go together and and and the kind of things they were going to do and then they
200. were obviously developing a relationship outside the class but I got the impression
201. that the the relationships that they had outside the class um started or were
202. rooted in relationships that they started within the class and that a lot of them had
203. met each other there
204. I: Did you observe any of the learners being isolated you've mentioned a French man who
205. wasn't keen to go into groups when you were looking at them in breaks and leaving and so on
206. did any of them seem to be friendless
207. A: (.) No no one seemed friendless no one seemed friendless some seemed more
208. needy than others and some seemed like they were making more of an effort to
209. get to know people (.) but everyone seemed to be responsive to the needs of
210. others
211. I: Can you name anybody or give me a an identity of anyone who seemed very needy
212. A: A female Kenyan woman who (.) um (.)
213. I: [Mariam]
214. A: Yeah can I talk about her I mean she'd been coming to this class for a number
215. of years and I'd observed her over that period but I think in this particular class In
216. the last year they were not as responsive to her needs as previous classes have
217. been and
218. I: What effect was that having on her
219. A: Um er she was a bit more isolated and she stood out more as being needy and
220. It was clear that her main motivation for coming to the class wasn't language but
221. was what she got out from the relationships out of the relationships with other
222. people there
223. I: Did she find it possible to to work with other people to get into pairs and groups
224. A: Mm yes she did you know people didn't people worked with her but but um I
225. would say less easily than she had done previously
226. I: Any others or did she stand out
227. A: She stood out (.) I I think some of the Koreans (.) found it difficult to work in
228. mixed nationality groups sometimes and that was partly language and partly kind
229. of just diffidence (.) um (.) but it wasn't reluctance on the part of other people to
230. work with them
231. I: And from a friendship point of view you can't think of anyone else you would say was
232. isolated
233. A: No other than the French student who I mentioned who I think probably chose
234. to be like that um (.) I'm not aware of anyone who was isolated
235. I: Were you aware of any sort of overwhelming or particularly dominant personalities in the

236. group

237. A: Mm yeah yeah um (.) the er the older Thai woman (.) and but but but she was

238. in a fairly appropriate way (.) because er it was due to the fact that she

239. contributed a lot and (.) talked a lot and liked being involved in the group also one

240. of the Korean women (.) um who was married to had an English partner who lived

241. outside York she had become she became increasingly confident and dominant

242. within the group because she definitely felt comfortable with any nationality and

243. mixed much more than the other Koreans um and um the woman from the

244. Russian republic was quite dominant as well (.) whether that was personality

245. I: Could you say anything about age or gender

246. A: (.) I think um (.) in this particular group I think age was a factor because I

247. think the older people were more confident than and and and and and talked more

248. especially in groups than than than than the younger people (.) I don't think that's

249. always the case but I think it was with this group (.) um and (.) and as far as

250. gender's concerned well I think it was a pretty female dominated group anyway

251. because I I I can't remember the figures but from what I can remember there

252. were a lot more women than men (.) um (.) but (.) but I think they when they

253. were in pairs and things they mixed across genders without too much reluctance

254. I: One teacher has talked to me about difficulties sometimes with Muslim students men not

255. wanting to work with women did their appear to be anything of that kind in this class

256. A: No no there didn't no

257. I: OK let's move on to um what was going on in the class in terms of the teaching content um

258. (.) it's difficult in retrospect again but could you estimate what proportion of the time the

259. learners spent speaking English during the class

260. A: (.) Um (.) well when the when the teacher wasn't speaking they were speaking

261. because um the emphasis in the class was on relationships and they were really

262. communicating with each other and even if they were doing written tasks and

263. things they were constantly in communication with each other so I think rather

264. than saying what percentage of the time were they speaking I think you just want

265. to break it up into what percentage of the time was the teacher speaking and the

266. rest of the time {there was no

267. I: {OK so what proportion of the time was the teacher speaking

268. A: Twenty per cent (.) I would have thought was realistic and and and they were

269. free to speak the rest of the time and the ethos of the class was such that I think if

270. they'd kind of wanted to interact with the teacher when the teacher was speaking

271. there would have been no problem with that so I didn't observe any times other

272. than when they were being given instructions that they were actually being talked

273. at and um

274. I: What sort of activities did you observe the learners enjoying most

275. A: (.) Um (.) OK um activities where the whole group was being addressed as a

276. group and they could listen to each other and but they all had an er an opportunity

277. to contribute so for instance where a topic where they liked feedback when they'd
278. been doing an activity because they could comment and listen to each other's
279. ideas about about something they'd been doing in groups um they also liked
280. activities where they asked what had they been doing during the week or what's
281. been in the news that kind of thing and they would all get quite involved in that (.)
282. um (.) but but they were also enthusiastic about working in pairs working in
283. groups um and going off to work in groups together to do a particular task it might
284. be a written task or something but but the the emphasis was on cooperation (.) so
285. I: Did you recall any activities which they didn't appear to enjoy very much
286. A: (.) No I would I would just say that that um sometimes they wouldn't not enjoy
287. activities but I think if they were activities that were too the where the language
288. might not be terribly clear for them it might introduce some anxiety or
289. misunderstanding and then they would have to do a lot of talking between each
290. other's for them to actually work it out
291. I: Can you remember any activities that just didn't work at all because of a lack of
292. understanding
293. A: (.) No I can't no I I think um and this was partly b- as a result of teacher in-
294. input into the group being being clear and material being clear and also the fact
295. that they did interact with
296. I: Totally
297. A: Yeah totally
298. I: Um you've obviously got quite a long experience of teaching EFL and a fair amount of
299. experience with ESOL groups on balance what would you say is the difference between EFL
300. and ESOL in this country
301. A: (.) Um I I think the focus in in ESOL is on relationships and the focus in EFL is
302. on language and I think the the the people I'd had in EFL groups they they get on
303. OK with each other but they're much more concerned about (.) I'm here to
304. improve my English there's much more you can have more problems in EFL groups
305. when they think that there's somebody in the group who might not be as good as
306. them and is going to drag their English down and they're not going to make as
307. much progress as other people and there's much more focus on what exam am I
308. going to do and am I getting value for money and all this kind of thing whereas I
309. think with ESOL the the the emphasis is much more on I've come here to
310. cooperate and get on with everyone and to learn along with everybody else and
311. we're all helping each other and um it's much more cooperative and I
312. think if you so there's much more cohesion group cohesion with ESOL and it's
313. much easier to move people on as a group um (.) and much less (.) er of yeah
314. I: Well that takes us on to anything you might have observed in this group about the learners'
315. motivations you've said already that you think the learners were there because they wanted to
316. make friends and so on but is there anything else you can say about what you perceive the
317. motivation of these learners were in terms of their English learning

318. A: Oh oh definitely to improve their English as well as as well as make
319. relationships they they were definitely keen to communicate to to improve their
320. verbal skills and their aural skills um and and to an extent their vocabularies um so
321. they were very keen on learning about new things new words new grammar new
322. structures and then practising so although I say that that that there was a lot of
323. emphasis on relationships language was also pretty important as well
324. I: (.) Did you perceive anything about how they viewed the wider community that they were
325. living in (.) I mean that could well be different from (?)
326. A: Yes yeah that that that's interesting um (.) um (.) yeah yeah I mean it's very
327. difficult to pick it up from observation I mean if I went beyond observation and
328. maybe into
329. I: Sure but just just thinking about what you saw I mean did you pick up any I don't want to
330. put too many ideas into your head
331. A: No no
332. I: Did you pick up any situations where learners might be uncomfortable with say the
333. environment they were living or working in or where they
334. A: Yes
335. I: Were feeling very comfortable with it
336. A: No no no somewhere they somewhere they were uncomfortable with it the
337. working environment I think I picked up listening um one Chinese woman who
338. obviously had psychological problems used to bring her was bringing her
339. employment problems along to the class to talk to people about um you know and
340. that's a sign that that that this class was serving a real social function as far as she
341. was concerned um and and the Korean woman who I've already mentioned was
342. getting support from the class to do with the job that she got (.) um at Marks and
343. Spencer (.) um
344. I: The Kenyan woman
345. A: Yeah yeah the Kenyan woman um and wanted to talk to people about that
346. I: Was she experiencing problems with that job
347. A: Yes yes I mean in terms of hours she was having to work nights and things and
348. I think there were problems round that for her as a woman being expected to (?)
349. pick it all up (?) um and I think other people would bring in their kind of cultural
350. things or things they were doing outside the class I mean one one South American
351. Venezuelan was a footballer I think and so he was talking I could hear him talking
352. about that and um difficulties that people had yeah um the other Venezuelan man
353. had er problems getting a job he was qualified as a doctor but but he was aware
354. that his language skills were not good enough for him to practise as a doctor in
355. this country although he kept making enquiries about how he could I think he was
356. a psychiatrist how whether he could get work (.) and I think he was a bit
357. discouraged about that um (.)
358. I: So your overall perception is that most of these learners felt fairly negative about the wider

359. community they were living in
360. A: Ah (.) I wouldn't say that totally no no because you know I think I picked up
361. from some of the Koreans particularly the Korean who was married to um and
362. lived in in Pickering um she felt very positive about the wider community you know
363. she'd been able to develop her skills as a hairdresser (.) and and was setting up
364. her own business and was was was was really quite positive about that and was
365. obviously interacting with other people really well I think it was people who felt a
366. bit more cut off from the local community either they were students or partners of
367. students at the university and who had children and had other responsibilities and
368. they didn't mix very much with people outside that environment or um felt they
369. weren't achieving as much as they hoped they'd achieve so could be dissatisfaction
370. there and and there was definitely evidence that people stayed within their cultural
371. groups outside the classroom so the Koreans did do a lot of mixing with each other
372. and and and staying within that group (.) yes I mean there were also au pairs I
373. mean there were a lot of au pairs in the group and I haven't really mentioned them
374. much up until now but but but they gave each other a lot of support and
375. particularly au pairs who got into families where they weren't happy (.) um would
376. get support from other people who came to the class and also
377. I: Can you think of any of those
378. A: Mm yeah um I think there was a male au pair (.) no no I can't then no the only
379. thing I can say is I think somebody found a job as an au pair through this group
380. I: Oh right {yeah
381. A: {Yeah yeah yeah changed their job
382. I: So that was sort of through contacts
383. A: Yes that's right yes but it was definitely a source of support for au pairs um
384. I: Did you become aware of any of the learners experiencing overt or (.) perceived racism in
385. the wider community
386. A: (.) No I didn't
387. I: ESOL's generally thought of as being for people who have settled in Britain permanently
388. were you aware of any of the learners in this group who were determined to make the UK
389. their permanent home
390. A: Yes
391. I: Or who would have liked to
392. A: Yeah yeah absolutely yes the Thai woman who who was married to a British
393. person who was obviously pretty permanently settled here although it it appeared
394. that she went back to Thailand on a fairly regular basis but but her home seemed
395. to be in Britain er some of the Korean women who specially I mean the woman
396. from Pickering who I've mentioned was obviously very settled here her daughter
397. was at school I think here as well um (.)
398. I: Were you aware of anyone who was definitely living here permanently and maybe wasn't
399. over happy about that fact

400. A: (.) I've observed it in other groups it wasn't
401. I: It didn't stand out
402. A: Oh the Kenyan woman I think yeah I mean I think part of her problem with her
403. social interaction and and her neediness was to do with the fact that she probably
404. wasn't comfortable in her situation
405. I: By the situation do you mean living in Britain
406. A: Yeah I think she no
407. I: What do you mean (.) when when you say she wasn't comfortable with her situation
408. do you mean like her immediate family situation ore her education or work situation or
409. cultural situation
410. A: (.) I think it was her family situation yeah within the immediate family that she
411. was living in
412. I: So it was maybe a combination of things
413. A: Yeah yeah but (.) but I think I think some of them felt that they they they had
414. to make try and make their permanent home in Britain whether they wanted to or
415. not
416. I: Again I mean ESOL is often thought as very targeted at refugees in this particular group
417. refugees were in a minority but is there anything you'd say about them
418. A: Um (.) yes I I I think they saw learning English and ESOL as more part of their
419. their life here whereas I think people who were not permanent like au pairs
420. partners of students and things it was much more like an interesting thing to do
421. along the way and maybe get an English qualification before they went back but it
422. wasn't a kind of part of as much a part and parcel of life
423. I: Did that make a difference to how they worked
424. A: Well yes I think so I mean it did in terms of some of the au pairs definitely I
425. think worked with other au pairs and some of the more temporary people worked
426. with other more temporary people and some of the more permanent people
427. worked with more permanent people I think sometimes but also I think at the end
428. of the day I wonder if the ones who were here more permanently were much more
429. interested in coming along and forming forming relationships in some ways and
430. the ones who were here for less (.) er for a shorter period of time were much
431. more in a way concerned about getting on with their English a bit and maybe
432. getting a qualification before they went back (.) but then there was definitely
433. overlap between the two yeah so you can't be
434. I: Yeah
435. A: Hard and fast about it
436. I: This is probably quite a difficult question but (.) do you think their English improved during
437. the period you were observing them
438. A: Well yes yes I think it did because I think they were keen to learn and improve
439. and learn new things and they were learning new things and to learn new
440. structures to learn new grammar and how to apply it they were learning new

441. vocabulary all the time and they were learning from and about each other and I
442. think they they definitely wanted to move on (.) and I think so they did in a way
443. and um (.) and also a group like this affected their personalities and I think
444. personality has a bearing on language learning and I think some of the Koreans
445. who were more reserved and hesitant at the beginning became much more
446. integrated more confident about actually using their language not just with other
447. Koreans speaking English and so it was definitely improving communication
448. speaking and listening skills
449. I: OK is there anything else you'd like to say (.) no well thank you

APPENDIX P: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION FROM THE LEARNERS' INITIAL INFORMATION FORMS FOR THE MAIN STUDY

APPENDIX P: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION FROM THE LEARNERS' INITIAL INFORMATION FORMS FOR THE MAIN STUDY

Name	Nationality/ Country of origin	Age	m/f	First language
Abdallah	Bangladeshi	23	m	Bangla
Andrea	Czech	25	f	Czech
Andreas	Italian/ Venezuela	49	m	Italian
Anita	Hungarian	23	f	Hungarian
Anne	French	29	f	French
Antonio	Italian		m	Italian
Asha	Turkish		f	Kurdish
Ayhan	Turkish		m	Kurdish
Carolina	Spanish		f	Spanish
Dipok	Bangladeshi	48	m	Bangla
Elizabetta	Italian	53	f	Italian
Eugenie	French		f	French
Eva	Slovak		f	Slovak
Fatima	Iranian		f	Persian
Filis	Turkish	35	f	Kurdish
Francesco	Venezuelan	33	m	Spanish
Gianplacido	Italian	25	m	Italian
Ham-Ei	South Korean		f	Korean
Hookyoung	South Korean	41	f	Korean
Hunmin	South Korean	36	f	Korean
Ibrahim	Turkish		m	Kurdish
Isabella	Spanish		f	Spanish
Isadora	Spanish		f	Spanish
Jan	Dutch ⇒ British/ Hong Kong	41	m	Cantonese
Jerome	French	29	m	French
Juan	Spanish	30	m	Spanish
Julio	Spanish		m	Spanish
Karin	Swiss	18	f	Swiss
Kristi	Slovak		f	Slovak
Lenka	Czech		f	Czech
Li	Chinese	54	f	Chinese
Louise	French	24	f	French
Luigi	Italian/ Venezuela	18	m	Italian

Name	Nationality/ Country of origin	Age	m/f	First language
Magalet	French	18	f	French
Marcella	Italian		f	Italian
Mariam	British/ Kenya	34	f	
Minjo	South Korean	46	f	Korean
Monika	Slovak		f	Slovak
Mujibur	Bangladeshi		m	Bangla
Nobuko	Japanese		f	Japanese
Olga	Russian/ Moldova		f	Russian
Omar	Turkish		m	Kurdish
Parvaneh	Iranian	30	f	Persian
Pierre	French	24	m	French
Roberto	Spanish		m	Spanish
Saleh	Bangladeshi	19	m	Bangla
Sang-Kwan	South Korean	24	f	Korean
Shamim	Bangladeshi	30	m	Bangla
Siu Wa	Chinese	37	m	Cantonese
Sofia	Italian	19	f	Italian
Song Bo	Chinese	16	f	Chinese
Soon-Keum	South Korean	43	f	Korean
Umaporn	British/ Thailand	46	f	Thai
Vahideh	Iranian	28	f	Persian
Young-joon	South Korean		f	Korean

**APPENDIX Q: SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION CONTAINED
IN THE INITIAL AND FINAL SELF ASSESSMENT FORMS**

APPENDIX Q: SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE INITIAL AND FINAL SELF ASSESSMENT FORMS

Learners' motivation for improving their English at initial assessment

Motivating factor	No. of learners mentioning factor
For work generally	7
To talk to other people	6
For a specific job or career	3
For living in England	2
Because English is an international language	2
Because the learner likes English	2
To watch television	1
For travel	1
For sport	1
To help husband	1
To be cleverer	1

Learners' motivation for improving their English at final assessment

Motivating factor	No. of learners mentioning factor
For work generally	4
To talk to or understand other people	4
For a specific job or career	1
For living in England	3
Because English is an international language	1
Because the learner likes English	2
For travel	1
For sport	1
To understand songs or drama	2
To talk to husband's friends	1
For parents' meetings at school	1
For visits to the doctor	2
For university	1
To understand news or newspapers	2

Learners' rating of their skills at initial assessment

Skill	Learners' self assessment		
	good	reasonable	bad
reading	2	12	3
writing	-	10	7
speaking	1	9	7
understanding what people say	2	11	4
spelling	4	4	9
grammar	2	10	5

Learners' rating of their skills at final assessment

Skill	Learners' self assessment		
	good	reasonable	bad
reading	-	13	4
writing	-	11	6
speaking	2	9	6
understanding what people say	6	7	4
spelling	2	4	11
grammar	2	3	12

Comparison of ratings at both assessments for group of 7 learners

Skill	Learners' self assessment ¹								
	B>G	R>G	G	B>R	R	G>R	B	R>B	G>B
reading				1	6				
writing				3	3			1	
speaking			1	2	3		1		
understanding what people say		2	1	1	2			1	
spelling	1				1		3	1	1
grammar		1			1		4	1	

- 1 B = bad
G = good
R = reasonable

APPENDIX R: SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION FROM THE LEARNERS' RECORDS OF WHO WORKED WITH WHOM

APPENDIX R: SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION FROM THE LEARNERS' RECORDS OF WHO WORKED WITH WHOM

Key:
X = where the naming is mutual
/ = where the naming is unitaleral
Bold where it coincides with the observer
O where the learner has omitted a name mentioned by the observer

10 October 2001
 (Week 5)

Learners present:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
1. Abdallah			O	X									O			/	/								
2. Andreas								X		X													X		
3. Hookyoung	O		/									/													
4. Hunmin	X						X												X						
5. Jan									X						X					X					X
6. Karin																X		X							
7. Luigi				X															X						
8. Magalet		X																						X	
9. Minjo					X						O														X
10. Fillis														X			X								
11. Li		X							O																O
12. Mariam																					X	X			
13. Song Bo	O		O																						
14. Soon-Keum										X							X								
15. Ham-Ei					X			/												X					
16. Kristi						X												X							
17. Eva										X				X					X						
18. Jerome						X										X					X				
19. Lenka				X			X										X								
20. Saleh					X			/							X										X
21. Asha	/		/				/			/	X							X				O			
22. Carolina											X										/				
23. Gianplacido		X						X																	
24. Siu Wa					X				X	O										X					

14 November 2001
(Week 9)

Key:

X = where the naming is mutual

/ = where the naming is unitaleral

Bold where it coincides with the observer

O where the learner has omitted a name mentioned by the observer

Learners present:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1. Andreas			X									X									
2. Hookyoung										/		X					X				
3. Jan	X					X					X	/									
4. Karin							/								X		X	X			
5. Minjo			/	/		X								X			/	X			
6. Umaporn			X		X									X							
7. Filis	/			/					X	X		/	/	/						/	
8. Li											O				/	X					
9. Mariam							X								X				X		
10. Soon-Keum							X					/	X	X	X		X				
11. Ham-Ei			X					/		/					/						
12. Jerome	X																X				
13. Lenka		X			/					X											
14. Asha		/			X	X	X		/											X	
15. Carolina				X					X	X											
16. Siu Wa								X				X									
17. Nobuko		X		X						X											
18. Olga				X	X				X						X						
19. Isabella																					
20. Roberto																					
21. Ibrahim																					

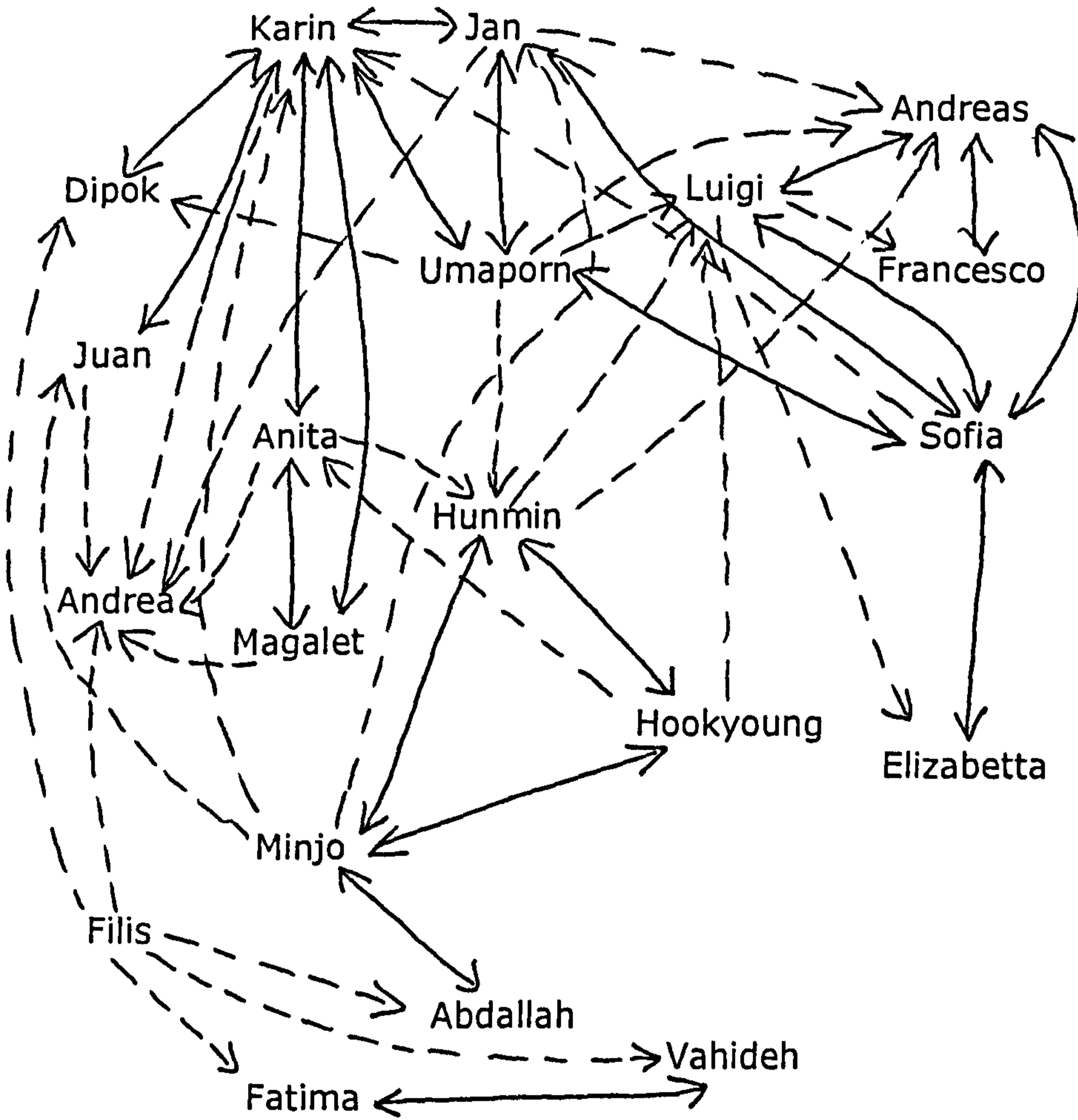
APPENDIX S: MAIN STUDY SOCIOGRAM 1

APPENDIX S: MAIN STUDY SOCIOGRAM 1

Key:

A - - - - - > B = B is named by A

A <- - - - -> B = A and B name each other



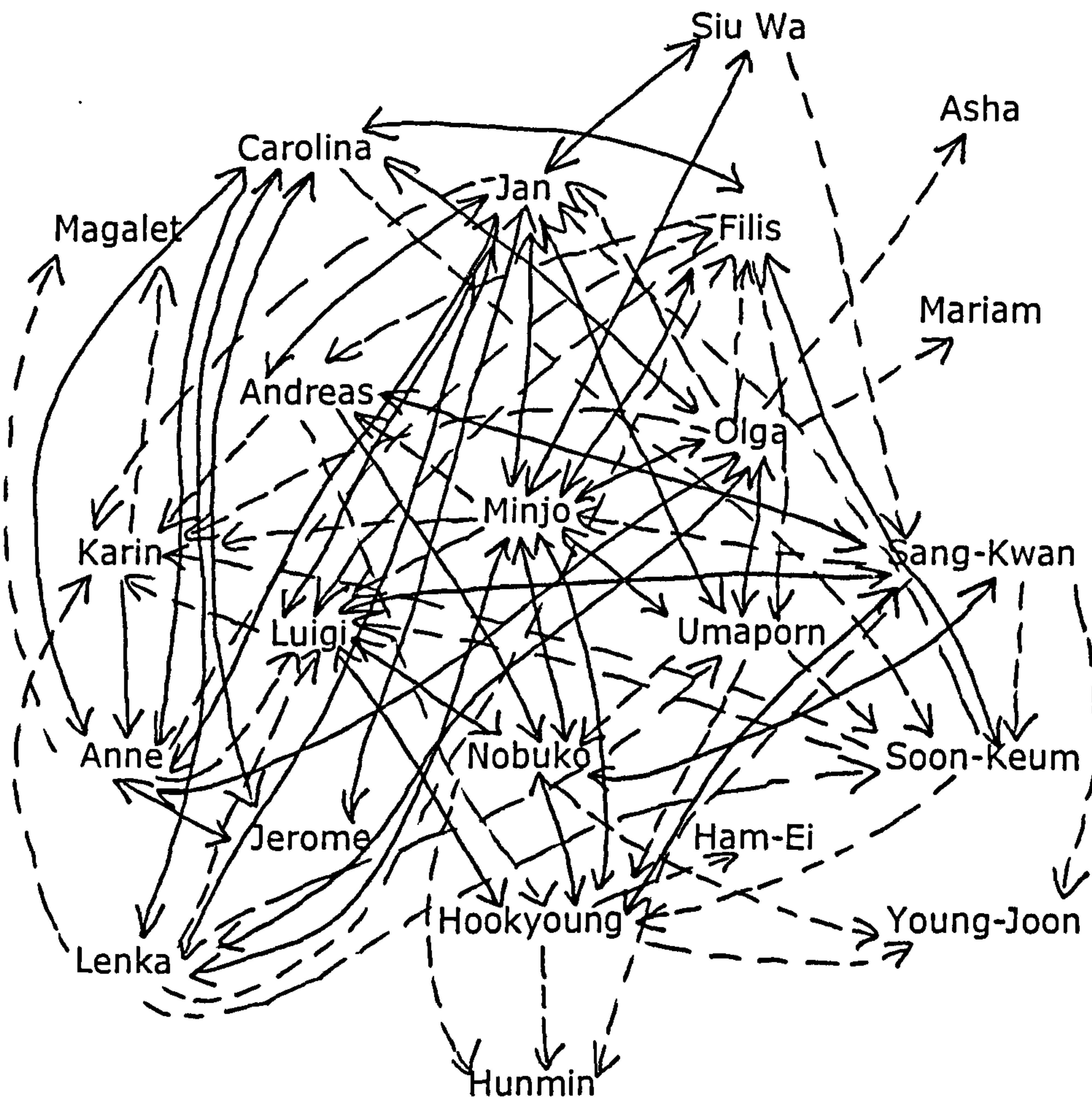
APPENDIX T: MAIN STUDY SOCIOGRAM 2

APPENDIX T: MAIN STUDY SOCIOGRAM 2

Key:

A - - - - - > B = B is named by A

A -----> B = A and B name each other



APPENDIX U: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION FROM
QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT AGE

APPENDIX U: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION FROM QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT AGE

Number of respondents: 12

Respective ages: 18, 19, 24, 25, 30, 33, 39, 43, 45, 46, 46, 48

Gender ratio, female - male: 9 - 3

The learner ...	number of learners giving this response
self definition defined himself or herself as 'young'	6
defined himself or herself as 'middle-aged'	6
definition of others in class perceived other learners as 'older than me'	4
perceived other learners as 'about the same age as me'	2
perceived other learners as 'younger than me'	6
age of friends was happy to make friends with learners of any age	9
was happy to make friends with learners of any age, but not 'too old' (over 50)	1
was happy to make friends with learners of the same age as them	1
was happy to make friends with learners of different ages from them	1
preference for age of class would prefer a class where the learners were of the same age	1
would prefer a class where the learners were of different ages	9
had no preference	2

APPENDIX V: SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPTS FROM MAIN
STUDY INTERVIEW 1

APPENDIX V: SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPTS FROM MAIN STUDY INTERVIEW 1

Conventions: T = teacher / interviewer
} = speaks simultaneously
(.) = pause
(?) = unintelligible

Interview 1:1

Interviewee = [KARIN] (K) 26.9.01

1. T: So how many different nationalities are there in this class [Karin]
2. K: About twelve nationalities
3. T: And what are they
4. K: They are um French Swiss Iranian Korean Dutch British Italian Hungarian
5. Venezuelan Turkish Bangladeshi Thai and Chinese
6. T: Very good who did you know before this class started
7. K: [Andrea] [Anita] [Anne] and I met some people before at the school
8. T: {Yes who were they
9. K: {They went to business school before yeah [Jan] [Mariam] um [Umaporn]
10. [Umaporn] [Soon-Keum] some of the China people I have seen before yeah
11. T: That's great do you see any of the other students outside the class
12. K: Yes [Andrea] [Anita] and [Anne]
13. T: What what sort of things do you do outside class
14. K: Yeah we go in town we going out at night pub yeah library
15. T: That's good what do you come to class for
16. K: To learn English
17. T: Is that the only reason
18. K: Yes yes
19. T: Good do you think talking to the other students helps you to learn English
20. K: Yes I think it's it is probably the easiest way to learn English but um not for er
21. perfect English because they they are not speaking perfect English
22. T: Good good do you prefer working with others or on your own
23. K: No I prefer working with others I don't like to be on my own I think it's more fun
24. with other people yeah

1. T: So what's your name
2. H: My name is [Hookyoung]
3. T: Good and where are you from
4. H: I'm from Korea
5. T: Very nice um in this class how many different nationalities are there
6. H: (.) About thirteen
7. T: Do you know what they are
8. H: (.) Little little
9. T: Yes where are the students from
10. H: (.) Hong Kong Switzerland France (.) Chinese (.) Italy Iran (.) Turkey Bangladesh
11. Hungary
12. T: Good good did you know any of these students before class started
13. H: Ah yes
14. T: Who did you know
15. H: [Hunmin] [Soon-Keum] [Minjo] [Ham-Ei]
16. T: All the Korean students
17. H: Yes
18. T: Yes do you see them outside the class
19. H: Yes (.) another English class
20. T: Yes do you see them apart from at English classes
21. H: Yes
22. T: Do you do you go out with them do you go shopping with them or go to their houses
23. H: Yes go to shopping and (.) with lunching
24. T: Oh that's nice um what do you come to class for
25. H: Um I want I want talking free
26. T: Good good do you think talking to the other students helps you learn English
27. H: (.) Yes yes
28. T: Do you prefer working in a group or would you rather work on your own
29. H: (.)
30. T: Do you like working with other students where you have to talk to each other
31. H: Yes
32. T: Or would you rather sit on your own and write by yourself which do you like best
33. H: Talking
34. T: You like talking best yes
35. H: Yes
36. T: Good good

APPENDIX W: SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPTS FROM MAIN
STUDY INTERVIEW 2

APPENDIX W: SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPTS FROM MAIN STUDY INTERVIEW 2

Conventions: T = teacher / interviewer
} = speaks simultaneously
(.) = pause
(?) = unintelligible

Interview 2:1 [Umaporn]

28 November 2001

1. T: Have you been to other English classes
2. U: Yes before when I in Thailand
3. T: Yes and is this class different from the other classes
4. U: Yes different
5. T: Can you say how it's different
6. U: Because the Thai classes was taught by Thai teacher (.) and the
7. English class is taught by English teacher (.) and a lot more difficult
8. T: What did you do in the Thai classes
9. U: What do I do so when I learn in the Thai classes I just learn about
10. basics of English (.) basic English that's all here is (.) not only that
11. because when I was studying in Thai class when I was young everything
12. very very good to remember and afterwards thirty years you know pack
13. everything away and now start it again like have to (?) again and then is
14. like a (.) knowledge is too far above you know my knowledge
15. T: Have you got friends in this class
16. U: Well yes I think I got some a few nice friends
17. T: Who are your friends would you say
18. U: I think [Jan] is quite nice and [Olga] quite quite nice yes
19. T: How easy is it to make friends
20. U: Not easy is it the problem is I don't have much time you see because I
21. have to work as well so only I I just have time come to to to English class
22. afterwards everybody going back home and then I not have time I have to
23. work so it not so easy really sorry
24. T: Is there anything that would make it casier to make friends here
25. U: (.) I think you know you have done very wells but because I don't
26. have time that's why you know if I have plenty of time I I arrange see
27. somebody
28. T: Yeah so if you had time outside class yeah that's fair enough um is working in a group
29. helpful or not
30. U: Yes help helpful yeah

31. T: Can you say why
32. U: Why because we get different idea from different students (.) yeah
33. it's very helpful when I get something which I don't know somebody
34. knows or he can tell another exchange experience or exchange knowledge
35. T: Do you like working with everyone here you can be honest
36. U: I can be honest with you honest yeah honest yeah
37. T: Do you like working with everyone
38. U: Yes yeah yeah
39. T: Is there anything you would change about the class
40. U: I don't think I have anything already very good I thoroughly enjoying it

Interview 1:3 [Fillis]

28 November 2001

1. T: OK so first of all tell me your name
2. F: [Fillis]
3. T: Good so have you been to other English classes
4. F: I have been to other English class
5. T: Is this class different from how you learnt at school in Turkey
6. F: Yes different
7. T: What's different
8. F: Because we learning in Turkey some words just I give you an example how are you
9. what is your name er we learn to count er
10. T: So just very simple things
11. F: Yes
12. T: Yes have you any friends in this class
13. F: Yes I have
14. T: Who are your friends
15. F: I give you their names
16. T: If you can
17. F: There is um [Vahideh] [Soon-Keum] [Karin] and er [Hookyoung] but I have a lot of
18. people my friends
19. T: That's good how easy is it to make friends in the class
20. F: Yes It really is easy for me because er we are from different countries and we
21. understand er easy than we talk
22. T: Good so you understand each other easily yeah that's very good um is there anything that would make it
23. easier to make friends here

24. F: Um yes it's easy in here yes it's easy to make friends here er because they are
25. helping me (?) everything
26. T: Oh that's good is working in a group helpful or not
27. F: Yes they are helpful when I don't understand the lesson I ask my friends and my
28. teacher er and they are helping me for everything yes we working each other
29. T: That's very good good um do you like working with everyone
30. F: Yes I liking with everyone because when we talk to each other it helps my language
31. T: So you don't mind who you work with
32. F: Um yes (?)
33. T: That's really good is there anything you would change about the class if you could
- F: Er no I want I don't want to change anything because I like my class

APPENDIX X: SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPTS
FROM MAIN STUDY INTERVIEW 3

APPENDIX x: SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPTS FROM MAIN STUDY INTERVIEW 3

Conventions: T = teacher / interviewer
} = speaks simultaneously
(.) = pause
(?) = unIntelligible

Interview 3:2 [Jan]

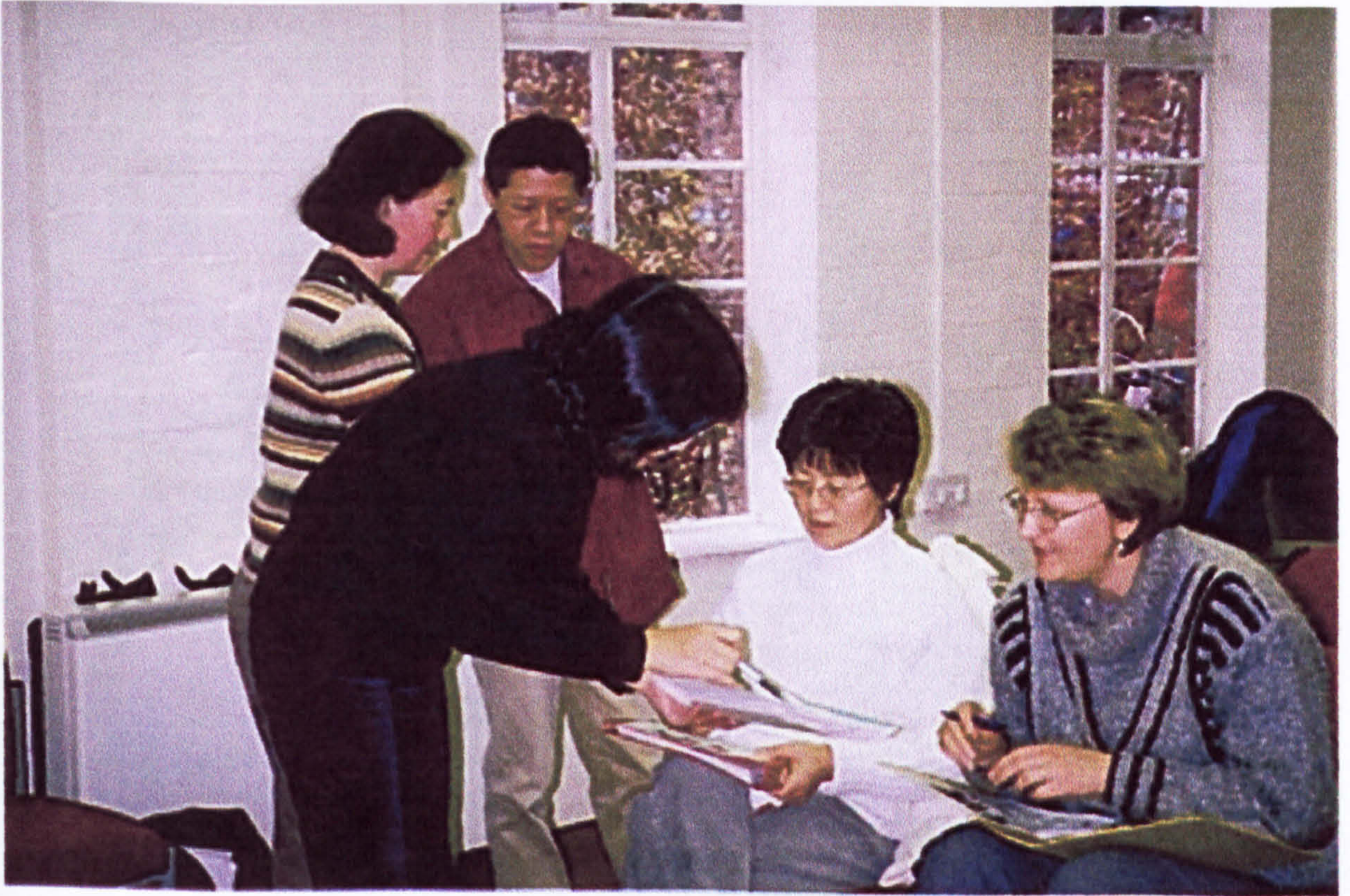
3 July 2002

1. T: OK um so first of all presumably you're still going to [X] on Wednesday
2. J: Yeah um at this moment I'm going on Tuesday and Wednesday two day
3. T: Yeah good and have you have you carried on going all through the year
4. J: Yeah
5. T: Yeah good um do you think if you can remember the Christmas term when I was teaching you has the
6. class changed since then
7. J: At Christmas time I'm not re- exactly remember whole although is quite similar (.)
8. yes is quite similar
9. T: Are they the same students there
10. J: No they been changed yeah some old friends been gone and some news been
11. coming
12. T: And has that been OK {have you
13. J: {Yeah is been really really nice they're very friendly very good
14. skill
15. T: Good do you know where the new people are from
16. J: Yeah I know this yeah from Hungary Czech Republic the France French German
17. Italia yeah
18. T: Good um at the class do you work in groups with the other students
19. J: Yeah we do it all er all the time yeah
20. T: And are you enjoying doing that is that
21. J: Oh yeah I love it yeah I really enjoy it because we we can do er different things or
22. we join together we er we make some some er like er when we do some sentences
23. we can get er we get some ? different ? yeah
24. T: What do you enjoy most
25. J: Oh I well actually I I enjoy everything in the lesson I love to because er I speaking in
26. my world speaking conversation is more important for me yeah
27. T: Are you going to carry on learning English
28. J: Yeah I would
29. T: At the same class or a different class
30. J: I would like to do some writing because um my writing is not very good yeah
31. everything actually I want to do everything yeah to improve my English I want to do
32. much better better better
33. T: You've just taken an exam
34. J: Yeah I've just taken PET

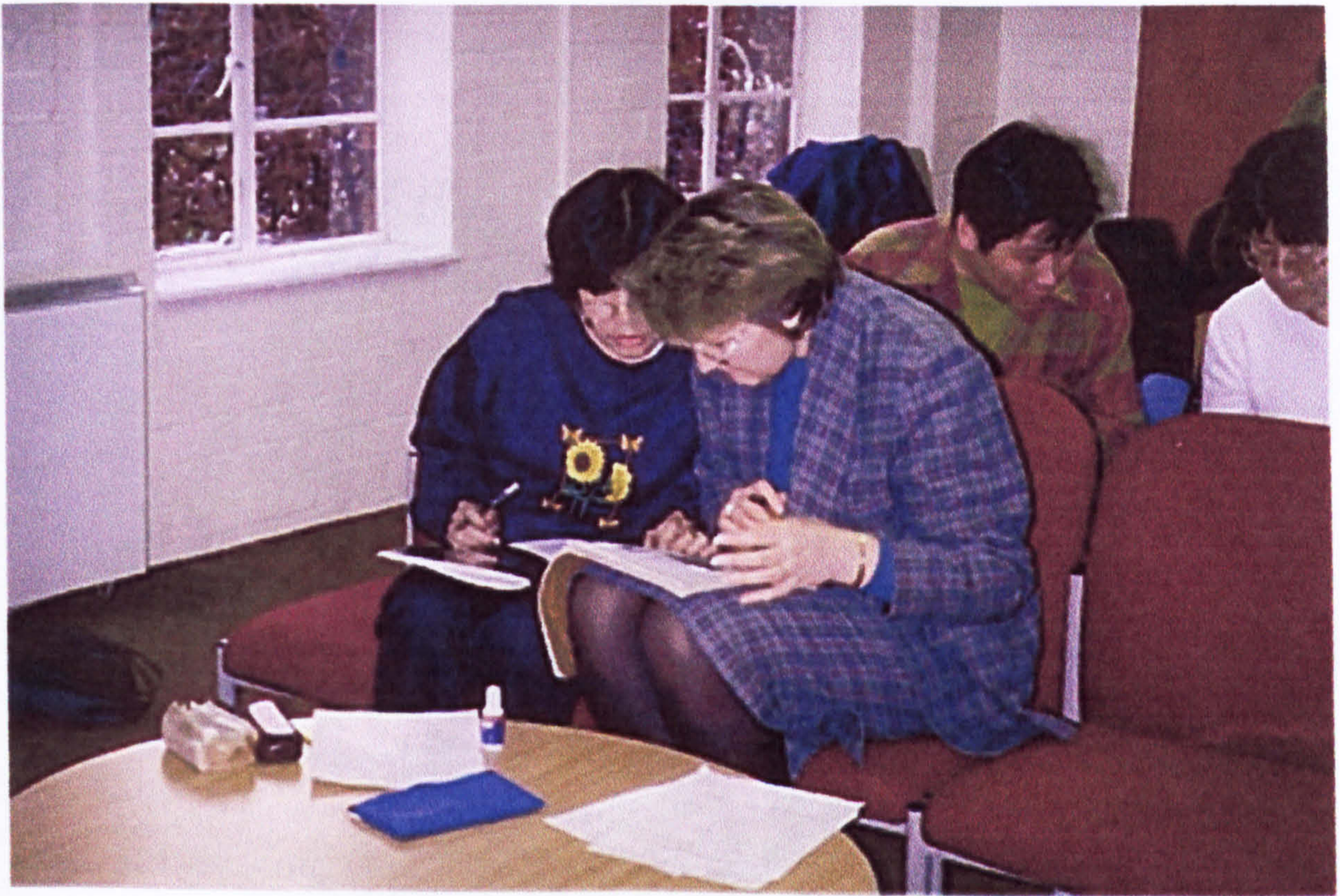
35 T: Yes and that was OK was it
36 J: I think so but I don't know yet I have to wait er er the results came out from
37 um August
38 T: Are you working at the moment
39 J: No um at this moment I'm not working because I I've got some health
40 problem er this time I recover so er so I have a lot of time to learning English
41 T: And are you learning any other languages as well
42 J: Yeah I'm learning Spanish on Monday
43 T: Yes is that going well
44 J: Yeah I think I I much better than the other one yeah because I I when I came
45 here England before I live in the Central America well actually not really really
46 Central America the Caribbean so I have (?) learnt some Spanish before yeah
47 so um that's I got to really comfortable
48 T: Which do you find easier English or Spanish
49 J: Both both difficult yeah because the language not easy when you want to
50 learn them better like English or Spanish because I am foreigner I'm Chinese
51 so er I think I have to work very hard to to doing this
52 T: Yes are all the other Spanish students English
53 J: They all English
54 T: Except you
55 J: Yeah except me
56 T: Yeah so they speak English a lot to each other do they
57 J: Yeah
58 T: Yeah
59 J: That well that's what I don't really like it's because I always think when you
60 going to learn some language you have to speak the language if you keep going
61 to speaking English is it's quite difficult to get to getting good and er and er
62 improve so much
63 T: Yes that's a good comment um in the class at [x] have you made some friends
64 J: Yeah (.) I made er um [Andreas] he is come from Venezuela and I meet [A]
65 she is come from Spain and [K] she is come from Hungary yes a lot of friends
66 yeah it's very good
67 T: Do you see people outside class
68 J: Er (.) what you mean
69 T: Like go to their houses or see people in town
70 J: No
71 T: Do you have friends you meet the rest of the week
72 J: No just [Andreas]
73 T: Just [Andreas] yes
74 J: Yes the other one we just meet in the class
75 T: Is everybody in the class friendly or are some people {difficult to

76 J: {Yeah they're very friendly very friendly
77 it's very nice yeah (.) when we er er meet in the class we always talking yeah
78 they're very nice
79 T: That's good yes um from your experience of learning languages what do you think is the best way to learn
80 English
81 J: Ah you mean for my personal
82 T: Yeah
83 J: I er I really want to learn conversation because er if example in writing you
84 can practise in your home at home and er reading you can practise you can
85 read much more but conversation you have to speak you have to practise and
86 that's I think no way to do it yourself at home so yeah the conversation
87 speaking is more
88 T: Speaking helps you most
89 J: Yeah
90 T: Yeah um who do you think is most important the teacher or the other students in helping you learn
91 J: (.) Well the same thing what I just said the speaking because in a class a lot
92 of students I seem to be er I feel seem to be not the time is not long enough
93 for speaking well I I know that is very very difficult for the teacher because a
94 lot of student the teachers can't speak with each other so if I got the chance I I
95 hope to go get er and a bit more time for speaking
100 T: In the class on Wednesday um how much of that class are you speaking
101 J: Could you repeat that
102 T: Yeah for in the class on Wednesday how much of the time do you spend speaking
103 J: (.) Um depend the teacher what they teaching that day well um actually
104 I I really want to have time for speaking yeah in there I I'm I'm not I
105 don't remember exactly the time but er um the time is very short for
106 speaking
107 T: So that's one thing you would change about the class more time for speaking is there
108 anything else that you would change
109 J: (..) Er listening because I got little bit little bit problem with the listening
110 so um maybe I'm not used to it because um (..) well I'm sure when I go
111 to school I'm just learning at that time when I go back home I'm really
112 lazy yeah so er maybe I still want to do something for listening listening
113 is my problem
114 T: Do you feel that your English has improved this year
115 J: Yeah exactly yeah is much better than before I know at this moment
116 I'm not too good I have to keep going but I am sure my English much
117 better than before
118 T: That's great thank you that's really good

APPENDIX Y: PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE LEARNERS DURING THE MAIN STUDY







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