NEW TIMES FOR ESOL IN FURTHER AND ADULT EDUCATION. A STUDY OF ESOL TEACHERS' ACCOUNTS OF THE CHANGES IN THEIR WORKING LIVES.

by

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ABSTRACT

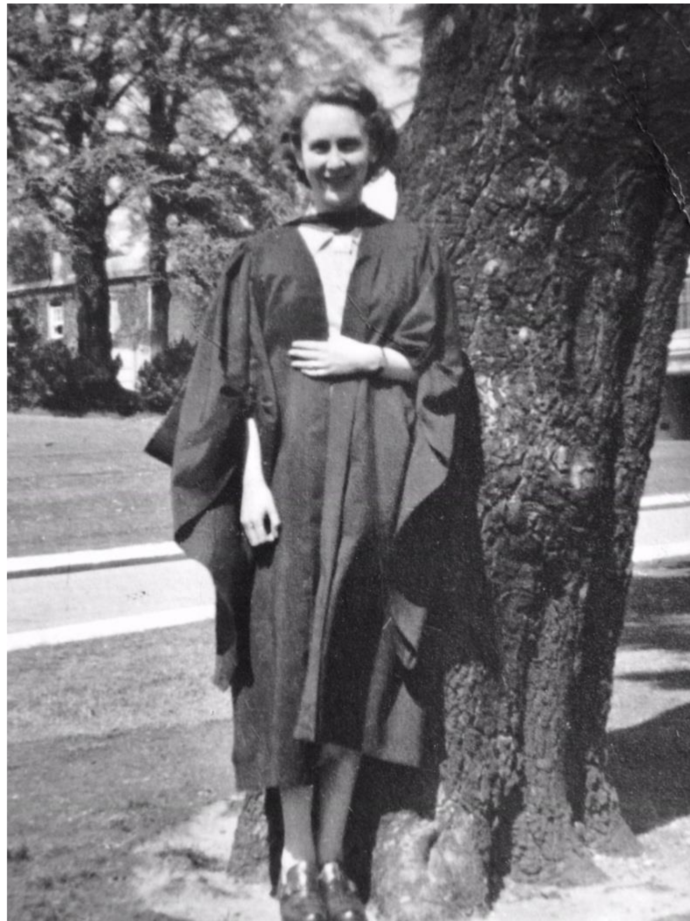
This thesis presents a study of the major changes in language education policy in the further and adult sector in England from 1997 to 2017, and of the impact of these changes on the working lives of eight adult ESOL teachers in the West Midlands. The aims of the research were to document the specific nature of the changes and to investigate the ways in which the teacher participants navigated the changes and narrated their lived experiences and their agentive actions and reactions within this changing context. The study was qualitative and it was based around iterative interviewing. The data analysis was carried out in two stages: firstly, thematic analysis of all interviews (twenty in all), focusing on themes that recurred across the interviews; and secondly, narrative analysis, combined with positioning analysis, focusing on small stories told by the teacher participants. The orienting theories for the study were drawn from research into teachers' lives and from the study of policy as process, particularly language policy. In keeping with the latter field, and with recent research in education, language policy-making was seen as a complex social practice, involving enactment on different levels of social life – national, institutional and personal.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother,

Barbara Lacey

1928-2018.



‘My hands will keep the print of hers’

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ABBREVIATIONS

AECC	Adult ESOL Core Curriculum
ALCC	Adult Literacy Core Curriculum
ALBSU	Adult Learning and Basic Skills Unit
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
BIS	(Department for) Business, Innovation and Skills
CELTA	Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults
Cert Ed.	Certificate in Education
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DIUS	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
DTLLS	Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
FAE	Further and Adult Education
FE	Further Education
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FS	Functional Skills
GLH	Guided learning hours

GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
HMIs	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILPs	Individual Learning Plans
IfL	Institute for Learning
JCP	Job Centre Plus
LEA	Local Education Authority
LPP	Language policy and planning
NATECLA	National Association for Teaching English and other Community Languages to Adults
NHS	National Health Service
NIACE	National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education
NRDC	National Research and Development Centre
NQF	National Qualification Framework
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
QTLS	Qualified Teacher in the Learning and Skills
SFA	Skills Funding Agency
TLC	Transforming Learning Cultures
TLRP	Teaching and Learning Research Programme
UCU	University and College Union
VITAE	Variation in Teachers' Work, Lives and their Effects on Pupils

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Feature	Description
'italics'	Extract from transcript (particularly in chapter 5)
italics and bold	Name of speaker
bold	Volume/ loudness of the utterance
,	Momentary pause (commensurate with a grammatical comma in a written text)
…	Pause longer than a momentary one
[ ]	Square bracket indicate non-verbal elements of the conversation, e.g. [sighs], [laughs], [hhh]
''word''	Quotation marks indicate utterances when the speaker is displaying a marked response regarding a particular term or set of terms
'word'	Single quotation marks indicate reported speech
a) b) …	Indicates verbal listing by a speaker

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The nature and scope of the study

This thesis presents a study of changes in language education policy and funding arrangements in England for the teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and the ways that eight ESOL teachers in one region of England talk about these processes and the impact they have had on their professional practice.

The study was a qualitative study which drew on: (1) interpretation and analysis of successive interviews with eight ESOL teachers in further and adult education (FAE) contexts; (2) analysis of policy-related documents and public debates; (3) observations in different institutional settings; (4) my own lived experience in FAE, specifically in the field of ESOL, in various capacities since 1991; (5) interdisciplinary reading of international research literature relating to language policy processes and the teaching of English to adult migrants and refugees, and research literature relating to the further and adult education sector in England and to the fields of ESOL, adult literacy and numeracy ('basic skills'), including research into the lives of teachers.

The study aims to make a distinct contribution to the small but growing body of research on adult ESOL in the UK by focusing on teachers' account of the ways in which wider, highly significant shifts in policy and funding have had an impact on the field of adult ESOL, and on their own professional practice. While I have narrowed my research lens so as to focus in-depth on the accounts of a group of ESOL teachers, in one region of England, my knowledge of the wider policy context in England leads me to anticipate that teachers and researchers in the field of adult ESOL will find resonances between the accounts of the teachers participating in my study and the accounts of teachers in other regions of England.

1.2 My life in ESOL

The questions that I am asking in the study presented in this thesis, and my approach to the interpretation and analysis of the teacher accounts documented here, have been shaped by my own experience of working in the ESOL field, as well as by my reading of the relevant research literatures, reviewed in Chapter 2. In developing the study I endeavoured to take a reflexive stance at each stage of the research process. My personal history, beliefs and values regarding language education policy, pedagogy and professional practice is to be found in the first appendix.

1.3. Research questions

The study presented in this thesis was guided by one overarching research question, namely:

How do ESOL teachers narrate their response to policy change in the adult and further education sector?

This was supported by the following five related questions.

1. How has national policy regarding ESOL in the further and adult education sector changed since 1997?
2. How have policy-generated funding arrangements, on national and institutional scales, shifted ESOL provision in the West Midlands since 1997?
3. In what way do the ESOL teachers in this study talk about the changes in language education policy, funding arrangements and institutional changes?
4. How do the ESOL teachers see the identified changes as shaping their practice?
5. What are the implications from the findings of the research?

1.4 Outline of the thesis

The next chapter presents the research context for the study. It reviews the relevant strands of research relating to educational policy change as well as research into teachers' lives, identifying key empirical studies, allowing for the exploration of the two most relevant strands of research to support my answer the overarching question. Chapter 3 documents the far-reaching changes that have taken place in educational policy

and funding in England, relating to further and adult education (FAE) and ESOL teaching, since the final decade of the twentieth century. An historical perspective is taken in this chapter and particular attention is given to the way in which national developments impacted on further and adult education (FAE) in the West Midlands. This chapter addresses research questions 1 and 2.

The next three chapters focus specifically on the fieldwork. Chapter 4 describes the design and conduct of the study, including the nature of interview data and the choice of narrative analysis. I discuss the relationships that I established with the ESOL teachers and I show how I dealt with ethical considerations. Chapter 5 presents a thematic analysis of the interview data gathered in this study. Chapter 6 is based on an interactional and narrative analysis of the interview data, using positioning theory as the basis for the analysis.

Chapter 7 discusses the links between the findings presented in chapters 5 and 6 and the conceptual framework for the study. I demonstrate what we can learn about language education policy processes through close analysis of teachers’’ narratives and by homing in on the specific ways in which they are able to exercise agency in navigating policy changes.

CHAPTER TWO: ORIENTING THEORIES

2.1 Introduction

My study draws on conceptual frameworks developed in two related fields of research in education: research into language education policy and research into teachers' lives, both linked explicitly to my overarching research question, 'how do ESOL teachers narrate their responses to policy change in the adult and further education sector?' Firstly I examine the field of policy research and educational policy making, especially language-in-education policies. This includes studies which take account of the impact of policy on teachers in schools as well as in the further and adult educations (FAE) sector. In this field, policy is seen as process and considerable attention is given to the way in which practitioners on the ground respond to, adapt or simply resist policy change. The second field I draw on is research into the lives of teachers. Here, the focus is on teachers' emic perspectives of their lives and their work, and how aspects of them as individual teachers affect their everyday teaching practices. This area of research is discussed in the second half of this chapter.

2.2. Researching policy as process

Two of the research questions in my study focus on the nature of policy changes taking place in the educational context in which the ESOL teachers in my study were working. These questions led me to the range of research on policy as process, including research into change in language -in-education policy. In the next section I focus on recent research in the field of language policy and planning, particularly on those studies which have adopted a qualitative (often explicitly ethnographic) approach and which focus on education. I then move on to review research into educational policy-making within the context of British education. This research is significant because it foregrounds the processual nature of policy (Ball *et al,* 2012) and because it takes account of the views and perspectives of different social actors, including teachers.

2.2.1 Language-in-education policy as process

In the last two decades, the focus of research on language policy-making has shifted to the ethnography of language policy (Ricento and Hornberger, 1996; Hornberger and Johnson, 2007; McCarty, 2011; Johnson, 2013). For example, McCarty (2011) argued that research in language policy and planning should not just to be restricted to explicit policy statements or documents of governments that are overtly about language, but it should also take account of covert policies that have a bearing on language use (such as the funding regimes in my study). McCarty's (2011) vision for the ethnography of language policy builds on the work of educational researchers in the US (Levinson and Sutton, 2001:1), who recommend viewing policy as 'a complex social practice'. They also focus on the 'appropriation' of policy and consider where and how it 'may be applied, interpreted, and/or contested by a multiplicity of local actors' (2001:2).

In a landmark article in 1996, Thomas Ricento and Nancy Hornberger reviewed the field of language policy and planning and noted the significant advance made through the introduction of an historical-structural approach in the early 1990s (Tollefson, 1991), with its insistence on the political and ideological basis of language policy. However, they also emphasised the need to take account of the 'agents, levels and processes' (Ricento and Hornberger, 1996:408) in specific instances of language policy making. To illustrate these 'levels' of policy making, they employed an 'onion' metaphor, indicating the many layers involved in the process of policy change. Ten years later, Hornberger and Johnson (2007) revisited this metaphor and made the case for adopting an ethnographic approach to language policy-making which would 'slice through the layers of the LPP [language policy and planning] onion to reveal varying local interpretations, implementations, and perhaps resistance ' (2007:510). In their view, studies of language policy texts and of historical and ideological processes were a significant dimension of language policy research, but research on these dimensions needed to be married with ethnography, so as to provide fuller accounts of the processes of policy development and the impact of these processes on the lives of specific groups of social actors. They state that policy texts

‘are nothing without the human agents who act as interpretive conduits between the language policy levels (or layers of the LPP onion)’ (Hornberger and Johnson, 2007:528).

Those embracing different qualitative and ethnographic approaches to language policy-making (and its impact) have used different terms to designate the different parts of the policy ‘onion’. These have included ‘layers’, ‘levels, and ‘scales’. I adopt the term levels here as used by Ricento and Hornberger (1996) and developed by Hornberger and Johnson (2007), which links to their metaphor of the policy onion. They see the roles of the researcher to be one of examining the various levels ‘through which language policy moves and develops’ (2007:527). In my data analysis I focus on three level of policy: the national level of policy-making, where politicians and civil servants are the main social actors, the institutional level where specific social actors in different organisations interpret and implement the policies within their own institutional context, and, of course, the level in the classroom, where ‘the teacher exercises language policy power through pedagogical decisions’ (2007:527)

I also take up the notion of agency that is highlighted in the work of Ricento and Hornberger (1996) and of Hornberger and Johnson (2007). Since, in my study, the focus was on the ways in which teachers talked of the impact of policy and funding changes on their working lives, it was essential to take account of their agency in interpreting different policies and in contributing to the rolling out of the polices related to adult ESOL provision, at different times and in different institutional spaces. As Menken and Garcia (2010:250) remind us, teachers are crucial players in language policy processes as it ‘is educators who cook and stir the onion’ and so have considerable influence on how the policy is enacted. Moreover, Johnson (2013:99) believes that to simply focus on policy creation and policy implementation omits the ‘agentive role that ‘implementers’ play in policy appropriation’. He offers four levels of policy-making for us to consider – creation, interpretation, appropriation and instantiation. While teachers are not the creators of language-in-education policy, their role in bringing policies to fruition make them central in Johnson’s three other levels of policy-making (that is, interpretation, appropriation and

instantiation) and their views on these policy changes, at these levels, play a significant part of their teaching lives. It is to the role of teachers in, and their views of, the processes of policy-making that I now turn.

2.2.2 Educational policy research in schools and colleges in England and Wales

One significant research project in further and adult education in the UK which focused on policy was called '*The impact of policy on learning and inclusion in the learning and skills sector*'. This was part of the *Teaching and Learning Research Programme* (TLRP), funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. This project ran from January 2004 till July 2007 (Edward and Coffield, 2007). Although the project was designed to focus on the impact of policies on three specified groups of learners, the researchers elicited a range of views, including those of teachers within the further and adult education sector. The study investigated 'views from above' (policy makers) as well as the 'view from below' of learners, teachers and managers (Edward and Coffield, 2007:126). They did so through interviews and focus groups, seeking the emic perspectives of those involved in the process. Edward and Coffield relate an event that took place in London in 2006 focusing on the *Skills for Life* agenda: policy makers (different government officials) and practitioners came together to share their understandings of the agenda. Edward and Coffield reported that the policy-makers were 'surprised by the gap' (2007:127) between their own perspectives and those of the teachers present. I attended this event and I remember the incredulity expressed by both LSC and DfES staff (the policy makers) not only regarding the views expressed by the practitioners there, but also about their understandings of each other's roles in the *Skills for Life* agenda.

Several research papers emerged from the TLRP. One focused on the basic skills context in adult and community settings (Hodgson, Edward and Gregson, 2007), a second reviewed policies in the 'learning and skills sector' (i.e. FAE) (Finlay *et al,* 2007) and a third explicitly targeted the impact of policy on teachers' practices (Edward *et al* 2007). In this paper, Edward *et al* stated,

> from the perspective of policy-makers, teaching staff may be seen as the last link in the policy chain, the ultimate implementers whose behaviour they seek to change, if the experience of learners is to change. (2007:158)

This policy-makers' view of teachers as mere recipients of policy, identified here by Edward *et al,* is in contrast with the much more dynamic role teachers are assigned within language policy and planning research. Edward *et al* go on to say that the teachers in their study had to live 'with the consequences of policy decisions, but could control neither the content nor the pace of these changes' (2007:161) and this made them seem like 'victims of change'. They also found that, despite being wearied by the constant changes at national and institutional levels, the teachers in their study were still able to focus on their students. In their words, 'those who focus strongly on their commitment to their learners and their needs are more likely to have weathered the storms of change in recent years' (Edward *et al,* 2007:166). This research focused on the interface between policy and teachers (like my study), and the teachers were seen as being bound up with the day-to-day aspects of their teaching rather than with the reasons for the 'constant policy change'. In summarising the set of papers for the project (which appeared in a special issues of the *Journal of Vocational Educational and Training* – Volume 59, issue 2), Hamilton (2007) states that, '(t)he questions I was left with at the end of these papers are all about different aspects of agency in the process of policy and change' (2007:253) and she recommends that researchers should take a closer look at the notion of agency regarding policy which is what my study does.

A clearer focus on the processual nature of policy and of teacher agency is seen in the work of Stephen Ball and colleagues (2012) who write about the *enactment* of policy by schools – and about teachers as policy actors. In their study of four schools, they identify eight different types of policy actor who are 'involved in making meaning of and constructing responses to policy through the processes of interpretation and translation' (2012:49). They believe that different types of policy produce different types of enactment, but that the underlying theme of most of the policy for education is built on the notional 'good learner' and 'good teacher' who both operate in a 'good school'. Ball *et al* (2012) argue that this idealised view of the consumers of policy initiatives

pressurises the teachers, in particular, to take on this role of 'good teacher' and constantly work on the self-as-teacher to become better and better. This leaves little time to resist – or even to think differently. In these circumstances, teachers' efforts need to go into being the best teacher and into complying with the latest policy.

Ball (2003) previously focused on the dominance of a performance agenda within education linked to an 'unstoppable flood of closely inter-related reform' (2003:215). He argued that this caused ontological angst in teachers as they strove for excellence in each new measurement of their performance, unable to resist the all-encompassing avalanche of policies within education. In their study of policy enactment, Ball *et al* (2012:150) do not encounter open resistance, but they do find 'evidence of discontents, murmurings, indifference and disengagements' and with that, some hope that not all reactions by teachers to education policy are about conformity or compliance.

Ball *et al*'s (2012) focus on policy actors and their idea of 'enactment' is very much in line with the ideas guiding the ethnographic approach to language policy and planning. Johnson and Freeman (2010), both language policy and planning researchers, note that they 'adopt the word "appropriation" because it highlights the powerful role of educators in the language policy process' (2010:14). This emphasis on the agentive role of the teacher in educational policy-making is key to my own research, especially in analysing the positons teachers take through their narratives about policy change. Teachers may be at the 'end point' of a policy, but they can assert their agency, adapt their practices and navigate the policy change in different ways.

There is a clear link, for me, between the study of language-in-education policy as policy enactment and the study of the lives of teachers who currently find themselves in a context saturated in policy-making. My main interest lies in the specific ways in which teachers' narratives are situated within that context. The teacher participants I interviewed talked to me about the changes in their working lives over a period of more than five years. They focused on the policy changes taking place on different levels –

national, institutional and personal – which affected the practices they engaged in within their day-to-day working contexts. These were overt policy shifts (such as the introduction of *Functional Skills*) or more covert changes (such as withdrawal of funding for many ESOL courses) and had great effect on their day to day lives as ESOL teachers. In the next section I discuss the research on teachers' lives in both school and FAE contexts.

2.3. Researching teachers' lives

One of my research questions (question four) concerns how the ESOL teachers view the way policy change shapes their everyday lived experiences. Research on aspects of teachers' lives has thus informed the choice of approach for my own study, most notably being that the focus of this area of research is on the emic perspective of the teachers. Initial studies in this field focused on those teaching in the school sector and then, in the late nineties, this broadened out to include teachers working in the further and adult education sector. This included teachers who were working in the *Skills for Life* area of literacy, numeracy and ESOL. I explore these different types of study in turn, identifying research papers that have been of particular significance in informing my own study, laying the foundations on which I have built.

2.3.1. Teachers' lives as the focus of research

Writing in 1981, Ivor Goodson stated that, up to that point, studies regarding education had frequently focused on the teaching event and not enough attention had 'been paid to the individual biography, personal views, and life-style of teachers' (1981:67). A few years later, writing with Stephen Ball (Ball and Goodson, 1985:7), he asserted that indeed, 'greater attention has been directed to teachers as human beings, as rounded social actors with their own problems and perspectives' and he acknowledged that research on teachers' work and careers was a growing area. This growth was in no small part due his early work which, according to Goodson and Numan, (2002:269) prompted others to study teachers' lives. These others included Huberman, who published his significant study, *The Lives of Teachers,* in 1993. This focus signified a realisation that the personal

histories of teachers, their own individual lived experiences, were significant factors in any act of teaching.

Within this research tradition, there has been an interest in specific aspects of teachers' lives such as the different types of knowledge teachers draw upon (Shulman, 1986; Goodson, 1995; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990) and the characteristics of 'good' teachers (Buchmann, 1987; Hattie, 2003), teacher identities (Gee, 2002; Watson, 2006; Soreide, 2007) and teacher agency (Goodson and Numan, 2002; Ball, 2003; Edwards, 2015; Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2015) as well as generic studies (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1991; Goodson, 1992; Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996). All of the studies cited above referred to those who taught in the school system, that is, primary and secondary schools and in various locations across the UK, Australia and the USA. The research approach taken by these studies often differed: while some studies were locally focused on a small number of teacher participants, others were large scale and use mixed methods to collect data. But all looked beyond theories of teaching to explore what the individual teacher brought to the process of teaching.

One significant, large scale study was the VITAE project (*Variation in Teachers' Work, Lives and their Effects on Pupils*) which ran for 4 years from 2001. The VITAE project was one of the largest ever conducted in the UK. It was commissioned by the New Labour Government, via the Department for Education and Skills. The research involved over 300 school teachers in 100 primary and secondary schools in England and was very much envisaged as part of the 'what works' approach to educational research. Such research was based on the assumption that large scale survey work could provide definitive answers to key questions within education. In VITAE the key question was 'what makes an effective teacher?'(See the research summary in Day *et al,* 2006b). Government backing for projects on this scale, such as the VITAE project, inevitably changes the nature of educational research, with a focus on easily transferable models to ensure every school is 'effective'. Thomas (2012) discusses the dangers of the 'what works' approach to educational research, linking it to a 'folk-lore' representation of science, and instead he

advocates ‘a science of education concerned with local study conducted by practitioners’ (p43). The VITAE study used mixed methods to collect data, some of which could be considered part of Thomas’ ‘putatively scientific precepts’ (2012:26). These included methods such as large surveys, using statistical measures to try to identify teacher characteristics associated with effectiveness. But qualitative methods were also used: methods such as collecting narrative accounts from teachers and students about their experiences within education. This data then formed the basis of research papers focusing on the experiences of the teachers, managers and learners rather than providing tables and targets as per the report, allowing for a much richer and more nuanced exploration of teaching and learning than a mere application of formulaic answers to generic questions focusing on ‘successful’ learning. I include the VITAE project here as it was an initial starting point for my study (see chapter 3) and encouraged my choice of focus on narrative accounts of teachers. As well as producing the ‘big data’ required by the funding conditions, the project also gave rise to many research papers focusing on different aspects of teachers’ lives, not just on effectiveness (Sammons *et al,* 2007) but on identity (Day *et al,* 2006a), resilience (Gu and Day, 2007) and on well-being (Day and Kington, 2008). Studies such as these have made a considerable contribution to the research into teachers’ lives.

Day and Kington (2008:8) outline how the ‘changing conditions in which teachers work’ affect how they feel about their job. They recognise four categories of teacher identity (which were stable positive, stable negative, unstable positive and unstable negative) and note that instabilities in personal, institutional or professional life cause ‘stresses in the emotional fabric of identity’ (2008:8). Four scenarios are given in their paper along with cameos of teachers participating in their study. Their conclusion is that, while it is not possible for teachers to remain ‘stable’ in terms of their personal, situational or professional lives, it is possible for the implications of policy changes on the emotional resilience of teachers to be considered by policy makers and policy implementers. Day *et al* (2006a) note that, as teaching requires much personal investment, there is a direct link between the personal and the professional identities of teachers, which impacts on their

sense of agency. They also ascertain that for secondary school teachers, the 'subject and its status are related (…) closely to identity' (p610). If the subject they are teaching loses status – such as ESOL in the case of the teacher participants in my research – then this can affect their sense of self.

The theme of agency is a key consideration for Priestly, Biesta and Robinson (2015) in their research into the lives of school teachers. Their paper draws heavily on a research project (funded by the Economic and Social Research Council) entitled *Teacher Agency and Curriculum Change*. They note that there has been a recent shift in the view of teachers as 'recipients' of policy (and thus de-professionalised) to teachers being referred to as 'agents of change', as social actors who have a key roles in school improvement. This can bring about a conflict because, as Priestly *et al* point out (2015:2), 'policy demands that teachers exercise agency in their working practices, then simultaneously denies them the means to do so.' In proposing an ecological view of agency, they hold that agency is not 'something that people can have; it is something that people do or, more precisely, something they achieve' (p3). And, as they go on to argue, teacher agency is enacted in a specific time and context. In this way they highlight that the responsibility for action is not just in the gift of teachers, but in the whole environment in which teachers find themselves.

2.3.2. Focusing on teachers in further and adult education

I now turn to research into the lives of teachers in the Further Education (FE) sector (there is relatively little on the lives of teachers in the adult and community education field, the work of Marion Bowl (2014, 2017) being a notable exception). Early research with FE teachers focused on the concept of professionalism, linked to notions of teacher agency and identity. This included work by Avis (1999) and by Bathmaker and Avis (2005a, 2005b). Bathmaker (2006) refers back to research she was involved with in 2001-2002 which explored the views of pre-service student teachers regarding their sense of self-as-teacher. The research data included in-depth interviews as well as focus groups and questionnaires. During the analysis of this data, different types of professionalism were

identified. These included the 'corporate' and 'critical' types of professionalism that Bathmaker had recognised in her earlier work with colleagues (e.g. Avis, Bathmaker and Parsons, 2002). In reviewing the data, Bathmaker (2006) identifies two further types of professionalism, 'personal' and 'collaborative'. These arose from her more detailed analysis of student teachers' views. These types of professionalism are concerned with relationships with others. Personal professionalism emphasises the importance of the teachers' own educational past, their commitment to students and their identification with their chosen subject, while collaborative professionalism focuses on relationships with peers. Both have their downsides, though, since personal professionalism can lead to isolation and collaborative professionalism can be subverted by the employer to ensure that the focus remains on corporate goals.

Bathmaker returned to the notion of professionalism (Bathmaker and Avis, 2013) in empirical work which followed the lives of three of the student teacher participants from the original study (2002), as they moved into their teaching careers. Using data from their narrative accounts over eight years, Bathmaker and Avis (2013:736) report that the teachers they worked with did not 'consciously and coherently' seek to address inequalities through their working practices, but were focused on their individual work context and their desire to support their students. The authors note that this 'personal professionalism' was not necessarily linked to any awareness of the wider policy context. In contrast, the link between policy and practice was clearly noted by the participants in my study – as will be seen in chapter 5.

Between 2000 and 2011, the large research initiative, entitled the *Teaching and Learning Research Programme* (TLRP) that I mentioned earlier in this chapter, was financed by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) at the behest of the New Labour Government. Writing more than halfway through the research programme in 2007, Pollard stated that the project was conceived as a way to move from small scale research to large scale, nationally funded research across the complete range of educational activities with a particular focus on contributing to 'new knowledge for the improvement

of learning' (2007:644). Among the projects supported by TLRP were several projects which focused on the further education sector, including the projects entitled *Learning and Working in Further Education in Wales* and *Transforming Learning Cultures* (TLC).

Jephcote and Salisbury's (2009) project, *Learning and Working in Further Education in Wales,* was conducted over two years in Welsh colleges of Further Education. As in the work of Day and colleagues (2006a, 2006b), Jephcote and Salisbury noted that there were significant connections between the personal lives of the teachers and their professional work. They reviewed key areas of research for the sector – professionalism, the impact of occupational standards, research with pre-service teachers – but noted that at the time there had been less research 'into the lives of experienced teachers' (2009:967). This is a significant aspect of my study. Jephcote and Salisbury also recorded the increasing interest among researchers in the development of biographies of teachers. For these two researchers, a prominent part of the professional identity of the teachers they worked with was their relationship with their students. A 'principled ethic of care' (2009:971) was identified in the work of the teachers participating in their study. Despite many policy changes and the pressure of external standards and auditing, the teachers in their study worked hard to support their students, whom they often saw as having been let down by the school system.

The *Transforming Learning Cultures* project (TLC) focussed on the complex nature of the learning environment (the learning culture) in FE (Nash *et al*, 2008). In his review of the TLC-FE strand, Gleeson writes that 'the tutor was a major influence on the quality of learning and the student experience' (2005:241) but that there was a startling lack of recognition of this. Despite the difficult circumstances prevalent in FE colleges, Gleeson's account demonstrated that teachers would try their best to be supportive of their students, investing considerable time, effort and emotional energy in order to put students' interests first. This echoed the work of Jephcote and Salisbury (2009) in the Welsh FE context.

In another paper from the TLC project, Gleeson and James (2007) explore the paradox underpinning professionalism in the FE sector. On the one hand, notions of professionalism are imposed from without and 'teachers are subject to external rules and constraints,' (p452) while, on the other hand, within FE institutions, teachers are seen 'as agents with power'. The research conducted by Gleeson and James (2007) was based on data gathered in different ways with 16 FE teachers, with a commitment to a practitioner-led research approach. The data included diaries, research workshops and frequent interviews. Focusing on the way that the FE teachers positioned themselves around what Gleeson and James call 'creative tensions' – and specifically how they mediated these tensions – the authors aimed to shed light on the ways in which FE tutors actively managed the complex conditions in which they operated. Bowl (2014) takes up this aspect of teacher agency in comparing the ideological orientations of teachers in adult and community settings in England and New Zealand. She shows that those teachers with more experience of teaching were better able to accommodate or resist the pressures of neoliberal policies in their working contexts and find 'ways of working in the spaces for professional agency' (2014:47).

I turn now to a study by two FE practitioners that was conducted in the UK in 2014 (Smith and Swift). The researchers were FE teachers themselves at the time of their study. They were interested in how 'the language of learning has led to a market model in FE which has influenced policy decisions and funding and created an audit-driven culture' (Smith and Swift, 2014: 251). In their study, they interviewed 12 staff engaged in teaching a range of subjects in the FE sector. They then analysed the interview data using etic coding from the researchers, but also emic categories from the participants' own accounts. Three major themes emerged – teachers' concepts of learning, the therapeutic aspect of teaching and the performative nature of the work. The teachers also reported a lack of time to complete the job effectively, and stated that this had an impact on their personal lives. In addition, Smith and Swift also reported that the administrative aspect of their work as teachers was awarded greater kudos from the management than the actual

teaching. The administrative burden associated with teaching was a theme for the participants in my study, too (see chapter 5 and chapter 6).

As my study investigates the impact of funding on the lived experience of teachers, a study by Illsley and Waller (2017) is relevant. These researchers interviewed six FE lecturers and three managers. The participants were all teachers with more than 5 years teaching experience. The focus of the study was on working within the sector's funding regime. Illsley and Waller reported that two themes emerged strongly among their participants with regard to their understanding of the requirements of funding; the first was a real pressure to retain students on their courses and the second was to 'get them (the students) through' (2017:484) the qualification. They found that the teachers were changing their working practices to ensure that as many students as possible achieved the designated outcome. One of the key findings of this study relates to the pressure generated by different funding regimes. For example, one participant in the study believed that their college's focus on achievement figures was 'dictated by the need to secure funding' and that this had resulted in a 'spoon-feeding culture' (2017:485).

2.3.3. Focusing on ESOL teachers and other 'basic skills' teachers

There is relatively little research about adult ESOL teachers, both in the UK and elsewhere. In general, the studies which focus on ESOL teachers replicate the themes identified above in my discussion of research with school teachers and FE teachers. These include the types of knowledge needed for early career ESOL teaching in the US (Reeves, 2008) and second language teacher professionalism (Leung, 2009). In addition, Wette (2009) has focused on ESOL teachers and curriculum development and Troudi (2005) has investigated both the content and the cultural knowledge that ESOL teachers need. O'Leary and Smith (2012) wrote about *Skills for Life* student teachers and their course journals. Their study focused on the challenging contexts in which student teachers found themselves, and how they responded. The participants in O'Leary and Smith's study reported that funding cuts were impacting on their lives, producing 'widespread cultures

of fear with a consequent feeling of disempowerment on behalf of the teachers' (2012:451).

There are a few studies in the British context that centre on experienced ESOL teachers, such as the teachers in my study. For example, Kiely and Davis (2010) focus on the ongoing learning processes taking place through continuing professional development (CPD) for experienced ESOL teachers. They interviewed 11 teachers as part of their research, focusing on the process of teacher learning. They concluded that, to make a difference to the everyday practices of teachers, there is a need for teachers to have a clear career structure and sustained involvement with continuing professional development. They recommend further studies on the career trajectories and professional identity-construction of ESOL teachers.

A key contributor to research on adult ESOL was the now-defunct *National Research and Development Centre* (NRDC). It was established in 2002 at the beginning of the *Skills for Life* era (2001-2010) originally to support the development of research into literacy and numeracy, with ESOL being added later (Roberts and Baynham, 2006). In a study funded through the NRDC, Baynham *et al* (2007) focused on effectiveness in teaching ESOL. They identified various characteristics of ESOL learners and ESOL classrooms; they also interviewed 40 ESOL teachers, all of whom were experienced. Some common themes emerged from these interviews, which resonate strongly with those from my own study. Baynham *et al*. (2007) stated that the 'interviews show a constant tension between the teachers' understandings of their learners on the one hand, and their perceptions of the policy demands and audit culture of FE and ESOL on the other'(2007:35). The policy demands included completing the documentation required for audit trails, including documents such as ILPs (Individual Learning Plans) and outcomes for funders. In the words of the researchers 'teachers in our study position themselves in a range of ways in relation to different aspects of the policy environment' (2007:37). Baynham *et al* considered various factors that influenced the different stances of the ESOL teachers. These included general life experiences, professional qualifications and teaching

experiences as well as their attitude to the then-current Adult ESOL Core Curriculum (AECC), which was a key part of the *Skills for Life* strategy. They argued that the teachers interviewed showed 'rich evidence of professional vision' (2007:40) and that this meant that they could take reasoned action regarding any changes made to their working conditions. Baynham and colleagues concluded that 'teacher expertise and vision are the most important resources for effective ESOL practice' (2007:71).

A special issue of *Linguistics and Education* (Volume 17 (1), 2006) was devoted to research into adult ESOL practice in the UK. The research related to ESOL classrooms, the students and the teaching methods employed in those classrooms. This major publication, twelve years ago, was a significant contribution to research in the field of ESOL in the UK. However, there is still a gap in the research pertaining to the perspectives of ESOL teachers. As Roberts and Baynham (2006) state in their introduction to that special edition, 'adult ESOL has, until recently, been more practice than research based' (2006:1), meaning that the focus of ESOL teaching has been more on the pedagogical decisions made in the classroom than on broader social and linguistic issues that impact on all aspects of ESOL teachers' professional lives.

In chapter 7, I will use Johnson's lens for the study of levels of policy processes (2013) – specifically creation, interpretation and appropriation. These are indexed in the narratives of the teachers in my study and these narratives provide a range of insights into the ways in which different teachers navigate the policy processes at work in their institutions, acting agentively despite changing conditions and increasing constraints in their teaching environments. I will focus on three examples of teacher interpretation and appropriation of changing policies concerning teaching ESOL. I will describe and analyse the way they talk about the effects of these policies on their working lives. Thus this study makes explicit links between the two areas of research: research orienting to policy processes and research orienting to teachers' lives and to the ways in which they are able to exercise agency. For the teachers in my study, the political most definitely becomes personal, and this guides their agentive actions and reactions.

CHAPTER THREE: ESOL POLICIES AND FUNDING IN ENGLAND

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the context of ESOL provision, starting with an historical overview of the further and adult education (FAE) sector and then moves, chronologically, from the end of the twentieth century to the present day. References are made to the changes in funding and changes in policies that affect the provision of, or the conditions for, ESOL. The chapter first describes the nature and scope of the FAE sector in England, linking (where necessary) to changes in the school sector. I then explore the history of educational policy and funding changes since 1997 to date for the teaching of ESOL. I also draw on my own lived experience of the teaching profession in the further and adult education sector from 1991 to the present.

Whilst there is no evidence that the educational policies and funding policies created by recent governments in England over the last few decades directly exhibit planning for ESOL, they have definitely affected the status of those who are learning to use English and pose significant challenges for their teachers. Education policy and funding differs for the other parts of the UK – Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – and I do not include these areas in my study.

Shifts in funding, in particular, reveal the approach of different governments to those in the migrant population who require or desire English. Lack of explicit policies on language learning means that government funding, de facto, drives the availability of provision for ESOL through monetary means, as will be seen below.

3.2. ESOL within further and adult education in England pre-1997

The further and adult education sector has its beginnings in the working men's colleges and mechanics institutions of the 19th century (Jarvis, 1995). This strand of education had as a focus the development of the skills of the tradesman (and it was mainly men) in ways beyond that which school could provide, offering paths to vocational specialisations. It

was in distinct contrast to the education at universities, the other route for education beyond the school. The 1944 Education Act made it the duty of local authorities to establish further education to provide for 'full-time and part-time education for persons over compulsory school age' (Stock, 1988 in Jarvis, 1995:229). From then on, many colleges were established by local education authorities (LEAs) in the late 1940s and 50s with a heavy emphasis on vocational training. This then broadened out to include more general studies, including English and maths, and courses that could support students to increase their employability in different ways. Such colleges were in addition to the Mechanics Institutes and other 'night schools' established from the mid-1800s which focused on development of specific trades.

These developments provided two new ways to access education post-school. The first was via the local adult education centre which was often more focused on the liberal arts and leisure courses such as art, poetry and crafts. The second was via the further education (FE) college where the emphasis was on courses more clearly linked to employment. Both were funded by the LEAs from monies allocated to them by the national government. The intermediary role of the LEA meant that the money could be spent where the local government thought best, taking account of local circumstances, rather than in accordance with national government thinking.

The teaching of the English language to those who spoke another language – ESOL as we now know it – has been fully documented by Rosenberg (2007). She identifies that, although there were people who had settled in the UK for centuries, the late 1800s were of particular significance. From the 1880s, new waves of refugees began to enter the country, such as Jewish refugees from the Russian pogroms and, in the 1900s, people from China and Italy. After both world wars, there were also significant influxes of refugees from places affected by conflict and post-conflict political changes.

In the 1960s and 1970s, ESOL provision became part of the broader strategies that the government adopted to address the issues raised by immigration. After the Second World

War, people (mostly men at first) from the British Commonwealth such as India, Pakistan Bangladesh and the Caribbean, came to find work in Britain, often encouraged by recruitment initiatives in their home countries funded by the British government. There was work in transport on buses, trains and underground as well as in factories and in the burgeoning National Health Service (NHS). When these men started to settle in Britain and then to bring their families to join them, provision was needed to support many in learning English. Section 11 of the 1966 Local Government Act sanctioned funding for LEAs to establish special provision for the needs of immigrants from the New Commonwealth (Simpson, 2015:206). These needs were seen to be in terms of linguistic or cultural difference and most of the funding was linked to educational posts. Dorn and Hibbert (1987) refer to the three main criteria that had to be in place for LEAs to claim Section 11 funding. The first was that the immigrant group must be from the New Commonwealth and must have been in the UK for less than 10 years. Secondly, there had to be substantial need (over 2% of the school population of the local authority). Thirdly, funding was only for posts that represented special provision for the immigrant groups. These posts catered for the needs of adults as well as children (Hamilton and Hillier, 2009) and represented a nascent consideration of the language needs of the increasingly diverse population of England. Section 11 funding continued until the late 1990s when it was replaced by the much more schools-focused Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (Tikly *et al,* 2002).

There were big educational changes in England in the late 1980s with the Education Reform Act of 1988 being one of the most significant (Parker and Parker, 1991). Duckworth and Ade-Ojo (2015) state, that at this time, there was a strong conviction in central government that the LEAs had too much power over education and so measures were put in place to limit this power. These included allowing schools to opt-out of LEA control and become self-managing – the so called ‘grant maintained’ school (Parker and Parker, 1991).

This shift towards independence from LEA control was mirrored in the further education sector with 'Incorporation'. This happened under the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act. Incorporation took FE colleges out of local authority control and made them corporations in their own right. The driving force behind this was an ideological commitment, within central government, to create a more open market and increase provision (Lucas and Crowther, 2015). This was the beginning of the marketisation of education as noted by many educational researchers (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005a; Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler, 2005; Smith, 2007a, 2007b). The Further and Higher Education Act also brought the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) into being and introduced the 'unit' of funding, based on outputs, to the FE sector (Panchamia, 2012). There was a separation by the FEFC between what was designated Schedule 2 and non-Schedule 2 provision. Schedule 2 covered all courses in FE that led to national qualifications, including adult literacy and numeracy as well as courses 'to improve the knowledge of English of those for whom English is not the language spoken at home' (cited in Rosenberg, 2007:192). Courses which did not lead to national accreditation were considered non-Schedule 2 and were mostly offered in adult education centres and in community based provision, although colleges did offer them in specific contexts.

Incorporation also heralded a change in employment status for those who worked in colleges as they became employed directly by their institution and were asked to sign new contracts with decreased rights and benefits. The contract that teaching staff had in colleges before incorporation was known as *The Silver Book* and many staff were reluctant to give up the privileges it embodied. Indeed, the demise of *The Silver Book* ended the notion of national conditions of service for teachers in the sector and could be seen as the start of casualisation of staff.

Lucas and Crowther (2015) note that this was a turning point for FE where the focus of the educational provision shifted from the student to the unit of funding. They state 'in effect, the 'unit' replaced the 'student' as a designator of college activity' (2015:584). According to Panchamia (2012) 'the rationale was simple: the more 'units' a provider

could deliver, the higher the funding allocation. This drove providers to compete for the limited supply of learners in their area' (2012:2). The shift meant making all courses 'viable' (i.e. profitable) and issues such as enrolment, achievement and success rates were paramount. All teachers had to be prepared to explain to senior management the reasons for any withdrawals by students or failures to complete. At this time, the college where I was working set up 'MOTs' for each course (so-called for the parallel with the Ministry of Transport's vehicle check). The very wording suggests a product-based approach to education where the course was parallel to a vehicle and needed a health check to make it 'safe'. The 'safety' aspect was related to success for funding purposes rather than to ensuring that students attending had learnt anything. Lucas and Crowther (2015) explore how the new vocabulary of colleges post-incorporation reveals their business orientation, with students becoming customers and the curriculum being decided by the funding available. Funding was, in turn, decided by what it was thought would be of most benefit to the economic well-being of the country and so the focus on education for employment became dominant.

In the 1980s and 1990s, most FE colleges established an area of work known as adult basic skills which included literacy and numeracy as well as ESOL, although the latter did not have a strong profile. Indeed, it could be said that ESOL was marginal to the sector at this time. By 1984, ESOL had come within the remit of the *Adult Learning and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU*). This had a significant impact. *ALBSU* was a re-incarnation of the *Adult Literacy Resource Agency*, which had been established in the 1970s as a way to offer resources for the provision of adult literacy, especially through the LEAs and voluntary associations. In 1980 it became known as *ALBSU*. It became more useful to the government and took more of a centre stage role in moving adult literacy provision forwards (Duckworth and Ade-Ojo, 2015). Hamilton and Hillier (2009:4) note that *ALBSU* 'managed to get ESOL, along with literacy and numeracy, included in Schedule 2 list of courses that ensured statutory funding from the FEFC in the 1990s'. This was both of benefit and detriment. On the one hand, this meant that colleges could secure funding for ESOL courses from the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), which was in

operation from Incorporation in 1992 until 2001. But, on the other hand it meant that ESOL was linked inextricably with literacy and numeracy provision – and remains so today (Simpson, 2015).

In the West Midlands, in the 1980s and 1990s, much of the ESOL provision was for the settled communities who were mostly from the Indian subcontinent. There was no set curriculum and ESOL students were able to work towards achieving their personal learning goals through the use of individual learning plans (Hamilton, 2009). This allowed the teacher the flexibility to teach to the needs of the students rather than to any exam. There were some English language exams that could be taken – typically through examination boards such as Trinity or Cambridge, both of which were focused on English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This meant that their exams did not easily fit the needs of those enrolled in ESOL classes and this impacted on the ESOL teachers involved.

The 1990s also saw the creation and rise of Ofsted – the *Office for Standards in Education*. Prior to this date, indeed since 1839, HMIs (Her -or His- Majesty's Inspectorate) had been reviewing the quality of schooling (Elliott, 2012). But in 1992 the then Secretary of Education, Kenneth Baker, viewed the HMI as contributing to the liberal education system. As this was not the educational perspective that the government then desired, Ofsted was established to replace independent HMIs from 1993 (Elliott, 2012; McVeigh, 2015). McVeigh (2015) charts the development of Ofsted from its inception till 2015 and documents the shifting foci of the different governments, exploring how school staff were impacted by the service. However, although her review is comprehensive for the schools sector, McVeigh (2015) does not comment on post-school education at all. Spours, Coffield and Gregson (2007) explore the policy drivers on FAE including inspections by Ofsted. They state that, in interviews with staff in the sector 'inspection was viewed most positively because it galvanized staff to focus on teaching and learning' (2007:198). Initially for the FE sector, the inspectorate was split in two. The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) would focus on post-19 (or adult) provision while Ofsted would inspect the provision for students aged under 19, in colleges as they did in schools. However, by

2007 ALI had been subsumed into Ofsted and the schools-focused agenda became dominant across all sectors.

3.3. ESOL provision from 1997 to 2010

This section begins in 1997 when the New Labour Government, led by Tony Blair, was elected. One of the key aspects of the New Labour manifesto was 'education, education, education' and this extended to the further and adult education sector. After a poor scoring by the UK in international literacy surveys during the late 1990s (Cooke and Simpson, 2008) the new government commissioned Sir Claus Moser to produce a report entitled '*A Fresh Start*' (Department for Education and Employment – DfEE, 1999). This report gave rise to the *Skills for Life* strategy which was brought into operation in England in 2001 (DfEE, 2001). This strategy mandated many subsequent policies for the provision of the teaching and learning of literacy, numeracy and ESOL in the further and adult education sector (Appleby and Bathmaker, 2006). At first, ESOL was not included in the *Skills for Life* strategy which started out as focusing only on literacy and numeracy. But, with a great amount of lobbying, especially from NIACE (*National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education*), ESOL was incorporated into the *Skills for Life policy* and its Core Curriculum was published at the end of 2001. By 2005 ESOL had grown into the largest area of provision in colleges across England.[1]

The *Skills for Life* strategy set out a huge range of changes to basic skills provision including ESOL; a new curriculum, new national standards, new exams focusing on the needs of ESOL learners, extensive teaching materials for all five levels of the curriculum (from Entry 1 through to Level 2), core curriculum training courses and specifically targeted teacher education programmes. This led to educational establishments putting on courses labelled with the *Skills for Life* nomenclature and giving ESOL a higher profile than it had ever had.

[1] NIACE was an independent organisation, originally established as the British Institute of Adult Education (BIAE) in 1921, for the promotion of adult education (Learning and Work Institute, 2017). It had become a powerful organisation which lobbied for the education of adults, including in areas such as literacy, numeracy and ESOL, and was frequently consulted directly by the New Labour Government.

All of this unprecedented development had a powerful impact on the provision of ESOL and how this subject was viewed. The three main areas of concern for *Skills for Life* – literacy, numeracy and ESOL – were now considered important by the government and had a new lease of life (Roberts *et al*, 2004). Very generous funding followed the three strands and they attracted uplifted funding from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) – the replacement funding agency for the sector following the demise of the FEFC in 2001. Colleges were given targets for achievement of qualifications in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Courses were funded at 40% more than non-*Skills for Life* courses, and given a 1.4 funding weighting for each 'unit'. These courses swiftly became most attractive to college management who saw that they could claim more money from the FEFC for the same amount of teaching hours. This prompted many colleges to increase their provision for literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses where they could.

The developments within the *Skills for Life* strategy from 2001 were extensive and had a major impact on the lives of ESOL teachers. From it being just another subject taught, ESOL now had an almost 'industrial' support system to cater for its provision. ESOL teachers had secure job prospects and a range of opportunities within their area to explore.

A key component of the *Skills for Life* strategy was the curricula for each specialism. The Adult ESOL Core Curriculum (AECC) was over 400 pages long (DfES, 2001b). It set out five different levels of study, namely entry one (E1), entry two (E2), entry three (E3), level 1 (L1) and level 2 (L2). These corresponded roughly (DfES 2001a:4) to stages within the schools-based National Curriculum, with level 2 being the equivalent to key stage four, that is, GCSE level. The AECC used the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC – DfES, 2001a) as a basis, but gave much greater weight to speaking and listening as well as to grammar and pragmatics. The ALCC had, in turn, used the National Curriculum, the English state schools' designated curriculum developed in the late 1990s, as a starting point. In the National Curriculum, the literacy section identified three areas of development, namely the word level, the sentence level and the text level. It is significant

that the ALCC (and so the AECC) inverted this so that the first level to be explored was to be the text level, moving down to sentence and then to word. For me, this was a real indication that the developers of the core curriculum knew the importance of text in adult learners' lives.

The core curriculum used basic statements regarding what an adult at each level could do and developed these to produce a document that gave new and existing teachers a clear framework to support their teaching. The core curriculum has been criticised for being too narrow and too rigid (e.g. Papen, 2005) – and certainly seems to be an example of an 'autonomous' approach to literacy rather than an 'ideological' one (Street, 1984). However, it was a very useful tool for teachers across a range of experiences in ESOL. It also allowed ESOL teachers to move away from the EFL resources which many had been using, and focus on local contexts.

To supplement the core curriculum there were extensive materials for teaching each level. There were assessment packs and resource guides. There were courses to learn about the curricula as well as courses to learn about the assessments and how to integrate learners with specific needs into the teaching of the three basic skills (including the Pre-Entry curriculum, guidance about dyslexia and developing basic literacy skills). Each region of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) established a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) centre. In the Midlands these were located in universities such as Stafford, Warwick and Wolverhampton. These centres ran CPD events and courses and had permanent staff supporting this – both teachers and administrators. All of this was free for FAE teachers to access.

In addition, there were specific initial teacher education courses. These were provided at three levels. The first was for new teachers who already had degrees (the PGCE – Post Graduate Certificate in Education). The second was for teachers who did not have degrees and did not already have a teaching qualification – usually referred to as a Certificate in Education (or Cert Ed). The third qualification was for those who were

already teachers, but who did not have a specialist background in teaching ESOL. This was most frequently known as a Stand Alone subject specialism. Many universities offered these three qualifications for ESOL – as well as for literacy and numeracy - offering them alongside their existing qualifications for teaching in the further and adult education sector. The cost of these qualifications varied across the decade: they started out as being free for participants, with grants attached. This encouraged teachers to choose basic skills as their subject and to complete courses leading to particular areas of expertise.

In this way, ESOL teachers, like teachers of literacy and numeracy, were seen as valuable by the sector and their services were desired. This significant shift in the value assigned to teachers of ESOL coincided with a huge rise in migration during the start of the twenty first century. This was, in most part, due to the expansion of the European Union (EU) from 2004 and the influx of new EU citizens looking for work in Britain. It was also due to globalisation and the significant shifts in transnational population flows that have created the condition of 'superdiversity' (Vertovec, 2007). The *BBC* records that a net immigration of 494,000 was seen in 2004 for the UK, with those from the newly expanded EU making a considerable contribution to that number (Casciani, 2004). Almost 45% were migrants from the EU and a quarter were from New Commonwealth countries, with the remainder from a great variety of other countries. This increase had a significant impact on the need for ESOL provision and so the cost of it. In all, by 2008 the *Skills for Life* programme had, according to the National Audit Office (2008:10), cost the taxpayer over £5 billion. It stated that ESOL provision had tripled between 2001 and 2004 and that demand outstripped supply (National Audit Office, 2008:9).

During the New Labour Government, and as a part of the *Skills for Life* strategy, a research centre, the National Research and Development Centre (NRDC) was established. This was based at the University of London, Institute for Education. The centre was originally set up for the development of research in adult literacy and numeracy, but (like several aspects of the *Skills for Life* strategy) soon included ESOL. As indicated in chapter 2, NRDC researched and published much new information and surveys about ESOL which

were of direct relevance to the practical teaching experiences of ESOL teachers. NRDC also published a magazine called *Reflect* which was free to all teachers who subscribed. One edition in March 2008 focused on ESOL and included an update on the policies for ESOL funding, an exploration of ESOL in the workplace, using e-learning in ESOL and a review of NIACE's 2006 influential document *More than a Language* - a publication which focused on the need for a unified approach to ESOL provision. This support and promotion of the practical teaching aspect and up-to-date information, including that from research, was useful to ESOL teachers across the nation.

To summarise, during the New Labour Government of 1997-2010, the key change for ESOL teachers was the implementation of the *Skills for Life* strategy, with the increase in funding for courses being a honey trap for many colleges across England. The introduction of the core curricula, qualifications, extensive resources including teaching materials and assessment tools, as well as a dedicated research centre, gave *Skills for Life* teachers a new status within the further and adult education world. They were at the heart of the New Labour Government agenda of increasing the employability of the population of the nation, through the 'education, education, education' of the post-school populace. This was a good time to be an ESOL teacher (and an ESOL teacher educator).

3.4. ESOL during the coalition years: 2010-2015

In May 2010, the general election in UK resulted in a hung parliament, with no one party having a majority. In the days that followed, a Coalition Government was formed between the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democratic Party. This party political change had a huge effect on education, including the FAE sector.

The *Skills for Life* initiative was never formally terminated but it seemed to drift away. It had been a pet project of a previous Prime Minister, Tony Blair (1997-2008), and had been drifting since Gordon Brown took office as Prime Minister in 2008. The first big impact was on funding for ESOL. In the new Coalition Government's Spending Review of 2010, no mention was made of ESOL, although explicit reference was made to the

continuing need for the educational provision for literacy and numeracy, the other two subjects in the *Skills for Life* area (Her Majesty's Treasury - HMT, 2010:52). The omission of ESOL in this report was either indicative of a lack of awareness or of deliberate exclusion, neither of which boded well for the continuation of ESOL provision. At this time, as O'Leary and Smith (2012:441) have commented, 'ESOL was vulnerable as a subject area and redundancies were likely to be widespread in *Skills for Life* subjects as a whole.' This vulnerability, arising from the lack of explicit inclusion of ESOL within the incoming Coalition Government's agenda, made individual ESOL teachers unsure of their future.

In November 2010, the funding for the next academic year for ESOL was severely threatened (O'Leary and Smith, 2012) with the government stating that only those receiving active work-search benefits would be able to access free ESOL classes. This would drastically cut the numbers of eligible students. The outlook seemed bleak for the future of ESOL. A protest organisation – *Action for ESOL* – was established and a manifesto was produced (*Action for ESOL,* 2011). The fourth point in this manifesto declared 'in order to maintain high-quality ESOL, funding needs to be persistent and sustained and not vulnerable to the whims of political administrations' (*Action for ESOL,* 2011:4). The organisation gained momentum and pressed for a change of policy, as did other organisations including the *National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education* and the *Association of Colleges*. There was also considerable disquiet that the changes in funding for ESOL would affect women disproportionally. The government initiated an equalities impact study on the proposed cuts (CEDAW, 2013) which identified this very eventuality. In July 2011 there was a late, and highly significant, U-turn on funding (Murray, 2011). This re-instated the funding for ESOL provision to people on a range of benefits, as per the situation since 2007 (House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, 2009:10). This did not, however, stop the cuts to ESOL. Instead of cutting accessibility to ESOL courses for people on certain benefits, the direct funding stream for ESOL courses was cut for all colleges. The Government's Spending Review in 2010 announced a 25% decrease in funding for the FE sector as a whole by 2014 – although the Adult and

Community Sector was somewhat protected (UCU, 2010; Foster, 2016). The 1.4 weighting uplift for funding ESOL provision was also dropped (UCU, 2010). This meant that ESOL courses went from having more funding allocated for their provision than for the average college course to receiving the standard amount of money based on guided learning hours. Work-based ESOL was terminated as the government had 'an expectation that learners and employers will co-invest' (House of Commons, 2011:4) in the training needs of ESOL workers. UCU (2010) predicted a loss of over 10,000 college jobs as a direct result of the cuts and thus a higher staff-to-student ratio. Colleges no longer saw ESOL as a 'cash-cow' and so, as ever, moved with the funding to focus on newer trends (such as apprenticeships and the 16-19 learner provision).

The reduction of funding availability for the sector so early on was to set the tone for the whole five years of Coalition Government. The educational agenda had shifted from the focus on *Skills for Life* – from the basic needs of those who did not have qualifications in literacy, numeracy or ESOL at level 2 – to the qualifications of 16-19 year olds who might be seen as having been failed by state compulsory schooling. Appleby and Bathmaker (2006) identified this trend as early as the mid-2000s, and it continued to increase. They discuss the difference of emphasis between the 'knowledge economy' and the 'knowledge society', as described by Brine (cited in Appleby and Bathmaker, 2006:707) and they show how this distinction was played out in the *Skills for Life* strategy. In sum, they argued that those who benefit from the knowledge *economy* would be those who were already somewhat privileged and who could gain more qualifications to further their careers. Those in the knowledge *society* would be those who were often considered 'surplus' to the state and so involved in 'education and training more as a means of ensuring political and economic stability than enabling them to develop high-level skills' (2006:708). For ESOL teachers, this meant that their student cohort was changing as the focus of the government switched from those of all ages without even the lowest level qualifications to those who needed better grades or more qualifications within the 16-19 age bracket. This would include younger ESOL students aged 16-19 who since the raising of the participation age (HMG, 2011a) had to be catered for.

Change in fees for ESOL students would have a great impact on student groups. Until 2007 all ESOL courses had been free (Foster and Bolton, 2018), but as the rise in demand for ESOL had grown (due to the changes in migration, especially from the extended European Union in 2004) the New Labour Government had seen fit to start to limit those who could access free courses. Only those who were in receipt of certain means-tested benefits were able to access free courses. The Coalition Government further restricted access to free courses and those who did not fall into specific categories were required to pay half the fees for the course in a process known as 'co-funding'. ESOL students needed to produce the correct documents and prove eligibility before the course began. Colleges had to record these documents accurately and in an auditable manner. Foster and Bolton (2018:8) highlight that, in regard to ESOL funding since 2009, 'the overall reduction up to 2016-17 was 56% in real terms'.

The cuts also meant redundancies in many, if not most, colleges. *FE Week* (Reinis, 2012) stated 'as the economic downturn continues to put pressure on the sector, staff at FE colleges up and down the country are increasingly facing the prospect of redundancy.' At the same time as funding cuts were impacting negatively on ESOL students, funding cuts were having an effect on the job prospects of ESOL teachers. From 2010, as an ESOL teacher educator, I saw a distinct drop in the number of ESOL teachers who wanted to take up the Stand Alone teaching qualification and fewer pre-service teachers who wanted to choose ESOL as their specialist option. Focusing on the West Midlands, in May 2010 the *Birmingham Mail* reported that hundreds of jobs were to go at Birmingham Metropolitan College and 40 more at Bournville College. It noted that 'South Birmingham College said it would have to make £1 million of savings in staff costs and City College is preparing to reduce all costs by a fifth' (*Birmingham Mail,* 2010). As well as redundancies, colleges introduced more temporary contracts. One local college which had prided itself on not using a teacher staffing agency started to do so (personal knowledge). This casualisation of staff in FE had been noted for a decade or more (Gleeson, Davies and Wheeler, 2005; Gleeson and James, 2007) but, since the start of the *Skills for Life* strategy in 2001, this had not been an issue for ESOL teachers. There were also some colleges in

the West Midlands which stopped offering ESOL altogether (personal knowledge) because of the risks of funding it.

In addition to the severe cuts in funding to colleges, there were other issues to do with education which would impact on the lives of ESOL teachers. Commissioned by the Coalition Government, the *Wolf Report* (DfE, 2011) focused on vocational education for the 14-19 age-range. The recommendations from this report included raising the participation age from 16 to 18, encouraging all students to continue their English and maths studies (even if they had GCSE) and requiring awarding bodies to work towards a simplified and more purposeful system of vocational education, which the report deemed too complex and often pointless. The Coalition Government implemented legislation to raise the participation age – a process started in 2008 in the New Labour Government era. The strategy (*Building Engagement, Building Futures,* HMG, 2011a) focused on ensuring that young people who turned 17 in 2013 continued their education or training, extending this in 2015 up to their 18th birthday. This focus on the education of those below 19 led colleges to change their planning to increase this area of provision while decreasing the adult (over 19) provision. Many ESOL students would be over 19 at the time of requiring a course and so this resulted in many ESOL classes for adults being terminated, as colleges concluded that funding adult ESOL provision was risky. The raising of the participation age also meant that colleges would be competing with schools to enrol more students over 16. Colleges would have to make more provision for those school leavers who did not have GCSE maths and English. Also, any ESOL student aged 16-18 would now require educational provision; prior to this, any potential ESOL student over 16 was not obliged to be in education. The *Wolf Report* led to the advent of Study Programmes in colleges, a government initiative offering '16-to-19-year-olds excellence in the provision of vocational education' (DfE, 2012:2). Suddenly, there was a great need for more teachers of English. In many colleges, this meant that those who had been teaching ESOL were being asked to teach 'English' – and some even to teach maths at lower levels. At the same time Key Skills, qualifications for English, maths and ICT since the millennium, were replaced by Functional Skills. Functional Skills courses were offered to those who

were considered not yet able to pass the GCSE. These qualifications were designed to be 'the fundamental, applied skills in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT) which help people to gain the most from life, learning and work' (Ofqual, 2012:2). This shift in focus was also reflected in a change of name, across colleges and qualifications, from 'literacy' to 'English'. Students who would have been placed on an adult literacy course were now being offered an English Functional Skills course. At my own institution, we were advised in 2014 that the name of the subject specialist teaching course would need to be labelled as 'Teachers of English' rather than 'Teachers of Adult Literacy'. This signified a reinterpretation of what language skills people were deemed to need.

In 2010, the Coalition Government published two strategy documents relating to reform of the post-19 sector of FAE (*Skills for Sustainable Growth,* BIS 2010a and *Further Education: New Horizon. Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth,* BIS 2010b). They ushered in a set of reform proposals under the banner of '*New Challenges, New Chances'* published in 2011. The Coalition Government stated that the purposes of the reforms were threefold:

> to promote high-quality teaching and learning at all levels of the adult education system; to free colleges and other skills providers from as many bureaucratic restrictions as possible in order to allow them to respond more effectively to the needs of their local communities; and to secure a fairer balance of investment in skills between the taxpayer, individual learners and employers (BIS 2011b:3).

One proposal, significant for the lives of ESOL teachers, was almost hidden within this final document. Fourth on the list of proposals was one entitled, 'Excellence in Teaching and Learning' which, at first glance, appeared to concern adult education and vocational pedagogy. However, the last line of this paragraph stated 'we will also facilitate an independent review of professionalism in the FE and skills workforce' (BIS 2011a:17). This paved the way for the instigation of the Lingfield report.

Lord Lingfield (Robert Balchin) was commissioned in 2012 by the Skills Minister of the Coalition Government to review professionalism of the FE and skills workforce. Lingfield's

report, *Professionalism in Further Education* (BIS, 2012) was published in October 2012 with several recommendations including that teachers in the further and adult education sector no longer needed to be qualified. This overturned a ruling that had been adopted just 5 years previously, in 2007. The *Further Education Teachers' (England) Regulations* 2007 (DIUS, 2007) was an amendment to the Education Act. It had implemented a requirement for all those teaching in FE to be qualified. The level of qualification varied according to job role, with those who were considered in a 'full teaching role' to be in need of a full teaching qualification (then at level 5 of the National Qualification Framework – NQF – and called a *Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector* or DTLLS). In addition to the diploma, from 2007 FAE sector teachers were required to apply for the *Qualified Teacher in the Learning and Skills* status – QTLS – by joining the sector professional body, called the *Institute for Learning* (IfL). Through membership of this organisation, and by completing an online portfolio process known as 'professional formation', further and adult education teachers would be able to achieve the QTLS status (see Avis, Fisher and Thomson 2015 for a more detailed exploration of the IfL). They were also required, from 2010, to pay a fee and complete 30 hours of CPD per year. This would put them on a par, legally and through salary, with those who had the position of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) allocated at the end of a compulsory schooling PGCE. Before 2007, FAE teachers with a PGCE were not considered equal to compulsory sector school teachers with a PGCE, an issue that contributed to the 'branding' of the FAE sector as the 'Cinderella sector' (cited in the Lingfield report itself – BIS, 2012:18).

The cost of initial and in-service teacher education courses, including continuing professional development (CPD), also impacted on the lives of ESOL teachers and potential ESOL teachers. New Labour had introduced the first tuition fees for all undergraduates in 1998. Tuition fees were introduced for the Post Graduate Teaching Certificate (PGCE) in 2012 for all sectors - primary, secondary and FAE. Fees for in-service courses such as the Cert Ed increased dramatically from less than £500 in 2010 to over £2,000 per year by 2012. The array of CPD courses that were part of the *Skills for Life* strategy, including the subject specialist pre-service, the subject specialist in-service and

the subject specialist Stand Alone courses, all had their fees increased. This meant that there was a significant drop in applicants for these specialist courses because of the increased cost. At the university where I worked, this drop in candidates for subject specialist courses over the years 2009 to 2012 meant that provision went from nine courses to just one. The one remaining course on offer at my university was a full time, pre-service PGCE for teachers of English.

One possible glimmer of hope for ESOL provision in 2014 was the Skills Funding Agency monies that were allocated by the Department of Work and Pension through the Job Centre Plus (JCP) to support ESOL language provision for those on benefits. These so-called ESOL plus mandation funds (SFA and DWP, no date- circa March 2014:1) were allocated to seventeen districts in England where there were people in a particular category claiming benefits: these were people whom the government deemed were being held back from obtaining jobs because of their poor command of English. Such claimants would have to 'improve their language skills in order to continue receiving benefit' (SFA and DWP, no date:1). However, this funding was peremptorily withdrawn in a letter to the sector sent in July 2015. This had immediate effect (NATECLA, 2015) with devastating effects for potential ESOL students, their teachers and educational institutions offering these courses.

The Coalition Government years had brought about many changes to the lives of ESOL teachers, taking away many of the privileges and conditions of employment that they had enjoyed during the *Skills for Life* era of the New Labour Government. The severe and repeated cuts in funding for the FAE sector coupled with the shift in focus to the 16-19 age range changed the landscape of many a general FE college. Redundancies became a common feature of college life, and ESOL teachers would need to be prepared to teach other subjects to keep their jobs: for example, they would have to teach Functional Skills – both English and maths – to their ESOL students. The deregulation of teachers in the sector, after the Lingfield report, also made the hard work of striving for a teacher

qualification somewhat redundant. The result of the election in UK in May 2015 would see further changes in the politics, policies and practices of education across the sector.

3.5. ESOL during the Conservative Government: 2015 onwards

The election result in May 2015 brought in a wholly Conservative Government. Although, at the time, this political change was expected to herald a shift from a Coalition where a Conservative agenda had been somewhat tempered by the Liberal Democrats, in hindsight there seems to have been little change in terms of education. The focus was still on reform and on moving private funding (and control) into the public arena (Philips, 2016). The next section focuses on the changes to the GCSE curriculum and the introduction of the Area Reviews of post-school provision across England.

3.5.1. Major changes in forms of assessment for GCSE English and maths.

During the Coalition Government of 2010-2015, Michael Gove was the Education Secretary for all but the last year. His view of education, particularly for the school sector, has impacted on the day-to-day lives of many teachers long after he ceased to be in this role. One key policy change related to the GCSE curriculum. In June 2017, students took the new GCSE exams, in English and maths only. These exams carried a grading of 1-9, with 9 being the highest score and 5 being a 'good pass' (OCR, 2016). Previously all GCSEs had been graded using letters, with A or A* being the highest. There was also a change to an exam-only assessment for GCSE rather than one including in-school assessment or coursework. For GCSE English, the curriculum was narrowed and some accessible texts (such as *Of Mice and Men* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*) were removed.

These changes, coupled with the changes to the participation age, put a greater challenge on both the student and the teacher. Children were to stay in education (or training) until they were 18, and had to take their English (and maths) GCSE again and again until they passed it or turned 19. This meant that there was a new emphasis for schools and colleges on assisting as many students as possible to pass their GCSE English. In April 2017, Belgutay wrote in the *Times Educational Supplement* that 'the 2015-16 year was the

first in which it became a condition of colleges' funding that students who had previously achieved a D grade in English or maths should retake the qualification'. The result was that a third more students took these exams after the age of 17, in an attempt to pass. Also, it was decided that the GCSE would be the preferred option at Level 2 study. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) confirmed that students 'must be enrolled on a GCSE, rather than an approved stepping stone qualification' (Belgutay, 2017). This 'stepping stone' qualification was the Functional Skills (FS) qualification. Functional Skills had been an alternative qualification to the more formal GCSE since 2007. Level 2 FS had been given a proxy equivalence (DfE no date *What qualification levels mean*) to GCSEs: they were intended to be a more practical, work-friendly qualification for those not passing GCSEs. Banning the Functional Skills qualification as an alternative to GCSEs to draw down funding from ESFA meant that colleges would have to continue to subject students to continuous retakes of the maths and English GCSEs. It could be argued that this might not be best way to engage learners and motivate them to develop their skills in these two most basic of subjects.

3.5.2. Area reviews for further and adult education.

Area Reviews were another governmental tool introduced to monitor the FAE sector. In July 2015, the Conservative Government introduced a policy entitled '*Fixing the foundations: Creating a more prosperous nation*' (HMT, 2015) which focused on productivity. One of the measures that they implemented to promote a rise in productivity was to 'invite local areas to participate in the reshaping and commissioning of local provision' (2015:9). As part of the policy, stipulated in '*Reviewing Post 16 Education and Training Institutions'* (BIS, 2015), Area Reviews were initiated to explore how neighbouring FE colleges, sixth forms and adult and community provision could work together to 'restructure their provision to ensure it is tailored to the changing context and designed to achieve maximum impact' (2015:3). This meant more outcomes with less money. The Birmingham Area Review was one of the first and was reported in November 2016 (DfE, 2016) and the Black Country Area Review took place in January 2017 (DfE, 2017a). The Birmingham Area Review concerned seven colleges, three of which were

designated as Sixth Form Colleges. The recommendations were that the colleges should pretty much remain as they were, with smaller colleges considering academy status (and joining with local Multi Academy Trusts). One merger was recommended between South and City College and Bournville College. This merger finally took place in August 2017. For the Black Country Area Review, five general FE colleges and one sixth-form were involved. While no mergers were identified for the Black Country colleges, some (e.g. City of Wolverhampton) were tasked with strengthening their finances, and others (e.g. Halesowen and King Edward V1 Sixth form) were encouraged to work together more with the potential of becoming a Multi Academy Trust. Some were also tasked with exploring firmer links (Walsall College, South Staffordshire College and Walsall adult education service). The Black Country Colleges were also advised 'to increase the number of young people achieving grades A*-C in GCSE English and maths at age 16 to 18' (DfE, 2017a:26). This was a key thread for many Area Reviews. Whilst they were in progress, the Area Reviews caused consternation amongst staff, who were unsure about the outcomes and, therefore, about their jobs. This was yet another change which threatened the loss of jobs for teachers in FAE, including ESOL teachers.

3.6. Current context for ESOL

On 23rd June 2016 the UK voted in a referendum to leave the European Union and set 'Brexit' in motion – the British Exit from the EU. In the immediate aftermath, there was an increase in 'racist hate crime', a term coined to identify acts of violence or aggression directed at individuals or groups, on the basis of assumptions regarding their ethnic identities. The *Evening Standard* (Simpson, 2016) reported a 41% increase in racially or religiously aggravated offences recorded by the police between July 2015 and July 2017. The *Daily Mirror*, too, reported an increase in racist hate crime, citing Dr Jon Burnett, researcher at the Institute of Race Relations, who stated 'many people who previously harboured xenophobic feelings felt 'emboldened' by the referendum campaign and result' (Wheatstone, 2016).

This openness about pro-white (pro-Christian) views came after several summers of tabloid press commentary on the increasing number of migrants entering Britain. The flow to Europe of economic migrants and refugees leaving war-torn countries had risen significantly since 2015. In the summer of 2015 – and since then – there have been many media reports of people leaving their home countries for a life in Europe. Wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and then Syria have driven millions of citizens across borders and over the Mediterranean Sea in search of a safer, better life. In 2016 the *BBC* reported that over one million refugees and migrants entered Europe in 2015 alone (*BBC* 2016). Nearly half a million of these were given asylum in Germany. The *BBC* (2016) presented a chart which showed how many asylum applications there were per 100,000 people in the local population, the UK came 21st of 32 countries in Europe with 60 per 100,000. These figures demonstrate that the scale of migration and settlement in the UK was rather small in comparison with the rest of Europe, well under the average (260 per 100,000 locals) for countries across the continent. So, the representation of the population changes by British tabloid papers such as the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Sun*, were out of all proportion to the recorded figures. However, such vitriol and distorted 'facts and figures' showing how migrants were taking jobs and benefits from the 'host population', no doubt added to the anti-migrant ideology underpinning the push to vote leave in the referendum.

In addition to the anti-immigrant press, there were changes in anti-terrorism strategies that affected schools, colleges and all educational establishments. These included the so-called Prevent Strategy (also known as the Prevent agenda or duty). This was a specifically focused attempt to counteract the rise of extremism and terrorism in the UK. It had its origins in the New Labour 'Contest' programme established in 2003 (*BBC,* 2017), as a response to the threats to the nation's security after the 9/11 attacks in New York. A Coalition Government report in 2011 showed that the strategy employed by the previous government had been 'flawed' (HMG, 2011b:8) and a more robust approach would be adopted to reduce the risks of radicalisation. Specific requirements were published for the Further Education sector which identified the duty to prevent 'people being drawn

into terrorism' (HMG, 2015:3). While there was no focus on one particular group of terrorists, there was an underlying assumption that this was directed at Islamic groups. *BBC* News (2017) stated that over half of those referred through Prevent related to 'Islamic extremism' and that some critics of the strategy thought that it targeted the Muslim community, leading to 'distrust across communities'. This was of particular concern for ESOL teachers as they, like other teachers, were the ones who were required to take the Prevent agenda forward. They feared that this could impact on their relationship with their students since many in the ESOL sector are Muslim. Alongside the Prevent requirements came the requirement to ensure that all classes contained references to 'British values'. According to guidance from the government to FE colleges these values were 'democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs' (HMG, 2015:5). These 'values' were taken up and made into posters, short videos and aide memoires for staff to use in each class (I saw several across the colleges I visited at this time).

After the Brexit result, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, resigned on 13th July 2016 and Theresa May was elected leader of the Conservative Party and became Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Desiring a clearer mandate for the Conservatives to lead Britain out of the EU, she called an unexpected snap election for June 2017. Rather than increase her majority (which was only 12 seats), the Conservative Party lost seats and had to enter into an agreement (at a cost of over one billion pounds) with a party from Northern Ireland, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), to ensure the majority needed to govern. As the minority Conservative Government confronts the realities of Brexit, the focus is on striking the deal to leave the EU. Education, for a while, has taken a lower profile.

As the British Conservative Government continues to negotiate the deal for exit from the European Union, European citizens residing in the UK are challenged with the question should they stay in a hostile Britain or return to their country of origin? Also, will the anti-migrant, anti-EU feelings affect their daily lives here? Other migrants including those from the Commonwealth such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and the Caribbean (the settled

communities that have been part of British life since the 1700s) are also uncertain about their continued existence in Britain post-Brexit, especially after the '*Windrush*' scandal of spring 2018 when some people who had come to the UK from the Caribbean[2] in the 1950s and 1960s were deported (Grierson, 2018). English classes for those who come to Britain to work, and perhaps to settle, will always be in demand, but it is not certain how much of this need will be funded by the public purse in the form of ESOL classes.

[2] in ships such as the Empire Windrush which left the Caribbean for London in 1948

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will begin by describing why I chose narrative analysis as a central feature of the methodology for my study, combining it with broader thematic analysis. Next I will detail the research design, commenting on the use of interviews as a means of knowledge-building and the significance of researching in a familiar domain. After this I will provide details of the data construction and preparation and I will explain why I chose two differing, yet complimentary, methods of data analysis. The concluding sections discuss the ethical considerations and the reflexive nature of the study. I will show how I took account of the fact that all the participants were familiar with me prior to commencing the study.

4.2 Researching narrative and small stories and identifying recurring themes

My research focuses on the narratives that ESOL teachers tell as they share their opinions and perceptions of the policy changes that affect their everyday teaching. This section shows how I oriented my study to narrative research and I review the literature that pertains to this field. As I used both thematic analysis and narrative analysis I will explore both approaches, starting with thematic analysis.

The use of the word ‘narrative’ in research is not straightforward as it may appear; there are several types of research which use this label. Riessman (2001) notes that there has been a ‘narrative turn’ affecting social science research, including psychology, sociology and anthropology as well as sociolinguists. She believes that the narrative turn ‘does not assume subjectivity, but privileges positionality and subjectivity’ (2001:696). Hendry (2010) believes that **all** research is narrative, whether it be of a scientific, positivist epistemology or a interpretivist one, as the term derives from the Greek ‘gno’ meaning to account. Her proposition is that, as all research (inquiry) is concerned with meaning making, then all inquiry is narrative. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) see narrative as being both a phenomenon (the story) and a method (narrative inquiry). It fits well with

educational research, they believe, as 'education is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories' (1990:2). Their narrative approach 'carries more of a sense of continual reformulation of an inquiry than it does a sense of a problem definition and solution' (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000:124). They view 'teaching and teacher knowledge as expressions of embodied individual and social stories' (2000:4).

Georgakopoulou (2006b:125) points out that narrative *analysis* is somewhat different from narrative *inquiry.* Narrative inquiry focuses on 'narrative as a means to an end' whereas, for narrative analysts 'the study of narrative can be an end in itself' and the focus is on 'the how of narrative tellings'. This sociolinguistic approach to narrative has strong links with ethnography. In ethnography, researchers observe everyday lives and everyday social practices and collect as much data as possible to explore the 'routine ways in which people make sense of the world in everyday life' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:2). In their review of the origins of ethnography and discourse analysis, Atkinson *et al* note that ethnography involves '*up-close, intensive, long term, holistic* study' (2011:85, original emphasis) within anthropology. According to Blommaert and Dong, (2010) because ethnography is rooted in anthropology, it 'situates language deeply and inextricably in social life' (2010:7). Linguistic ethnography is a branch of ethnography which 'aligns itself with a particular epistemological view of language in social context' and explores the 'processual nature of meaning-creation in the making of context' (Creese, 2008:229). Creese traces the development of linguistic ethnography, citing Dell Hymes and his influential work within the ethnography of communication in the late 1960s. In another foundational article on linguistic ethnography, Rampton (2004) argues that linguistic ethnography allows linguistics to open up and linguistics allows ethnography to focus down to the 'close detail of local action and interaction as embedded in a wider world' (Rampton, 2004 cited in Creese, 2008:233).

For me, the 'close detail of local interaction' involved in narrative analysis fits well with interpretive processes such as these. In this study my aim is to adopt two different, but complementary ways of doing qualitative analysis of the data: thematic analysis and

positioning analysis. Thematic analysis allows for a broad examination of a data set of interviews, and gives insight into a wide range of issues of concern to participants regarding the impact of policy on their lives. Positioning analysis focuses in on the detail of the interaction between researcher and participant during an interview, showing the co-construction of narrative and the meanings this generates. This more detailed form of analysis can only be achieved with data from just a few participants, illuminating further the impact of policy changes. Taken together, these approaches to the analysis of narrative data ensure both breadth and depth in the examination of the interviews. These are the main approaches I adopted to address the research questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 and to respond to the overarching research question: 'how do ESOL teachers narrate their response to policy change in the adult and further education sector?'

Narrative analysis in this thesis is, then, a sociolinguistic approach to the study of language-in-use and, as such, is a good fit with my research aims of researching the ways ESOL teachers talk about the changes they encounter in their everyday working lives. It also situates the study in a particular social and historical context, a significant aspect of my research. There are several key authors who have researched narratives-in-interaction and who have influenced my choice of analytical approach. Stanton Wortham has written extensively on the notion of narrative. For instance, in *Narratives in Action* (2001) he presents a detailed case study of one woman's autobiographical narrative. In this case study he focuses on the interactional positioning between narrator and audience as the story unfolds. He believes that most studies of narrative focus too much on the content of stories and he is interested in the discursive and dialogical nature of the stories as means of constructing selfhood. Wortham identifies those aspects of an autobiographical storytelling event which are of significance including the way the narrator 'adopts a certain interactional position' and through this can 'accomplish social actions' (2001:9). Georgakopoulou (2000) reviews a paper by Wortham based on this same story (Wortham, 2000), and points out that his approach was based more in discursive psychology than linguistic ethnography, and she appeals for closer attention not only to the narrator's positioning, but also to the interactional positioning between narrator and

audience as well as the way the narrator positons themselves in the world. This would involve a focus ‘on what the participants themselves explicitly orient to or make relevant in their talk’ (Georgakopoulou, 2000:187).

Georgakopoulou has been a significant figure in the development of the area of ’small story’ research within the field of narrative analysis. Small story research was as ‘a counter-move to the more dominant models of narrative’ that Georgakopoulou (2014:2) believed privileged a particular type of story – one that focused on the narrator recounting a life story, most often in a focused research interview. Georgakopoulou builds on the foundations of small story analysis developed by Michael Bamberg (Bamberg 1997, 2006). She has also worked in collaboration with him (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008). As she points out, the broader social science context for small story research is in the ‘turn to identities-in-action’ (Georgakopoulou, 2014:3). This focuses on the emic viewpoints of participants (rather than researcher’s etic view point). Indeed, she believes that small story research is an ideological standpoint in which the researcher ‘listens’ to the participants and attempts to uncover ‘the messiness, performativity, incompleteness and fragmentation of people’s identities’ (2014:10).

Alongside the development of small story research (Georgakopoulou 2006a; 2006b; Watson, 2007) is the approach to narrative analysis known as positioning analysis. Georgakopoulou (2014:14) states that ‘small story research has often been combined with positioning analysis’. This is the approach that I adopt in the research presented in chapter 6. Positioning analysis has its roots in work by Davies and Harré (1990) and by Harré (2004) who developed the idea of positioning to help social psychologists focus on the dynamic interactional nature of language in use. They use the term ’discursive practices’ (Davies and Harré, 1990:45) to denote ‘all the ways in which people actively produce social and psychological realities’ (1990:45). For these authors, the focus is on the fragments of the storyline which emerge in conversation, and how the participants position each other, how they position themselves vis-a-vis others and how they position themselves in the world. Key studies in this area have included one by Watson (2006),

who used positioning analysis to examine the professional talk between two PGCE student teachers, and Chilton (2012) who focused on the talk between two experienced teachers about their team teaching situation and about the parent participants on a family literacy course. Both emphasise how a detailed analysis of language-in-interaction demonstrates the complex lamination of the identities that are taken up in shared stories of professional life.

Watson (2007:371) describes small stories as 'the ephemeral narratives emerging in such every day, mundane contexts'. She argues that small stories are worthy of the attention of those interested in 'identity realised in and through language' (Watson, 2007:372). Building on research such as that by Watson (2007) and Chilton (2012), I have chosen positioning analysis, and the exploration of small stories, to allow me to consider the ways that the ESOL teachers within my study negotiate their identities in relation to government policy-making and funding changes, to show how these changes have an impact on their day-to-day lives, and how they position themselves in relation to these changes. In doing so, I aim to illuminate the ESOL teachers' enactment of policy (Ball *et al* 2012), along with aspects of both identity construction and the agentive stances taken by the teachers.

4.2.1 The working lives of ESOL teachers as the focus of narrative analysis

Two studies focusing on ESOL contexts are significant in terms of on my approach to my study. The first is by Mike Baynham (2011) who uses interview data collected as part of a larger study on adult ESOL classrooms in the UK. The interviews were led by researchers who were, or who had been, ESOL teacher themselves and this was a significant factor for Baynham in that this allowed for a 'high degree of congruence between interviewers and interviewees' (2011:63). Baynham does not say how well they knew each other (which may have had further impact on the nature of the dialogue), but he argues that the shared background allowed for 'a high degree of commonality' (p70). The focus of the article was on the stance that the ESOL teachers took up in their interviews, that was a type of stance which included their positionality and alignment to aspects of their

narratives. Baynham identifies five types of narrative and he gives examples of each from the data set as well as highlighting occurrences of the co-construction of the narrative, by interviewer and interviewee, within the interview. His focus on interviews, with a sympathetic other, as a way of investigating ESOL teachers' discursive practices of positioning showed me that this was an approach worth considering.

The second study is one by James Simpson (2011) who also focuses on the interactive nature of narratives in interviews. His focus is on students rather than teachers. His concern is of a pedagogical nature. He argues that ESOL teachers could support their students more if they allowed them greater interactional space, giving the students an opportunity to bring the outside in, that is, to draw on their knowledge and experiences outside the classroom in order to strengthen their discursive skills in English.

Simpsons' account (2011) focuses on the interaction between an ESOL student and himself as interviewer, in an ESOL class where they had been encouraged to find, and then talk about, stories from their homelands. He argues that ESOL students are often represented 'in a limited, deficit way' (2011:10) in policy discourses. He specifies three particular ways of portraying ESOL students in such discourses: as people who need to learn English so they can be economically active; as people who need to learn English to be allowed to become British citizens and finally, as people in English classes who have to take tests (to prove they can speak English). In this study, Simpson uses Bamberg and Georgakopoulou's (2008) approach to narrative analysis in his account of a story told by Luisa, an ESOL student. His fine-grained analysis demonstrates how Luisa positions herself in different ways within her story, allowing her to represent herself as an agentive, independent woman. He notes that such opportunities for extended talk are not common enough within ESOL classes and recommends that ESOL teachers could focus on creating such spaces. This would afford ESOL students the chance to take up different positions within their talk (in English) and thus exhibit identities beyond those of the possible employee, the new citizen or the test-taker.

4.2.2. The work of Gary Barkhuizen

The third approach to narrative analysis, and the most significant for my own research, is that developed by Barkhuizen (2008, 2010 and 2011). I use his analytical framework to examine the small stories in chapter 6. In this body of work, Barkhuizen investigates various aspects of teacher identity, using narrative analysis within the context of the teaching of English. His work includes a study of the journal writing of two South African teachers (2008), the use of narrative frames with teachers in China (with Rosemary Wette, 2008) and the use of positioning analysis as developed by Bamberg (1997) to examine the narratives emerging in an interview with a teacher in New Zealand (2010). It is this last paper which guided my own analysis, shown in chapter 6, of three small stories by ESOL teachers.

Barkhuizen (2010) describes his approach to narrative, and specifically his use of positioning analysis within small stories, taking as an example his study of a teacher in New Zealand. In this study, Barkhuizen characterises analysis of narrative data as having three distinct levels, moving progressively through each level (2010:284), with attention paid to the wider context of the narrative telling. The first level takes account of the narration of an episode and the ways in which the different social actors involved in the episode are represented, that is, the content and the characters within the story. The second level considers the ways in which the narrator positions her/himself vis-à-vis the audience - or is positioned by the audience - of the story. This focuses on the interaction between the narrator and the audience. Thirdly, the final level examines the performance of the story vis-à-vis wider normative discourses and the ways the narrator agentively position her/himself with reference to these discourses. In my study, I take account of the ways in which the teachers engage in their story-telling to me, whom they know to be a sympathetic interlocutor, with shared views about ESOL policy and practice and with some knowledge of the institutional context in which they are working. I have chosen to use Barkhuizen's framework (2010) because he builds on previous approaches to positioning analysis within narrative analysis and provides an appropriate three-level framework to analyse the storying within ESOL teachers' account of their working lives.

4.3 Research design

When I began this study, my initial research question was 'How do ESOL teachers talk about their lives, their work and their futures in times of change?' This question arose because of a sudden shift in the expectations and experiences of the ESOL teachers that I was in contact with during the summer term of 2010. As I indicated in chapter 3, in June of that year, the government of the United Kingdom changed from New Labour to a Coalition Government (Liberal and Conservative). The mantra of 'education, education, education', Prime Minister Tony Blair's famous slogan in the general election of 1997 (Coughlan, 2007), faded away and with it the focus on *Skills for Life*, a strategy which had placed basic skills education – in literacy, numeracy and ESOL - at the forefront of post-16 education. The ESOL teachers I was teaching shared their concerns with me about the future of ESOL provision as well as their future as ESOL teachers. So, this study developed as a way to explore these concerns and to examine how national and institutional policies were impacting on the everyday lived experiences of ESOL teachers.

As part of the professional doctorate, I had to submit written work for assessment other than this final thesis. Some of those assessed pieces were linked to the development of this study, including one which focused on comparing different forms of research design (Lacey, 2012). For that essay, I chose to compare questionnaires and interviews as data gathering tools. My experience from that piece of research fed into my decision to choose iterative interviews as a means of constructing data for this study. I drafted ten questions that I felt would elicit open responses from the participants during interviews with me. I tried out these ten questions with an ex-student, as a pilot, but soon afterwards I obtained the list of twelve questions asked of teachers in the VITAE project (cited in chapter 2). I adapted and then adopted the twelve VITAE questions as they were very similar to my pilot set. As a beginning researcher, the advantage accruing from this decision was that these questions had been devised and used by more experienced researchers.

Overall, my choice of approach was guided by my initial research question. Punch (2006:27) advises researchers to consider 'questions before methods' to ensure a match between the knowledge one seeks with the type of research approach taken. The research question set out above focused on the changing work context for ESOL teachers and how they understood and represented their contexts. The shift away from *Skills for Life* and the impact of the new Coalition Government was affecting both the confidence and the work practices of the ESOL teachers I came into contact with. It felt timely to document how ESOL teachers talked about their professional lives, how they articulated their concerns and the issues they faced in times of challenge and change, and to build an account of how they did this through their conversations with me, a familiar other.

Burns (2000:3) distinguishes between quantitative and qualitative research, saying of the latter:

> The naturalistic approach to research emphasises the importance of the subjective experience of individuals, with a focus on qualitative analysis. Social reality is regarded as a creation of individual consciousness, with meaning and the evaluation of events seen as a personal and subjective construction.

The subjective experiences of ESOL teachers were the core of this study, placing it firmly within a qualitative, interpretative epistemological perspective. The interviews were rich with the tellings and retellings of the 'beings' and 'doings' of the everyday lives of ESOL teachers.

Copland (2015:114) recounts how, in finding her way from an applied linguistics background to linguistic ethnographic research, she wanted to develop an emic approach, as she puts it 'an appreciation of how local people, rather than researchers, make sense of the world.' For me, this was a crucial aspect of the study – my aim would be to gain insight into the perspective of the participants. This was to be a study which focused 'on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live' (Holloway and Wheeler, 2002:3). This is the essence of qualitative research.

Building on the work of Davies and Harré (1990), Bamberg (1997) and of Barkhuizen (2010) in particular, outlined in section 4.2 above, I planned to analyse the content and the nature of the talk exchanged between me as a known researcher (and their teacher educator) and the ESOL teachers in the study.

My study was designed around iterative interviews which focused on alterations in the eight ESOL teachers' work lives, shifts that were linked to changes in language education policies over more than five years and two changes in government. The changes in policy were significant in the way they impacted on the lives of these educationalists and the iterative design of the study demonstrated this to best effect. Returning three times to check with the teacher participants how changes had affected their working lives, allowed for a deep exploration of the perceptions and beliefs of educational practitioners positioned on different levels. Documenting policy changes and public discourse with reference to policy documents and through historical analysis of changes to governmental approaches to FAE permitted me to trace the links between public policy-making and personal working lives. Table 4.1 below shows the basic design of the study and how each of the five specific research questions, linked to the overarching question, were addressed.

Research questions		Data gathering activities	Type(s) of data generated	Data description and analysis
1	**How has national policy regarding ESOL in the further and adult education sector changed since 1997?**	Gathering documents from government and other public body sources (England)	Textual data for later analysis of: - Policy discourses - Time lines of national policies (England)	Exploration of policy discourses Description of policy developments Presented in chapter 3
2	**How have policy-generated funding arrangements, on national and institutional levels, shifted ESOL provision in the**	Documenting local policy and funding agency changes. Interviews with 8 ESOL teachers, twice (2011/2013)	Policy and funding texts Transcripts of interviews with ESOL teachers	Analysis of policy discourses Presented in chapters 3 and 5

	Research questions	Data gathering activities	Type(s) of data generated	Data description and analysis
	West Midlands since 1997?	Third interview with 4 of the participants in 2016		
3	**In what way do the ESOL teachers, in this study, talk about the changes in language education policy, funding arrangements and institutional changes?**	Interviews with 8 ESOL teachers, twice (2011/2013) Third interview with 4 of the participants in 2016	Transcripts of interviews with ESOL teachers Field notes relating to interviews	Thematic analysis of all interviews Presented in chapter 5 Narrative analysis of three small stories from three of the ESOL teachers across the span of the study. Presented in chapter 6
4	**How do the ESOL teachers see the identified changes as shaping their practice?**	Interviews with ESOL teachers (eight twice and four a third time)	Transcripts of interviews with ESOL teachers Field notes relating to interviews	Narrative analysis of three small stories from three of the ESOL teachers across the span of the study. Presented in chapter 6
5	**What are the implications from the findings of the research?**	Review of the findings	All of the above	Presented in chapter 7 and 8

Table 4.1: Research questions and research design

I aimed to explore the key policy documents that had affected the provision of ESOL and the working lives of the participants. As shown in Table 4.1 above, this included an historical review as well as an exploration of policies extant at the time of interviews. In this way, I was able to demonstrate how these participants responded to specific changes in their working lives.

4.4 Interviews as a means of building knowledge

The use of the interview has been widespread in research in the social sciences for many decades (Talmy, 2010). Interviews are also part of our everyday lives – on radio, television and in newspapers. They have become so commonplace, Silverman says, that we live in 'an interview society' (2001:30). He identifies three types of research interview, each embedded within three different research traditions: positivism, emotionalism or constructionism. He suggests that those who come from a positivist approach see the interview as a place to discover facts about the social world, which are then presented in the form of tabulations and graphic representations. Those researchers who adopt an emotionalist approach foreground the emotions generated in narratives of personal experience and they view the interview as 'an authentic insight into people's experiences' (Silverman, 2001:87). Silverman's last category of researchers – constructivists – focus on the notion that 'interviewers and interviewees are always actively engaged in constructing meaning' (2001:87). This latter category resonates with Holstein and Gubrium's notion of the 'active interview' (1995). They state that 'both parties to the interview are necessarily and unavoidably *active*.' (1995:4, original emphasis). My approach adopts this constructivist model. The interviews were my main data source, and I saw the data as being 'constructed' (White and Drew, 2011) rather than 'gathered'. This is an important aspect of my study. I recognise that the data for the study results from the interactions between me and the participants as we explored the issues that they had encountered in their working lives.

De Fina and Perrino (2011) identify two groups of people who question the validity of the interview: firstly, there are those who ignore the interactional aspect of the interview, blanking out the contribution of the interviewer and focussing only on the participant (a broadly positivist position). On the other side, there are those who think that, because the interview is not naturally occurring data, captured as part of another 'event' (a strict conversation analysis position), then it is to be avoided. Commenting on these viewpoints, de Fina and Perrino (2011:1) conclude that 'the interview ends up being a problem to overcome'. These authors disagree with both these positions and go on to

argue that there is much to be gained by focusing on the detail of the interactions taking place in an interview since it is a key site for the co-construction of knowledge. I share this view and I therefore use interviews as the primary data source, with public documents as a secondary source of data.

Denscombe (2003:179) points out that ‘trust and rapport are the keywords’ in ensuring that a positive interview occurs. However, trust and rapport are difficult to achieve in institutional contexts like education where there are asymmetries of power between, for example, teacher and student. Kvale (2007) discusses these imbalances of power in depth and the way in which they can shape qualitative research interviews. During the interviews that I set up, I endeavoured to work in as reflexive a manner as possible, taking account of the impact on those I would interview. I discuss this aspect of my research in greater depth in the final section of this chapter.

The use of an audio recorder to capture the interview can have an effect on the interviewees. There can also be an impact on the interviewer. The use of an audio recorder or video recorder can be constraining in any interview in that it changes the conversation from being an ephemeral exchange to a more permanent capture of words between people – and perhaps used as evidence in some way. It is often recommended in the literature that one or two interviews should be conducted before the audio recorder is introduced, but I did not do this as I had been in extensive one-to-one conversations with all participants before the recordings took place.

Constructing data via a recorded interview does not end with the audio capture. The next step before thorough analysis can take place is the transcription of the interview. Kvale (2007) indicates that it can take 5 hours to transcribe an hour of recording and another 10 or 15 to analyse it. Dörnyei (2007) warns that a more fine-grained transcription can take even longer. The act of transcription is ‘a translation from one narrative mode – oral discourse – into another narrative mode – written discourse’ (Kvale, 2007:93). It is thus closely linked to analysis, but this method of data preparation does have implications for

the researcher in terms of time. However, the transcription allows the researcher to become very familiar with the audio recordings. It also draws the researcher's attention to other aspects of the conversation such as the prosody of both interviewer and interviewee that might otherwise be lost.

Garton and Copland (2010:535) write about some of the issues that are presented when interviewer and interviewee already know each other, as was the case with all my interviews. They call these 'acquaintance interviews' and explore them in relation to Goffman's notion of 'frames' (Goffman, 1974) and 'footing (Goffman, 1981). They identify places in their data where a prior relationship – with a friend and/or a colleague – impinged on the procedural nature of the formal interview and where shifts occurred between the 'footing', moving between talk as friends and talk as interviewee/ interviewer. I explore this further in the next section.

4.5. Research in a familiar domain

One of the most significant aspects of the interviews I conducted was that the participants were already quite familiar with me. All teacher participants had been students on a subject specialist ESOL course at my university between 2006 and 2010. I had observed and assessed their teaching on two or three occasions. The observations had been followed by a debriefing session, as is common practice in teaching observations (Gravels, 2012; Wallace, 2011). These debriefing sessions focused on aspects of their teaching and usually lasted about 30 minutes, depending on the time available. Table 4.2 gives an overview of the assessed work for the year-long course that the teacher participants had followed.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Observation process</th><th>Academic work</th></tr>
<tr><td>Term 1</td><td>Observation of teaching 1</td><td>By author</td><td rowspan="4">Academic work on: theories of second language acquisition; classroom text analysis and use; presentation of learning language and literacy artefact: essay on reflections of self as teacher of English – language and literacy
Also, portfolio of classroom practices.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Term 2</td><td>Observation of teaching 2</td><td>By author</td></tr>
<tr><td>Term 3</td><td>Observation of teaching 3</td><td>By author</td></tr>
<tr><td>Anytime</td><td>Observation of teaching 4</td><td>By peer or line manager</td></tr>
</table>

Table 4.2: Overview of ESOL subject specialist course – observations and academic work

This shows the involvement I had with the teacher participants during their course. It included observations in their workplace and their expressions of their views and ideas through the academic work submitted. In addition I had come to know them through the conversations and discussions that had taken place during the university classroom activities. I had a rich personal and professional knowledge of all the participants.
As an ex-tutor to the research participants, I was familiar with their working environment and how they operated in the classroom during assessed observations. I had been to the places where they worked to observe their teaching and had often sat in the institution's canteen or coffee shop for the post-observation feedback. Although the observations were given a grade of pass or fail (according to set criteria shared with the student teacher throughout the course) the feedback was designed to be developmental and supportive. It was a conversation about what had occurred during the session and what, if any, changes could be made to enhance teaching and learning. This was in contrast to the observation process that most colleges adopted for their staff which involved Ofsted-like grades of 1 (outstanding) to 4 (inadequate) when feedback would be formal, brief and focused on the grade and the consequences of grades less than good.

This aspect of working with known participants in a research interview is only occasionally discussed in the literature. Examples include Garton and Copland (2010) and Chimbutane (2012). Garton and Copland (2010) reflect on research where they knew the interviewees as friends and /or as colleagues before the research interview and recommend this as an area to be explored further. Chimbutane (2012) writes about the choices he made in his research with Mozambican teachers. The prior relationships he had with the participants in his research were explored as part of the process. He shows how the teachers indexed the different dimensions of their relationships with him in their interviews. Drawing on Marcus (1998), Chimbutane suggests that 'researchers investigating a familiar locale can use their control of language as well as their life experiences as assets to achieve depth' (2012:288). This clearly resonates with my experience of conducting my study.

4.6. The research participants

The *Skills for Life* strategy established three routes to fully qualified status as an ESOL teacher in the further and adult education (FAE) as noted in chapter 3. I chose participants from the third route, those from the ESOL subject specialism Stand-Alone route. I deemed this to be the most appropriate cohort to focus on because they had already gained a teaching qualification. Jephcote and Salisbury remark that, while there has been recent research focusing on the initial education of teachers, there has been 'much less into the lives of experienced teachers' (2009:967). My focus was, therefore, on the more experienced teachers and their responses to the ways in which the changes in policy had impacted on their working lives. As all of the teachers on this ESOL subject specialist route had already gained their teaching certificate, I would not be the gatekeeper to their qualification of 'teacher' and so the balance of power could be considered more equal than between me and those I was the gatekeeper for. This more equal status between us would allow those on the subject specialism route, I believed, to be more frank in their discussions about their working lives.

Delamont (1993:71) describes her own research practice as follows: 'I started with personal contacts and places [where I] would get cooperation'. Following Delamont, I also recruited people for the study through my contacts. I began to talk to those taking the ESOL subject specialist route about being involved in my research and most seemed willing to be part of it. I then needed to select a few who would be able to spare time to talk to me and take part in the iterative interviewing, to record their changing lives and responses to shifts in policy and practice in their colleges. In October 2010, I sent an email (see appendix) to all those who had been on the ESOL subject specialist courses between 2006-2010, asking if they would like to be involved in my study about ESOL teachers' working lives. Altogether, 20 volunteered to be interviewed. This was out of a total population of 45 on these courses during 2006-2010. The speedy response indicated that this was an area that was pertinent to these teachers. It also suggested that the relationships between them and me were such that they were interested in continued communication. I had various professional relationships with these people, not just as

teacher/student, and so the level of response was pleasing. Also, there were some who, despite seeing me on a regular basis, did not feel compelled to respond which suggests that those who did respond were doing so out of genuine interest rather than feeling coerced.

I responded to each offer of involvement and began to establish initial interviews and soon I had eight ESOL subject specialist teachers as the participants in the study. Table 4.3 shows the participants, all of whom were women.

	Name*	Age at first interview	Employment status	Type of provision
1	Anita	Late 30s	Part time	Adult and Community Education
2	Anna	Early 40s	Full time	Adult and Community Education
3	Cherry	Early 30s	Part time	FE college
4	Eleanor	Early 30s	Full time	FE college
5	Liz	Late 50s	Full time - but less than half for ESOL teaching	FE college
6	Jana	Early 30s	Part time	FE college
7	Jasmine	Late 20s	Full time	FE college
8	Monica	Late 30s	Full time	FE college

Table 4.3 – participants (all names have been changed to protect confidentiality)

According to a report surveying the workforce of the *Skills for Life* area in 2008-2009 (Mallows, Cara and Casey, 2009), the majority of the teaching population (nearly 75%) was female. I decided that I would choose only women to be part of the study. This was partly because, in such a small scale study, I was concerned the inclusion of one or two men might give rise to possible identification of the participants through pronoun use. Also, I felt I would be more confident and comfortable interviewing women, allowing me to build a better rapport. I did, however, include a range of ages and made sure not all were employed in general FE colleges – two worked in adult and community college settings. Two of the participants were women of colour.

Thomas (2009) considers the notion of 'sampling' to be a strategy associated with quantitative research and that it really has no place in qualitative research. Others argue

that sampling is a significant consideration in the design of any study, and list types of sampling that are suitable for qualitative research (Bryman, 2008; Newby, 2010). For this study, I used convenience sampling, for whilst I invited all those who had studied on the subject specialist course to be involved (via email), I followed up on those who presented themselves to me as willing not only to be part of any research study I might complete, but to be part of this study, to be interviewed and audio recorded more than once. Bryman states that 'social research is […] frequently based on convenience sampling' (2008:183). In this study there seemed no compelling argument against using this approach to selecting the participants as I had no way of anticipating - or even expecting - any bias that might be present in the group thus selected.

As the volunteers for my study were asked to talk about their lives, it was important to work with teachers who were happy to be interviewed about their beliefs and values. The process of being interviewed can be quite intense and it necessitates considerable time commitment. This time-heavy aspect was part of the ground rules established at the start, at interview one. Thomas (2009:150) refers to participants such as these as 'opting in'. Those from the subject specialist courses were able to opt in to the research project by responding to a generalised email request and then volunteering to take part. (Please see appendix two for detailed pen portraits of each of the participants.)

4.7 Data construction

The data construction was carried out by means of iterative interviews with the eight ESOL teachers over almost six years. All eight teachers were interviewed twice, with four of the group being interviewed for a third time. In addition, I gathered a set of relevant governmental policy documents, documents regarding funding as well as research reports concerning FAE post-1997. The aim of this data gathering was to build a well-documented account of broader policy development with respect to the educational context of the study.

4.7.1 Preparing for the initial interviews

To explore the participants' ways of being and discursively representing themselves as ESOL teachers in challenging times, I needed to choose a method that would ensure that the teachers' own views of their lived experiences were foregrounded. In searching for a model to use, I came across the VITAE project, the large scale study of the lives of teachers in the compulsory sector (primary and secondary) I discussed in chapter 2. This was undertaken in England between 2001 and 2006. One tool that the project used to collect data from teachers was a set of semi structured interview questions, designed to elicit teachers' views on 'four Ps – pupils, policy, practice and personal' (Day *et al,* 2006b:175). As none of the research reports or papers had included the exact questions used, I requested these from one of the researchers (by email) and compared them to the draft questions I had used in an initial, pilot interview. I had created ten questions, and the VITAE project used twelve. They were, in fact, quite similar and I felt reassured that my lines of inquiry were appropriate, as I stated in section 4.3 of this chapter. I adapted and adopted the VITAE questions to address the context I was exploring – that of ESOL teachers working in the FAE context.

The initial questions (see appendix) were all sent out to the participants before the interview, along with a consent form (see appendix). Seven of the eight interviews were carried out at the work place of the participant (with the eighth being held at the university where I worked). All were audio-recorded. Additional brief 'field notes' were taken by me either during or immediately after the interviews to note down things that I felt were significant. Field notes are useful to give some context to the interview and serve as a reminder of specific events. McCarty states that field notes often 'may begin as jottings' (2015:86). My notes were indeed jottings and remained so. I did not take detailed notes as the emphasis was on the talk, not on observation. My attention was on the flow of the conversation between teacher and myself as researcher.

4.7.2. Conducting the first set of interviews

The initial interviews were held in the academic year 2010-2011, mostly in the second and third college terms (spring and summer). The interviews lasted between 22 and 54 minutes, the average being 35 minutes. There were greetings and a sharing of personal information before the audio recorder was switched on, as these were people I already had relationships with. On most occasions, the conversation continued after the recording stopped. This is not, perhaps, so usual in research interviews where researcher and participant do not know each other and when the sole purpose of the meeting is for the interview. Bogdan and Biklen (2003:96) identify several features of a good interview; their first feature is that the interviewees 'are at ease and talk freely'. For the participants and me, it was more a matter of becoming 'at ease' in our new roles within the interview.

The interviews unfolded more smoothly as I became more confident in the task. The first was challenging for me as I did not know how the unusual act of being interviewer would affect the dialogue. I chose the participant whom I knew best (Cherry) to be first so that I could ease myself into the role. However, I found the shift in purpose from sharing ideas and talking of teaching in general terms to being 'an interviewer' a most challenging task and I had some difficulty in finding a comfortable way of interacting. I spoke too frequently and, on listening back to the recording, felt I had taken too familiar a position within the exchange. This meant that in the next interview, with Anita, I was too reticent and restrained. Throughout the first eight interviews, I found that my style and manner of interactions changed according to the other participant. These nuances of interaction are a feature of the data analysis, in particular the narrative analysis in chapter 6.

4.7.3. The second phase of interviewing

The second interviews mostly took place in June and July 2013 with one much earlier in September 2011. I sent each person the full transcription of their interview as soon as I was able to do so. Some call this 'member checking' (Roulston, 2010 citing Briggs, 1986) but I prefer Tracy's term 'member reflection' (2010) as this fits in with the reflexive approach I adopted to the research. This reflection allowed the participants to read the

script and decide if they were happy for me to use the data. I was surprised by the responses of some which focused more on their perceived lack of fluency (I had transcribed the fillers and false starts [ums and ers] of our talk) than on the content. All were happy for me to use the content. They did not want me to remove any parts and were happy to progress to the second interview.

These second interviews focused on the changes that had taken place since the first interview. They allowed for a more open and participant-led approach, with no questions set by me to be answered by all. I did have person-specific questions, leading on from the first interview. For example, I wanted to ask Anita why she had written down the answers she gave me for her first interview, and had stuck to her written script during the 'conversation'. I also asked Cherry about her view of other teachers and Jasmine about her sense of self as teacher.

Half of the second interviews were conducted in the same place as the first (see Table 4.4 below for locations of all three interviews).

	Name	Interviews site 1	Interview site 2	Interview site 3
1	Cherry	At university	same room	
2	Eleanor	At her place of work	but different campus	At her home
3	Anna	At her place of work	same room	Same room
4	Anita	At her place of work	but different campus	At her home
5	Liz	At her place of work,	but different campus	
6	Monica	At her place of work	same room	
7	Jana	At her place of work	same room	
8	Jasmine	At her place of work	but different campus	Different room

Table 4.4 – place of interviews

At interview two, all eight teachers were still working for the same organisation although, in each case, their actual teaching timetable had changed. Significant for four of the eight was the change in location for the second interview which corresponded with their altered teaching timetable. Four were interviewed in the same room as for their first interview. I had been in contact with half of the participants between the two interviews,

meeting casually in their place of work or for more official meetings such as joint observations (where they acted as a co-observer). During this time, too, four of the institutions had been visited by Ofsted and this had had an effect on the second set of interviews as did some key changes in policy for some which will be seen in chapter 5.

4.7.4 The third phase of interviewing

The third interviews were conducted with only four of the original eight teacher participants. This was because four of them were no longer contactable. One had retired, one had left teaching altogether, a third had moved from college teaching to teaching and supporting students with dyslexia in universities and a fourth was unable to be contacted during this time. Of the remaining four, two were just about to start on maternity leave and two asked for this final interview to be conducted in their home. This relocation to the teacher participants' home was an indication of the level of ease and familiarity established between us.

The purpose of the final interview was to review the first and second interviews and talk about the changes that had occurred in their working lives over the period of the study. It also gave me a chance to ask the participants to reflect on their involvement in the study overall.

4.7.5 Documentation of national policies

The aim of gathering official governmental documents was to provide data to contextualise my account of the wider policy context for my study (chapter 3) from 1997 to 2018. These documents relate to specific educational policy decisions, such as the *Skills for Life* strategy, the raising of the participation age in 2013 and the GCSE reforms in 2015. I also collected documents relating to funding decisions and policies, along with policy interpretations by educational establishments related to migration and education. Documents relating to changes in the curriculum on offer for ESOL students were also reviewed as they contributed to the demise of the *Skills for Life* strategy. Also documents relating to the funding of certain qualifications, including through the 'Study Programmes'

(DfE, 2012) and the rise of Functional Skills qualifications across the sector, were studied. As well as government documents, local, national and educational press releases were also surveyed to monitor responses to educational changes.

4.8 Data preparation and transcription

All the audio recorded data were transcribed and listened to frequently to familiarise myself with the contents. The transcriptions for each interview were also printed to allow for closer review. The appendix includes sample transcripts of interviews, namely extended extracts of interview one for Jana, interview two for Jasmine and interview three for Anita (the extracts used in chapter 6). I have also included a table showing the transcription conventions (page vii) that I have used in the extracts in chapter 6, and in the extended extracts in the appendix.

There have been debates about the way that talk is transcribed into text and how this is represented on paper and on screen. Roberts (1997) explores the politics of transcription and points out that 'if talk is a social act, then so is transcription' (p167). She believes that it is the duty of the transcriber to be reflexive in their accounts of how they have turned talk into text. Indeed, she believes this to be a matter of ethics, and advocates that the researcher is conscious and careful in how they interpret the spoken words of another person in an interview. Thornborrow and Coates (2005:13) remind us that 'transcription is inevitably always a form of interpretation' and the choices of each researcher need to be clearly indicated. My choice has been to try to represent the talk as accurately as I could, but in a written form that was not too heavily focused on the minutiae of transcription. I am fully aware that this is my representation and 'not just talk written down' (Green, Franquiz and Dixon, 1997:172) and I acknowledge my choices regarding how it is represented on the written page. I would like my research to be read by ESOL teachers and so have used transcription conventions that are accessible to them. Mann (2016) writes thoughtfully about the difficulties of transcription. He refers to the 'delicacy' of the different detail of transcription conventions, and notes the 'rock and a hard place' (2016:203) that signifies how much detail to include when transcribing interviews. I have

chosen, therefore, to show spoken emphasis as emboldened text and have used round brackets to indicate where there were examples of paralinguistic features (such as sighs and laugher) that were significant in my interpretation. In chapter 5, for the thematic analysis, I have shown extracts from the participants' conversations in italicised text, to support the reader in distinguishing the data extracts from my own analysis and comment around these extracts.

4.9 Data analysis

As indicated in section 4.2, I conducted the data analysis in two distinct phases. I began by doing a thematic analysis of all the interviews in the corpus I had gathered. This allowed me to review the broader topics related to policy change that resonated across the interviews. These were topics that all of the participants spoke about during their two or three interviews. Then, in a second phase, I completed a detailed analysis of narrative extracts from these interviews which permitted a much more in-depth analysis of three small stories relating directly to the themes raised from the first, thematic data analysis. This allowed me to examine in greater detail how the teachers' concerns about policy change were indexed and how the teachers positioned themselves in their narrative accounts vis-à-vis these changes. I describe each of these approaches to data analysis in more detail below.

4.9.1 Thematic analysis

The overarching research question focuses on how ESOL teachers narrate their response to policy change; to begin with this involved analysing the whole data set of twenty separate interviews, with eight ESOL teachers, in three distinct periods of time. In this section, I explain the process of building a robust system for analysing the data and I demonstrate the detailed, iterative process I carried out in order to ensure a thorough analysis. I did not pilot the analytic process but followed steps taken by other qualitative researchers (e.g. Barton and Hamilton, 1998). In order to capture the policy processes at work, I went through every transcript, listening to the audio-file and reading the texts. As I read, I identified what each teacher had commented on. I also summarised the

interviews, condensing the transcript into a one (occasionally two) page A4 sheet. This allowed me to review each interview quickly and compare it more readily with those from the same time-set (interview one, two or three). Next I highlighted topics that reoccurred, using different colours for references to students, peers or administrative duties, for example. I coded topics in this way within each interview, across the time-set of interviews and across the two or three interviews per participant. This allowed me to gain systematic insight into the teachers' responses to, and understandings of, policy changes. The issues they talked about most frequently were those that had direct links with the policy changes at work in their institutions.

From this paper-based analysis, I then moved to identify every part of the interviews that made reference to all aspects of policy and the effects that these policies had on their working lives. This included policy developments impacting on an institutional level (such as Ofsted) or on a personal level (such as the pressure of being observed). I made extensive charts for each participant and then cross-referenced these to the charts of others at the same stage of the interviews. This allowed for both a horizontal analysis (that is, across all participants at each phase) as well as a vertical one (tracing each participant through the three stages) (Barton and Hamilton, 1998:70). Each reference was entered in a chart, which I then read closely to identify the different levels of policy referred to. These were then given key topic words so that I could compare extracts of the same topic more readily. Sifting through the charts and individual teacher responses and comments in these ways led me to identify three distinct levels of policy change that the participants referenced. These were at national, at institutional and at personal levels. Although it was sometimes challenging to definitively categorise a reference to policy as fitting into just one of the levels, I drew on my wider knowledge and made a judgement about the best fit; this was particularly the case with the institutional and the personal levels.

Once I had identified the three different levels of policy change, I then was able to carry out the next stage of the analysis, which was to detail the references to policy within

these three policy levels. The national level included references to such topics as funding, fees, Ofsted, *Skills for Life*, Functional Skills, the Prevent agenda and Brexit. At the institutional level, categories such as the amount of paperwork involved, management responses to support change, team spirit, changes in qualifications offered or college mergers were identified. The personal level included the agentive responses of the teachers to the changes taking place and their new working conditions, such as creating resources for an ever-changing student cohort, declarations about their own values and responses to the nature of teaching ESOL as well as comments on work-life balance, how they would respond to changes in the curricula, timetabling and their hopes for the future.

Thematic analysis is used in many forms of qualitative research, but it sits well with explorations of narratives as it 'allows the researcher to see and makes sense of collective shared meanings and experiences' (Braun and Clarke, 2012:57). This examination of the breadth of the responses to policy change from the participants then formed an excellent basis for moving to the next approach to data analysis – the use of positioning theory within narrative analysis, which I will explore in the next section.

4.9.2 Narrative analysis: stories of positioning and lived experiences

As well as the broader analysis of themes from all eight participants over the three sets of interviews, I also wanted to conduct a much more fine-grained analysis of the interviews, exploring how the participants crafted stories about their working lives as they spoke to me about their perspectives, their problems and their practices. The use of 'small story' (Bamberg, 2004) analysis afforded me the chance to do just this. In analysing the small stories (see chapter 6), once again I read through all the transcripts and noted down all the possible stories from each participant for each interview. I wanted to focus on small stories that echoed the themes identified in chapter 5. Once more, I devised a chart for these and took time to consider which would best illustrate the ways that national and institutional changes had shaped the personal responses of the ESOL teachers I had interviewed. After careful consideration of many of the small stories within the

narratives, I chose to have one story from each of the three sets of interviews, with one representing each of the three levels of policy change. This gave me three extracts for three different participants.

I chose to analyse these three small stories using positioning analysis within the framework of narrative analysis (Bamberg, 1997) (see earlier in the chapter, section 4.2). As Marshall and Rossman (1999:5) state, the approach of narrative analysis 'seeks to describe the meaning of experience for individuals' and 'assumes that storytelling is integral to understanding lives'. Bamberg (2004:365) reminds us that,

> interviews, just like any other talk-in-interaction, are no innocent windows into participants' interiors. Rather, they are in need of being analysed as interactive, social, and cultural practices, which entails a close scrutiny of how such responses are put to use, as opposed to speculating about the attitudes that they putatively reflect.

In the analysis presented in chapter 6, the focus is on the interactive, social and cultural practices revealed in interviews. For example, I analysed the ways in which they talked about their students, their peers and their managers. I also analysed the ways in which they represented the changes to ESOL and the consequences for themselves and their students. I examined the positionings they adopted, drawing on analytical frameworks such as those developed by Davies and Harré (1990), Watson (2007) and Barkhuizen (2010, 2011).

4.10 Ethical considerations

All researchers need to be aware of four basic aspects of their empirical work to ensure that ethical considerations have been applied. Merriam (2009:230) refers to these as, 'the protection of subjects from harm, the right to privacy, the notion of informed consent and the issue of deception…' These were constantly reviewed during my study as the flexible and recursive nature of the design could have exposed unforeseen ethical issues. Also, face-to-face interviewing has specific ethical issues relating to power. Seidman (2006:99) reminds us 'the interviewing relationship is fraught with issues of power—who controls the direction of the interview, who controls the results, who benefits.' Fontana

and Frey (2000: 655) note the 'fragility of trust' in such situations: all interactions require sensitivity. In this study of teachers, since all adults were already known to me and none of them appeared to be vulnerable, the study was of relatively low risk. However, sensitivity must always be maintained and I offered all participants the opportunity to cease involvement after each interview. Of course, there are limitations on the right to withdraw and I checked that participants were happy for me to include their interviews, or extracts from these, in the final thesis. Although this was not explicitly stated on the consent form, I did check at each interview that the participant was willing to continue. Every effort was made to ensure they knew what the research was about and how their data would be used and stored. British Education Research Association (BERA) guidelines (2011) and British Association of Applied Linguists (BAAL) guidelines (2016) were also consulted and adhered to.

BERA (2011:7) states, 'Researchers must recognize the participants' entitlement to privacy and must accord them their rights to confidentially and anonymity'. But Merriam (2009:233) says, 'At the local level, it is nearly impossible to protect the identity of either the case or the people involved.' In my study, every effort was taken to ensure those who know the local colleges will not be able to identify the teachers involved. This issue was raised with all participants at the start of the study and was part of their informed consent. I have used pseudonyms for all participants and changed the names of any venues or other people they mentioned in their interviews.

Because all the participants in the study were ex-students, or ex-colleagues, we already had a relationship prior to the interviews. While all were clearly willing to be involved, I needed to be aware that the teacher participants may have regarded me as a person in a position of authority and power. I had been their teacher and this placed me in a possible locus of influence in their teaching roles. They may have been concerned as to whether I thought well of them and this might have skewed their responses. They might have thought that I would take the information they shared back to their managers and so ensured that they did not say anything that could harm their own position. The consent

form (see appendix) sought to reassure all participants that this would not be the case and allowed them to opt out at any time. Throughout, reflexivity was at the forefront of my concern as I carried out this work, and my focus on how the interactions in the interviews unfolded required a constant self-critical stance from me.

Throughout the course of the study I kept reviewing my approach and considered knowledge building as a means of reconstructing particular events in space and time with the nine people involved – eight teachers and me. Most people like to talk, especially about themselves and their lives. My study allowed the participants to talk to me, whom they knew to be interested in them and their work, about key aspects of their professional lives. But each interview was a humbling experience for me as I listened to them weave events into stories and as I engaged in conversation about things that mattered to them, that affected their everyday practices.

CHAPTER FIVE: PARTICIPANTS' ACCOUNTS OF CHANGES IN POLICY AND PRACTICE: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS.

5.1 Introduction

Three broad sets of themes emerged from my thematic analysis of the interviews with the eight ESOL teachers. Firstly, there were issues in the national policy level. These included developments in government policy making, political uncertainty and funding changes as well as an acknowledgement of societal changes such as attitudes to migration, possible ghettoization of ESOL students and, later on in the study's time line, Brexit. The second set of themes was associated with the institutional level. Participants noted concerns about their current working practices and their time limitations. These concerns included changes to their teaching timetable, subjects they would teach and the amount of administrative paperwork they had to complete. They expressed different opinions regarding the team they worked with versus the institution they worked for. Mention was also made of the expanding use of technology in their workplace. For the participants, the third set of themes related to their personal pedagogic practices. They included comments on their classroom practice and the implications of educational change for their own students. Here, on this personal level, there were also concerns about their work-life balance, their own personal trajectories as ESOL teachers and their emotional response to being a teacher of ESOL. The participants also referred to their understanding of their students' lived experiences and the changing social conditions regarding immigration. They also indicated how they felt were making a difference.

I chose to analyse the interviews in time sequence – starting with the initial phase between November 2010 and July 2011 – as this time-progressive approach highlighted changes in the context of the participants' lives and links directly with the chronological review of policy change in chapter 3. I analysed the themes revealed in the interviews in the order presented below, moving from the level of national policies and funding changes through to the institutional level and then to the personal and pedagogic level, as discussed in chapter 4. This multi-layered approach ties in with the view of language-

in-education policy processes presented in chapter 2 and it provides a detailed context for the accounts given by these eight ESOL teachers during troubled times.

5.2 First phase of teacher interviews: the cuts and the consequences

This section explores the themes that the teacher participants shared with me concerning the three levels of policy development in their first interviews at the very start of this study, between November 2010 and November 2011.

5.2.1 Teacher accounts of developments on the national level

5.2.1.1. Changes to funding, changes to student numbers

All but one of the eight teacher participants were aware of the implications of the national agendas for their own working contexts. Reference was made by seven participants to the issue of fees (because of the lack of funding for ESOL classes), and they were made more than once. At the time of these first interviews (between November 2010 and November 2011) there were fears that most ESOL students would have to pay fees as a result of changes mooted in the Coalition Spending Review of 2010. It was announced in November 2010 that ESOL funding was being cut and would allow only those who were actively seeing work to have fee remission on their ESOL courses for the next academic year. After considerable disquiet about this, including the establishment of *Action for ESOL* and interventions by other organisations (see chapter 3) the government rescinded this recommendation – but not until July 2011, after colleges and adult education centres had timetabled their provision for the 2011-2012 academic year. While some colleges were able to respond to the U-turn at the start of the 2011-2012 academic year, others were not able to do this, so many colleges and adult education providers charged blanket fees for all students not on work related benefits.

It is understandable, therefore, that at their first interview the teachers in the study should be expressing their fears about how the fee changes would impact on student recruitment. Seven participants mentioned the changes in funding for ESOL as having a direct impact on their own jobs. They wondered if they would have enough students to

ensure they had a full quota of hours on their teaching timetables. This led them to speculate as to whether they would need to be able to teach other subjects. Diversification was a strong thread running through the first set of interviews as the participants talked about what other teaching they might need to take on. Liz talked of confidence-building classes in the community that she had started to teach. She also anticipated that other staff would need to take on more generic *Skills for Life* teaching - including teaching numeracy. Eleanor worried that she would be asked to teach numeracy (but she stated that she would refuse) and Jasmine said she was considering private tutoring or GCSE English. Anita wondered if she could teach in schools – or even teach interior design, a subject in which she had qualifications. Anna mentioned that the future for her institution might well be in the wider subject of family learning, rather than in ESOL provision.

5.2.1.2. Concern for students not able to access courses

Five of the eight participants expressed concern for the students themselves. Jasmine was troubled for the ESOL students and she said *'I just think, how are these people going to cope without language?*' and then stated '*it's not just a subject, it's a future for people in this country*'. Eleanor said '*I am worried about the students that can't, you know, get on a course. (…) what's going to happen to them?*' Cherry thought about how it might be if she was in another country and needed to know the languages spoken there: '*if I was in their shoes, I'd hope that somebody would help me…(…) and help me get access to the language to enable me to survive, because it is about survival, you know.*' Anna took a more overtly political stance. She worried specifically about the women who would be affected such as those who were working, but on very low incomes, as well as '*all the brides, all the wives*' who would not be able to access English lessons anymore. She did not think there would be any outcry against the cuts in English language teaching: in fact, she feared '*the opposite. I think people will be quite pleased (…) "they come here taking our jobs and they get free English provision."* ' Anna was alluding to the negative publicity for immigrants in the media at this time (2011). There were echoes of this with both Anita and with Jana, too, albeit in different ways. Anita was a little sceptical of her students on

Job Seekers Allowance who attended free classes as she did not think that they were all serious about searching for employment. She said '*Some of them get Job Seekers Allowance but, you know, I don't think they are really looking for a job.*' Anita thought that the payment of fees would help to motivate the students to go to classes more regularly. She was the only person who looked at the rise in fees for ESOL as a potential positive. Jana showed her concern in a more subtle way. She was talking about ESOL being undervalued. She said '*I had somebody recently say to me, 'Oh, so do you teach a lot of refugees?'* and *'I'm thinking the question itself is very judgemental (…) I just think that's its indicative that it's not valued'*.

Monica was not so concerned about a possible reduction of ESOL student numbers. She said she was *'quite optimistic … I'm not really worried about September.*' She was, however, not looking forward to teaching the younger age range. She recounted a dreadful lesson she once had with 16-18 year olds which really put her off teaching them again. Cherry did not express her concern for her job – perhaps because she was already teaching fewer ESOL hours and had taken on more specialist student support hours. Jana was not happy with her role as an ESOL teacher in these changing times and was thinking of moving away from it. She did not want to have to teach the younger age range and did not want to do other teaching. Cherry and Jana were, at the time 'unbecoming' teachers of ESOL (Colley, James and Diment, 2007) and had chosen to reduce their ESOL teaching and focus on other aspects of their careers. Liz, too, was on this same trajectory as she had her eyes on her up-coming retirement.

5.2.1.3. Community cohesion and Ofsted

Other national agenda issues arose in more individualised way. Two participants, who worked in the same town, one in a college and another in an adult education centre, mentioned community cohesion and how they felt this was now a thing of the past. They were referring to *A New Approach to English for Speakers of Other Languages* (DIUS, 2009) which had mandated that local ESOL providers (colleges, local authority provision, Job Centre Plus and voluntary organisations) should work together to draw up plans to

access priority groups to support community cohesion. Two others referred to Ofsted and the requirements it placed upon teaching. There was a suggestion of protest against the ESOL cuts via *Action for ESOL* (mentioned by Anita) and NATECLA's campaign (mentioned by Liz). Anna said, wearily, '*time to get the placards back out'* as she remarked that the Big Society (a notion put forward in a speech by the Prime Minister, David Cameron, newly elected in 2010) was only accessible for certain people – and that did not include ESOL students. Anna was concerned that the lack of ESOL classes could lead to ghettoization of marginalised sections of the population.

These eight ESOL teachers were clearly aware of the consequences that might ensue from the reduction of ESOL provision through altered funding regimes. They were meeting this with expressions of fear and discontent. Fear for their own jobs, for their (carefully) chosen career. This particular issue was obviously at the forefront of their minds as they talked to me in their first interviews. Some were also concerned about the implications for the students themselves and the impact this would have on the nation as a whole. Liz, Cherry and Jana were actually thinking of moving away from ESOL teaching to take on other life endeavours while the remaining five expressed concern about future developments as a direct consequence of the funding changes.

5.2.2 Teacher accounts of institutional conditions

5.2.2.1. Micromanagement and paperwork

Whilst the perceptions of the national picture were fairly consistent across all eight of the first interviews, this was not the case with their accounts of institutional issues. The most consistent thematic thread related to excessive demands for paperwork. This workplace demand was mentioned three times by Eleanor who said *'wherever you go, you know, the paperwork is increasing but your time doesn't [increase]*'. Further on in her first interview, Eleanor said *'…my priority is planning decent lessons but the college's priority is making sure that you have figures and the paperwork…*' Cherry also observed that the paperwork was not always connected to student learning. She stated, in a challenging tone

> *We have the ILPs [Individual Learning Plans] in place, termly targets, diagnostic assessments to find out this, that and the other and then eventually there will be, of course, an exam and they are expected to pass. Is that learner driven? I've certainly seen it presented like that. In my personal opinion it is not entirely learner driven … it is funding driven.*

At the same time, Cherry believed that she had to negotiate the paperwork for the sake of the students, in her words *'to make sure that I am keeping my students happy.'* Jana disclosed that she had been shocked by the administrative workload, thinking this was particularly onerous for ESOL teachers because of the diversity of the students. Jasmine was also very troubled by the amount of administrative tasks she had to complete for her college. She, like Eleanor, mentioned this three times, identifying the tasks that needed to be done, letting me know that '*it's the administrative stuff I do not like.*' She also said *'I think all teachers take their work home.'* Anita was in agreement with this. She said

> *I have to do all my paperwork at home, in my personal time, all my planning, all my paperwork and whatever else I need to do, and I find it extremely hard to juggle my personal time and family responsibilities with my work life.*

Anita was not a full-time teacher with hours for administration on her timetable, so she had to do all her planning and preparation at home when she was *'exhausted'*, a situation which was made worse by the poor facilities she encountered at some of the community venues.

5.2.2.2. The teaching team and the management

All of the participants referred to other people in the team at their institution. Seven were complimentary about their co-teachers and identified this as a positive feature of their work lives. Some contrasted their positive feelings about their colleagues with negative feelings towards their institution and the administrative load. The imposition of paperwork by institutions is also a common theme in the literature on the rise of performativity and managerialism within FAE sector (e.g. Smith and O'Leary, 2013). Ball

(2003) states that, in the end, performativity sets 'the care of the self against duty to others' (2003:216). This was certainly reflected in the first interviews with these eight ESOL teachers. Of course, this focus on administrative duties, of proving that one is an effective teacher, was not a new phenomenon for these participants. Increasing paperwork had been a significant issue since the Incorporation of colleges in 1992 when education (indeed, all public services) had been subject to increasing audits and requirements to prove that money had been spent well (Gleeson and James, 2007). This involved teachers, in their colleges, proving that they had enrolled students, retained them and got them to pass their exams by administering initial diagnostic tests, setting targets, recording achievement, completing Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for each student and setting specific outcomes in their lessons (outcomes that they would need to prove had been met by all students at the end of the lesson). All this data would need to be recorded and sent to various offices within a college, often more than once, to prove to their managers, the funders, the government, and ultimately to the public, that teachers were doing their jobs.

The participants also made revealing comments about the structures and hierarchies of their specific workplaces. Liz gave examples of several abbreviations of names of middle managers, though she said she did not know what they all stood for. Her particular institution did seem to be in flux. She commented on many changes in the communication structures of the workplace, including the introduction of weekly blogs from the principal, a newly appointed communications managers and an increase in the quality assurance team. Like others, she also commented on the diversification of provision. Liz, Monica, Jana, Anita and Anna talked of having to take on non-ESOL provision. Some of this was in the community (that is, not on the main campus of the institution) and some was with other groups of students, particularly the 16-19 cohort. Eleanor observed that '*the people that get the funding are the 16 to 18s'* and so that was where the focus of her workplace was. This was echoed by Monica, talking about her interview for her current job. She said, *'in the interview they were asking me about 16 to 18 year olds and that's the way forward'*.

5.2.2.3. Resources and support

Another theme that recurred across several interviews was the difference in the quality of teaching resources between the main campus of different institutions and the community classes where the ESOL teachers worked. Many ESOL courses have been (and still are) held in local community contexts, those 'hard-to-reach' places that the New Labour Government had identified as a priority in the *Skills for Life* strategy (DfEE, 2001:4) as well as in the *New Approach for Speakers of Other Languages* (DIUS, 2009). The paucity of teaching materials at community venues added to the inequality of provision between ESOL and non-ESOL teaching (which was rarely in community venues). In her interview, Anita was most concerned with this issue and it occupied about a third of her account.

5.2.2.4. Observations and Ofsted

All of the participants showed an awareness of the expectations and demands of their institutions, such as Ofsted compliance and the observation process. Indeed, two reported recent observations of their classes and said how disappointed they had been with them. Both had been given a grade three for the lesson observed (considered merely 'satisfactory' by the Ofsted grading system at the time). As both had received a grade one in previous observations, they were perturbed by the turn of events. Both had asked their line managers to intervene. One was observed again and was given a grade one (the highest of four possible grades). The other had the grade changed to a two, also known as 'good'. This participant, Cherry, said *'it knocked my confidence because I felt somebody was coming in telling me I was not good at my job because that three on the piece of paper, that was then changed to a two because my boss said absolutely categorically not…*' and the other, Jana, stated '*my institution is happy that a non ESOL specialist will give me a one, but an 'ESOL specialist', and I say that in inverted commas… erm, she said it was a three.*' The performativity agenda (Ball, 2003) is evident here; the teachers were made to feel that the grade given to them at the end of a short observation process, by Ofsted and by specialists (or others within their institutions), acted as a badge, representing their professional identity as teachers. It was these two teachers who were talking most about 'unbecoming' (Colley, James and Diment, 2007) ESOL teachers.

5.2.3. Teacher accounts of ESOL teaching and learning: personal perspectives

5.2.3.1 Finding the job rewarding, despite the challenges

In their initial interviews, it was clear that the participants saw their teaching as being of great importance to them and they wanted to share with me how much they enjoyed being ESOL teachers. They relished being with new students, getting to know them and shaping the lessons to support their needs. They felt that being an ESOL teacher was a particularly unique teaching role because of the diverse needs and backgrounds of the student group. But, this diverse student group also placed particular burdens on them as teachers. Jana talked about how she found it particularly rewarding to teach the pre-entry groups, much to her surprise. She felt that she made an impact on these students' lives and indicated how much she liked teaching reading: *'you can see the students' faces light up when they can start, just start to sound out.'* She was concerned with making her teaching fit the needs of her students, ensuring that she was differentiating, completing their ILPs appropriately and setting them achievable targets. She felt this was much harder for her as an ESOL teacher than it was for other sorts of teachers. She said *'if you think about it, an A Level teacher or GCSE … all of their students have roughly the same education… or been through the same educational system'* which was not the case for her students. Overall she felt she was loosening up as a teacher because of her realisation that her ESOL students led complicated lives. Jana's reflections were as follows:

> *I mean, I am always conscious that I can never live the life of any other person, however I have got a deeper understanding now or awareness of factors that might influence why they're coming to the classes in the first place. I think that's kind of, erm been reflected in my practice somewhat.*

All of them talked about their students, relating stories of general achievement or of specific students who gained significantly from studying English. Anna made specific mention of the way that teaching allowed women to have a voice '*to deal with stuff on their own*.' When sharing her weekend practice of taking her children to the park, Monica recounted that this encouraged her students to take **their** children to that park. There was a clear sense of their ESOL practice reaching far beyond the classroom walls into the

worlds of the students, and of these teachers being aware of the significance of building links with life beyond the classroom (Simpson, 2011). They felt a need to support their students and to help them make the best of their lives, not just by passing their exams. Eleanor said exams were not as important to her as hearing students use the language she had taught them and seeing them developing confidence, using English in wider contexts. As Monica put it '*you learn a language (…) and you use it however you can outside and that's what's nice about it.*'

5.2.3.2 Creating and finding resources

Like Jana, both Jasmine and Eleanor talked about their enjoyment of pre-entry provision, but also noted how it put an extra burden on them as they had to create so many teaching and learning resources for this level. Eleanor told me that, for her, it involved '*lots of cutting up, every morning, frantically cutting.'* This point of emphasis on resources that were appropriate and relevant was also made by Cherry and by Liz. Cherry said she used a multi-sensory approach to her teaching, influenced by her specialism in dyslexia, while Liz was keen to transfer her expertise in teaching Deaf students to ensure there were lots of visual resources for her ESOL students. It is clear that these teachers were creating new resources specifically for each student group. This was a particular challenge that made Jana comment on how hard the job of an ESOL teacher was. Jasmine even said '*I look at other subjects now and think 'that would be so easy to go in there with a textbook' but ESOL's not like that*.'

Most of the teachers stated that they thought ESOL was a particular type of teaching – enjoyable but so very varied. The participants commented on the diversity represented in their ESOL classrooms in the West Midlands. Both Cherry and Jana talked of 'spikey profiles' of the students. This is a term that had been used in the *Skills for Life* resources to indicate the different levels of ability in the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening that any one student might have. Jasmine mentioned '*the variety of learners you have, and the complexities they bring with them in terms of language*' while Jana talked of

'the sheer kind of unique … features of ESOL teachers and the things that they have to do because of the diversity of the students.'

5.2.3.3. My job, my values

In addition to their comments about ESOL teaching and learning and their students, the participants shared views about their own approach to their lives as teachers. Anna, for example, talked about how her feminism and her sense of social justice pervaded her role as an ESOL teacher, and vice versa. She said '*my whole sort of mental outlook, my outlook on society is shaped by the fact I'm an ESOL teacher.*' She recounted how she had moved from a corporate world to teach in a college because she felt the public sector was more important to her than the private. She was concerned that the cuts would adversely affect ESOL students by marginalising them, by ghettoising them and leaving them without a voice. None of the others were so overtly political, although Eleanor stated that '*the language is the power'* showing that she was aware she was doing more than just language teaching. She also noted that '*there's the big 'hoo ha' about immigration*' and she was worried about the students who wouldn't be able to find a course. Liz said that she was encouraging the other staff to be involved with the NATECLA protests and Anita referred to the *Action for ESOL* campaign (see chapter 3) to try to reverse the cuts for 2011. Jasmine told me she thought ESOL was more than teaching a language and Jana said, with reference to the drop in ESOL hours for her for the next year '*like I say, politics are just so destructive.*' Cherry was aware of the numbers of people who needed ESOL and how government changes would impact on both the students and teachers. Only one, Monica, did not make explicit reference to the news about ESOL cuts in relation to students. Monica was more focussed on herself and her own career trajectory than on the impact that loss of provision would have on the students themselves. All were personally worried by the cuts and all were preparing for a more varied teaching timetable in the future.

5.2.4 Section summary

Looking back on this first set of interviews conducted when the participants were facing a particularly bleak future of deep ESOL cuts, I have drawn out some of the key themes that related the ESOL policy processes, which were unfolding on different levels, to these teachers' portrayal of their work in ESOL.

Speaking of issues on the national level, these ESOL teachers felt that there was no empathy with the plight of their students. Cuts had to be made and ESOL provision would be part of those cuts. They were keenly aware that the 'golden age' of expanding ESOL provision through *Skills for Life* was over and that a new policy and funding landscape was emerging. With regard to the institutional level, the participants were troubled by the amount of administrative work they were obliged to do, which stole time away from planning good classes. Not one mentioned concern being shown to them in their workplace about the impact of these changes – although two did mention that there would be no forced redundancies in their college (Eleanor and Jana). The teachers were also perturbed by the complex changes taking place in their jobs and the lack of understanding from their institutions that their teaching roles might be more demanding than in other subject areas, simply because of the nature of their students. The participants mentioned the specific complexities of teaching diverse student groups while being personally motivated to support the language needs of those who were not yet proficient in the English language. They also indicated that they found their work as ESOL teachers rewarding despite the challenges. They returned often to concerns about the onus on ESOL teachers to show flexibility and adaptability in the face of change as well as to the challenges ahead of them regarding their enforced diversification in both the subjects they taught and the age groups they were asked to work with. Nevertheless, with regard to the personal and pedagogic level, they talked of satisfaction as teachers of ESOL in seeing their students gaining a better grasp of English.

5.3 Second phase of teacher interviews: ongoing policy changes, practitioner reactions

All but one of the eight interviews in the second phase were carried out in the period from May to July 2013. The earliest, with Eleanor, was in September 2011 and so somewhat out of kilter with the others. All participants were asked to reflect on their first interview, having been sent a transcript by email. They were also asked to comment on changes that had taken place since the last interview had occurred.

5.3.1 Teacher accounts of developments on the national level

5.3.1 Funding cuts continued

During the second set of interviews, concern about funding was a priority for all but two (Cherry and Monica). Some of these concerns referred back to the detrimental impact of the funding cuts announced in November 2010, then retracted in July 2011, as Anna put it *'the day before we started enrolling*'. This haphazard approach to funding was a problem for these teachers and they made mention of this in several ways. Jana was worried about '*the fact that the funding constantly changes… you never quite understand the reasons why and I am not sure they are actually given, anyway. But it all seems very arbitrary'*. Jasmine had been told that there would only be funding for pre-entry students if they were in the under-19 category and noted that the guided learning hours (GLH) for all ESOL courses were rumoured to have been cut in half for the following academic year (September 2013-August 2014). Anita began her interview by saying that she had been settling '*into the new pattern of fees being charged for some ESOL students'*. She explored the impact of the change in fees and of the fee remissions for those in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance. As in her first interview, Anita was bothered by the idea that some of her students in receipt of fee had no intention of getting a job. She also told me that there were many students coming for courses at her college and some were paying because they needed to pass the qualification to allow them to obtain citizenship. At this time, June 2013, those applying for British citizenship needed to have an English language qualification at least at Entry 3, now relabelled B1 within the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Home Office 2017). Liz's college had just been given a poor Ofsted rating and she felt vulnerable. She said that there '*was talk about*

them having one big college' hinting that the college and the adult education services in her district might be pushed to merge. She thought that the college might not continue to exist, and said *'everybody's feeling the dread for September.'*

5.3.1.2 Ofsted expectations: differing views

Ofsted was an issue for Anita and Jana, as well as for Liz. All three of them were teaching in colleges where there had been an Ofsted inspection since their first interviews in 2011. They expressed contrasting views about Ofsted inspections. Anita felt that an Ofsted visit was a stressful time, but that it had its good points: '*you get ready for everything, you bring everything up to standard and all that. Things are, things are all good and shiny.'* She had not been observed herself in that inspection. Nor had Jana been observed in **her** institution's Ofsted inspection, but she took a different view about Ofsted inspections, saying that *'it doesn't motivate. I think it has a really, really detrimental effect on teachers as practitioners…to me it just seems pointless.'* Illsley and Waller (2017:481) have commented on the impact of the increase in policy levers in colleges, and they argue that this has 'resulted in a highly stressful working environment where the focus shifts from teaching and learning to statistical monitoring, funding and targets.' Jana was feeling this stress and in much of her second interview she focused on her disillusionment with the current state of teaching in colleges in England.

5.3.1.3 Functional Skills

Two of the participants, Anna and Cherry, referred to the introduction of the Functional Skills exams for ESOL students (see chapter 3) - but they had different perspectives on this. Anna asked why ESOL, nationally, had not adopted Functional Skills wholeheartedly. She was concerned that there were, as yet, no new ESOL exams, as had been promised in December 2012 and so her institution had had to extend the life of the old *Skills for Life* exams while she wanted to move to the new Functional Skills English ones. She thought that the functional aspect of this new exam was in harmony with the approach that ESOL had been taking for a long time and so was happy to pilot the Functional Skills qualifications with the ESOL student cohort the following year. In contrast, Cherry felt

that the Functional Skills qualifications were absolutely not for ESOL. Indeed, this policy move had been one of the reasons for her decision to cease teaching ESOL. She felt her decision was based on her principles: students who had achieved level 2 ESOL with her were being put into a level 1 English Functional Skills class which she felt was most inappropriate. She said Functional Skills were for '*native English speakers'* and was quite forceful about this. Cherry was exercising agency at this point in her career and decided she would rather stop teaching ESOL than prepare students for what she felt was an inappropriate exam. Jana said this directly, too: '*I'm not, sort of prepared to just play a ridiculous game which the government seems to want us to do.'* Both Cherry and Jana were on trajectories out of teaching ESOL and this acknowledgement of not 'playing the game' was, for both, an important factor.

5.3.2 Teacher accounts of developments on the institutional level

5.3.2.1 Changes to qualifications offered to ESOL students

Participants had plenty to say regarding the changes in their own institutions. There were several themes that emerged. Take, for example, the courses that were available for students - courses that they had to teach. Ofsted practices and the link to their institution's own observation policies were also a concern as were the expectations of their employers. Change and challenge were words uttered by most of the eight participants with regard to some aspect of their work. At an institutional level, as well as a national one, the issue of the adoption of Functional Skills qualifications for ESOL students was a recurring theme. As seen earlier, Anna and Cherry had very different ideas about the efficacy of using the English Functional Skills to replace the *Skills for Life* ESOL-specific courses, but the changes in funding, enacted in 2011, meant that by 2013 several other colleges had altered their ESOL provision to follow the funding. Both Eleanor and Jasmine were teaching maths (numeracy) for ESOL students. Neither of them actually wanted to do this. Eleanor stated that her college had just '*changed the courses from ESOL to literacy and numeracy, 'cause that's free'*. She was just about to begin teaching maths (her interview was in September, the start of the English academic year). She said *'I'm a bit mm about the maths, but I am going to take it week by week and, you know... try to*

make it sort of fun.' She was not happy about the fact that she had not been given any support by her college with regard to this new subject. *'It would have been nice to get some training, you know, general topics that you need to teach and things like that...'* but she had been forced to do her own research and planning. Jasmine also felt at odds with this new subject area. She said *'it's difficult for me to teach numeracy cos I'm not a maths person'* and laughed. There was little support for her, too, from her college and she only really had help from her peers: *'we were just kind of told to teach it.'* For her, one of the biggest issues in teaching numeracy was that many of the students in her classes had much better numeracy skills than she did, some even had degrees and these students *'they are really on the ball. They know numeracy from, you know, their own countries'.* She said that she felt *'really on edge'* when the next numeracy class was coming up.

5.3.2.1 Changes to everyday practices – and Ofsted monitoring

Uncertainties about the observation process were expressed in this set of interviews – whether it was as part of the national Ofsted monitoring process or as part of institutional practices (driven, largely, by Ofsted). Ofsted-related worries have already been explored in the previous section, but in their second interviews Anita, Jasmine and Jana talked about internal observations, too. Anita was anxious about the unannounced observations that her institution was using. This meant that she was unable to be seen at her well-prepared best. She felt that just letting staff know which week they could expect observations would be helpful: *'I would really appreciate it if there is an indication of when people are going to come and observe you, at least a week.'* Anita took the view that there were other ways of gathering evidence about a teacher's ability to teach and felt that the process could *'be demoralising, it can crush your confidence. So that's why I feel uncomfortable. But I can't do anything about it.'* Jasmine said *'we've had the internal inspections again.'* Jasmine was pleased that she had had good feedback. The words she used were *'it is really encouraging to know that I am on the right track and I am not doing something really crazy.'* Although this sounds as if she was reporting a positive experience, it does highlight a lack of trust between institution and employee as Jasmine felt uncertain about what she was supposed to be doing as a teacher.

Jasmine also talked about the new marking policy her institution had brought in and noted how *'quality take work, student work, marked work from us… they give you feedback on your marking'*. This notion of 'quality' as a concrete administrative entity indexes the nature of the relationship between staff and management. Jasmine used this term as shorthand to refer to the quality assurance team, evident in many colleges. Jasmine's college policy of surveying teachers' marking seemed to be a direct response to Ofsted. In November 2016 the *Times Educational Supplement* reported that Ofsted were still commenting on marking schemes despite having been told not to by their national director (Busby, 2016). It would seem that, in a bid to establish a practice that Ofsted could praise, Jasmine's college was adopting an auditable marking policy process. Like Jasmine, Jana felt the overall observation and monitoring process in her college was flawed, although she thought that her own institution was relatively supportive of teachers and better able to make good judgements than outsiders (such as Ofsted inspectors or expert consultants). She said *'every time we get external people, you just, everything's inconsistent.'*

Jana and Monica talked explicitly about the challenges of perpetual change, as did Eleanor and Jasmine. Monica noted *'the college changes things every year and they are still changing it for next year. And I do feel I would like a comfort blanket, just for one year'.* Anna talked of the shift in her institution in terms of the student groups. They could no longer teach asylum seekers, due to funding changes, but they had been approached by the Job Centre Plus to teach pre-entry ESOL students. She said that this meant they now had very different students in their centres. *'It's been great actually, because they are a different… kettle of fish to the normal ESOL learners. Lots and lots of Czechs and Slovaks. That's the most [common] nationality. Gypsies... Romany families.'*

5.3.2.1 New location, new challenges – but fewer teaching staff

Finally, there were two institutions that had imposed physical moves on their staff. In Liz's institution this was due to finances and the prohibitive cost of keeping on a local community venue that had been much loved by the ESOL staff. She said *'it is far too*

expensive, there are no ifs and maybes, we've held on to it long enough.' Although there was concern that students might not go to the new venue for ESOL, Liz was confident they would. She had told her management team '*look, they've travelled from Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, you name it. Do you really think they can't find their way to [the new site]!'* Jasmine's institution had moved to a brand new building. Although she had some praise for the modern, clean building, there were serious issues of space. *'For me, the main problem is teaching in the joint classes. So, two classes going on in one room'.* This caused the staff much stress, including problems with projecting their voices, having to strain to get their students to hear them above the noise of the other class. She said, *'I'm kind of almost hushing the students 'oh don't talk too loud'. And it's a language class. I should be encouraging them to talk.'* As the classes that shared the rooms were not just ESOL, this meant that there were issues for the ESOL students. Jasmine pointed out that the '*engineering students have taken the mick out of our ESOL students'.*

Anna, Liz and Monica all talked about the reduction in staff over the last few years. Monica said *'we have kind of got used to people going and I suppose we fill the void in, so to speak'.* Her department had gone from nine to three ESOL staff while Anna's had gone from fifteen or sixteen to only four full timers. Liz's department of ESOL had shrunk from twenty two to four full-time and three half-time teachers. Liz was also concerned about more redundancies at her college coming in September and Eleanor told me that the college voluntary redundancy scheme was still available. Jasmine indicated that for her *'the jobs situation has kind of settled now. Although we know there are not a lot of jobs out there, our current one is safe'*

5.3.3 Teacher accounts of ESOL teaching and learning: personal perspectives

5.3.3.1 Personal reflections on lived experiences at work: past and present

For many of the participants, this was the area they talked about most in their second interview. Some of them were 'filling me in' on aspects of their lives – something I refer to in the methodology chapter in terms of interviewing known participants. Others were sharing with me the impact of changes in their working conditions and revealing more

about their own perceptions of being an ESOL specialist. Three of the participants remarked on how the first interview had made them think about themselves and their jobs. Anna said she thought she had been depressed at the time of the first interview because she thought they would all lose their jobs by the end of the year. Monica indicated that she had really enjoyed the chance to reflect on her teaching journey *'I suppose it was good for me to kind of vocalise it.'* Eleanor said it had made her think differently. She said that she liked *'helping people empower themselves. … Helping them, you know, with the English language is giving them the language, giving them the power to improve their lives and their circumstances.'* She said that she had not realised that she was driven by a commitment to social justice until she started the interviews. *'It must have been a subconscious thing. Then… it's not now.'* Cherry, too, said she was very unhappy about the changes to Functional Skills for ESOL students and that she was *'very morally driven.'* Cherry also felt that she cared very much about her students, sometimes too much, sometimes to her own detriment.

5.3.3.2 Paperwork and work-life balance

Many felt they were time-poor and referred, as in interview one, to the paperwork and administrative tasks they needed to do. Anita mentioned *'the mounting paperwork'* and Anna said that *'I wish I had more time for that, to read more and do more around my subject.'* Cherry talked about there being less paperwork as a specialist dyslexia support teacher than when teaching a class of 20 ESOL students and Jasmine stated that she felt she had more time now she wasn't teaching pre-entry level students. All participants referred to sources of stress in teaching ESOL. Jana said *'I do wonder, sometimes… there must be easier ways to earn a living,'* while Monica wanted *'a lazy year'* after the stressful one she had just experienced. For her, much of the stress had been around her role as maths GCSE coordinator because, as she said, *'it has been frustrating that I haven't got the maths knowledge'.* Jasmine and Eleanor were teaching maths, although neither wanted to. Eleanor said *'I do hate maths and as soon as it is mentioned I have a mental block.'* It seems that the shortage of maths teachers brought about by the introduction of Study Programmes in 2012 (DfE, 2012), which mandated that all 16-19 year olds must be

taught maths and English (see chapter 3), had coincided with the need for ESOL teachers to diversify. This led many colleges to shift maths teaching to those who were not specialists in maths, including these ESOL teachers.

5.3.3.3 My future in ESOL – gaols and aspirations

Participants also talked about their own personal goals. For Anna, a long term goal was to complete an MA and perhaps teach abroad. Jana had started her degree and was enjoying it, thinking that it might lead to the possibility of teaching French at her college as she was studying languages as part of the degree. Anita talked about her just-missed opportunity for promotion and how this might be something she could pursue more diligently once she had fewer childcare considerations. Cherry, already studying for an MA, considered the possibility of a doctorate in the future, although she shared with me her reservations about taking on such a task.

Changing approaches to their teaching were discussed, too. Anita revealed that the college's CPD around 'accelerated learning' had influenced her. While she felt that she could not sustain the whole range of activities and strategies the course had recommended – such as bringing in cupcakes at each lesson - she did feel that the use of music and videos had supported the learning of her students. She said that the course had *'made me more aware of the different strategies you can use in the classroom.'* At the same time it also required *'extensive hours of preparation for each lesson,'* hours which she did not have. Cherry had been learning about neuroscience and education, leading her to state *'I think multi-sensory teaching is definitely where it is going.'* Both Monica and Jasmine referred to the out-of-college trips they had organised for students. They felt that these trips were of great value and encouraged the students to build their confidence. Monica was so keen on the outcomes of her latest trip that she was considering how to extend her student excursions into the college breaks. *'They don't get out in the holidays and we were saying, if we could just meet up at the local park and all just have like a massive picnic.'* She was even saying that she would do this in her own free time.

5.3.4 Section summary

In phase two, most participants felt a little more settled regarding their job, though they were still anxious about the constant changes they faced as ESOL teachers. They were concerned about the impact of the continued funding cuts and the imposition of fees for some of their students. They referred to the process of observation – both by Ofsted and internally – and how this affected them. Ofsted was represented as a driver in both national and institutional change. There was a feeling for some that they were not trusted as teachers, by the government or by their own institutions. This was evident in the constantly increasing monitoring and in the paperwork that they had to produce. Changes in funding had also brought about changes in the qualifications on offer to ESOL students. All participants mentioned this in one way or another. The use of English Functional Skills instead of specific ESOL qualifications was a further issue of significance, as was the introduction of maths Functional Skills to ESOL students. The participants were teaching courses leading to qualifications in both English and maths with little support from their institutions to manage the change. There were also differences in the student cohort that they were teaching: for some, this meant younger students and, for others, it meant no more pre-entry students as such students were seen as not progressing fast enough for the funding to be worthwhile. Finally, there was evidence that several of the participants had taken the chance offered by the reading of the transcripts of their first interview to reflect on and assess their work as teachers, examining their motives for teaching ESOL and thinking about their futures.

5.4. Third phase of teacher interviews: adjusting to the new normal

The time lapse between phase two and phase three was over 3 years – over 4 for one of the participants. This third phase was conducted in June and July 2016. By this time, only four of the original eight participants were available for interview. Two of the eight had stopped teaching ESOL altogether – Liz had retired and Cherry had moved into teaching in higher education, mostly supporting dyslexic students. I was not able to make contact with Monica or Jana. Of the remaining four, two were pregnant at the time of recording their third interviews and were set to be on maternity leave for the next academic year,

with return to their ESOL jobs afterwards. Another had mostly moved over to management and the fourth participant was still teaching ESOL part-time. About five years had gone by between the initial and the final set of interviews, and this was remarked upon at the start of each interview. All participants had been asked in the first interview where they thought they might be in 5 years' time and so it was pertinent to review their predictions.

At her first interview, Anna had anticipated that she would be involved in more teacher education courses and had also been thinking of teaching abroad. She was, in fact, doing the former, but was not quite ready to teach abroad. In 2011, Anita had expected to still be working part time hours but that she would *'be more experienced and be more organised, handle it better.'* She had also thought that she might be doing some managerial work, too. In this final interview she indicated that she was pleased she was not doing any management duties. In her first interview she had said '*I would not like to give up teaching. I enjoy it very much.'* Indeed, five years later she was still teaching. Eleanor had said that in five years she could see herself '*doing the same thing… maybe not ESOL but hopefully doing something within English but still teaching.'* She *was* still teaching ESOL five years later and had not moved into management, something she had stated she really did not want to do. Finally, Jasmine had said, at her first interview '*Five years' time? I hope I am still teaching ESOL, I really do.'* And, indeed, she was. So, they all were doing what they had hoped to be doing and still remained in ESOL.

5.4.1 Teacher accounts of developments on the national level

5.4.1.1 Brexit, Prevent and British Values

The timing of these third interviews was significant in the history of the UK with the initiation of the Brexit process, discussed in chapter 3. This national political development was a key topic in all four interviews, though more in some than others. Anna had predicted that the UK might vote to come out of the European Union back in her second interview. On being reminded of this she declared *'Did I predict that?… Wow! God I'm good, aren't I?'* She and Anita were particularly concerned about Brexit and about how it

would change the landscape of ESOL. Both Jasmine and Eleanor talked about Brexit in relation to their teaching and both had used the opportunity to talk about politics in their classes. Eleanor said *'I never thought I'd do politics and political stuff you know,'* and went on to explain how she had shown them how to register to vote online. She said *'And then they wanted to vote after that.'* When asked about some 'Save ESOL' posters that were displayed in her classroom, Jasmine said that she and her colleagues had assisted the students to write letters to their MPs. She noted *'a lot of students don't know what's going on politically, they come to class, they have their lesson and they go home. So it was nice to involve them in what's going on.'*

Anita and Eleanor talked about the 'Prevent agenda' and the link to 'British values', both of these being initiatives that had been prioritised by Ofsted (Ofsted, 2016) in inspections of colleges (see chapter 3). Anita said her college was '*starting to make it priority now'* and that all staff had received training about it. She also stated that she often had to look at students' passports to see if they were eligible for fee remission and had the 'right to remain'. This policy of checking passports to see if students had the right sort of visa or passport to have access to public funding had the effect of positioning teachers as border guards. Indeed, in November 2016 on her parliamentary website, Diane Abbott, MP for Hackney, said just this. Her words were as follows: 'This government also expects them [teachers] to act as border guards' (Abbot, 2016). Whilst on the face of it, this is just a check on eligibility, it can also be seen as an extension of the State, using teachers as gate keepers to exclude those who are not entitled to free ESOL provision. This checking of status was a great concern for Anita in this third interview. While national policy demanded that educational establishments should be more rigorous in deciding who could have access to free education, these establishments were placing this burden on the teachers rather than on the administrators. For Anita, the effect of this policy process was heightened as her college had moved the local guidance team from her site to be centrally located in the college's main campus. This meant that she found it difficult to ascertain which students she could enrol and which she could not.

5.4.1.2 Funding, fees and different students

Issues related to fee paying or fee remission for ESOL students were also brought up by other participants. Evidence was needed to determine whether a student was eligible for fee remission and who had to pay. As Anna explained *'you know if they're on benefits they'll get fees remitted, and if not they'll have to pay.'* This issue of fee remission was bound up with course funding; some courses were free because they attracted full funding. Regarding the new policy related to English Functional Skills for ESOL students, Eleanor said, *'it was a way of, I think, getting the funding and the hours and stuff like that.'* Jasmine made a similar observation about the use of maths Functional Skills with ESOL students *'I think they want to continue that because they get a lot of funding from the Functional Skills Numeracy.'* The participants in the study were wary of this reliance on Functional Skills funding as it led to some inappropriate use of these qualifications for ESOL learners. This point is explored more in the next section regarding institutional changes.

All participants who were interviewed a third time mentioned the student groups they were working with, identifying the most common nations of origin for those present in their ESOL classes. Each participant worked in a different locality and so the differences were evident across the West Midlands, based on what the participants reported, with Birmingham having more new arrivals from Eritrea and Bangladesh and fewer new eastern Europeans. Wolverhampton had Sudanese, Somali, Iraqi, Kurdish, Indian, Pakistani and Eastern European students. West Bromwich had Romanians and Slovakians as well as students of Indian sub-continental origin coming to the UK via countries in continental Europe.

5.4.1.3 Continued cuts to funding

Three of the four participants mentioned the cuts that had affected the adult education budget in 2016 impacting directly on ESOL (which had been largely adult provision). Anna mourned the loss of their Job Centre Plus contract just a few weeks before the start of the previous academic year. In her words '*we lost all the funding for that, the government cut*

the lot… just about this time last year actually, actually it was probably today last year.' This was a moment that had been clearly etched in her memory. Anita, too, talked of this same event. For her college, the '*job centre used to send batches of learners on Job Seeker's Allowance to go… Eastern Europeans especially… to go and acquire English skills so that then they could find jobs. And then suddenly it stopped, mid last year the funding got cut drastically.*' Jasmine mentioned that for her it had been '*a really erratic year… there have been lots of changes'* many of which she felt were due to the cuts in adult education funding, referring to the significant reduction in funding across the FE sector. Howse (2015) reported that the *Association of Colleges* was warning that '190,000 adult education places will go next year, as funding is cut by 24%.' The 24% cut was on top of previous cuts to the adult education budget in the previous Coalition Government (see chapter 3). These were only the first of the cuts to come from the newly elected, wholly Conservative Government of 2015.

5.4.2 Teacher accounts of developments on the institutional level

5.4.2.1 Qualifications offered to ESOL students

A major preoccupation for the participants related to the type of qualifications that their institutions were offering to ESOL students. There had been considerable national debate about the reform of GCSEs. There had also been discussion at a national level about the development of Functional Skills for English and maths (see chapter 3) but there had not been a comparable development of the qualifications for ESOL students. Indeed, many of the qualifications on offer for ESOL still bore the title *Skills for Life*, the nomenclature of the New Labour Government of 1997-2010.

In these third interviews, all participants made mention of the qualifications available to their ESOL learners. Anna pointed out that her college had made several changes in the awards offered to ESOL learners over the past few years, trying to find the ones that were the best fit. She reported that in the past year her college had tried some new English Awards (from Pearson) for reading and writing, but, referring to a decision made by her college, she said '*next year we'll be going back to ESOL.'* She had also been keen, in

interview two, to try Functional Skills with the ESOL students. After a pilot year, these were not being adopted. For Anna, there were two flaws in the use of Functional Skills for ESOL. These were, *'the inappropriacy of the qualification. And of course with Functional Skills, if you don't get it all you don't get anything.'* The students in Anna's college had done well on the Speaking, Listening and Reading element of the exams, but not on the Writing. So, in effect, at the end of their hard work the students did not have a full qualification. From the start of the following academic year, the college would be offering all *Skills for Life* ESOL qualifications through Ascentis, an awarding body which allowed a more tailored approach to assessments of each skill area. Anita said that her college was also adopting the Ascentis awards. This was, she said, *'because in the past few years Reading and Writing results have not been very good or as good as they needed to be.'* This awarding board had advantages that attracted both Anna's and Anita's colleges. Ascentis did not externally assess the actual exams taken but, instead, moderated the results, allowing the college much more flexibility in managing the assessment regime. As Anita said of the teachers using this award *'they're able to train their learners accordingly'.* This had brought about *'very significant improvement in results.'*

This theme of the need for students to pass exams was also raised by Eleanor. She was concerned about the awarding body that her college used (though she did not state what it was). She felt that it was *'just a really cheap nasty exam'* and that it encouraged teachers to pass their students. She added to her initial comment as follows: *'you know of teachers who have got 100% success rates and pass rates but you know that they've taught to the exam.'* Teaching to the test has been an issue in educational circles in the England in research and practice (Coffield and Williamson, 2011; Biesta, 2010) for several decades. Eleanor felt that she had to make detailed records of any student who did not pass. She also felt that she had to inform her line manager so she was '*covered'* in case of questioning about her success rates. She emphasised this saying '*They have to pass, everybody has to pass.*' With these words she was indicating the wider funding regime. The success rate of the student group defines the funding that a college gets.

5.4.2.2. Mergers and managers

In addition to the issues relating to qualifications for ESOL students and pass rates, other areas of institutional change had affected the participants involved in this third phase of the study. For two participants, the changes included mergers with other colleges. One participant reported that her college had recently taken steps to become private and she was concerned about the impact that this would have on her job. For example, there would be a new imperative for success rates to be high so as to maintain funding. Another participant had specific issues with the design of the teaching space in her college. These had already been a feature of her second interview and she felt that by the time of the third interview, although things were better, the teaching spaces were still a concern for her. She said *'I don't even know how I managed for 3 years teaching like that… Three years without a wall'*.

Three of the four participants made mention of managerial control and surveillance by their managers and noted that this affected them as teachers. Eleanor spoke about the merger between her college and another college and remarked that the new culture was *'very heavy on paperwork procedures, charts and, you know, very sort of prescriptive.'* She added that, from a teacher's perspective, this '*doesn't leave any room for you.*' Another indicated that she experienced increased stress knowing that the manager could come unannounced into her classroom. She said '*the manager can just walk about, 'learning walks' they used to say. And all managers walk about.'* A third participant mentioned a particularly controversial regulation. She recounted that: '*At one point top management had come out with some silly rule that teachers shouldn't be sitting down. So if you were seen to be sitting down you're obviously not teaching.*' This was pertinent for her as there were many classrooms with glass walls in her college, so managers could simply look in. Ball (2003:219) writes about 'new forms of very immediate surveillance.' He also observes that such constant scrutiny makes us 'become ontologically insecure: unsure whether we are doing enough, doing the right thing, doing as much as others, or as well as others, constantly looking to improve, to be better, to be excellent' (2003:220).

5.4.3 Teacher accounts of ESOL teaching and learning: personal perspectives

5.4.3.1 Growing and adjusting – keeping a job

As indicated earlier, the final interviews were with four teachers who had managed to remain teachers of ESOL, despite continued uncertainty and despite concerns that there might not be sufficient student numbers for them to be able to continue. They were feeling the cold winds of Brexit and were still concerned about their future. In these interviews they had less to say about their students, although they did talk about their professional development as teachers. Anita felt that her college's focus on 'accelerated learning' a few years prior to the third interview had helped her develop a teaching approach. She focused especially on *'how to include all the sensory perceptions in the class.'* She indicated that she used *'quite a lot of mnemonics and TEFL techniques as to how to remember vocabulary, spellings and usage of certain words and pronunciation, all that… it works. And sometimes it causes a lot of humour in the class and good fun.'* Anita continued to be concerned that some of her students, who received free courses because they were on Job Seekers Allowance, were not really looking for employment. In her words '*most people who are on Job Seekers who don't have any intention of seeking a job, do you know what I mean? It really gets to me, you know. But it's the system not the people themselves.'* She remarked that this was a real contradiction for her and for ESOL, because they all needed these students to run ESOL classes.

Jasmine felt that she had grown considerably as a teacher over the course of the interviews. She said *'so I've realised that actually, do you know what, a lot of people don't know what they're doing!'* Somehow, this realisation had made her feel better and she felt more confident. She also pointed out that she had learnt a lot by working across four different departments. Jasmine had not really enjoyed working with the (non-ESOL) Functional Skills students over the past year, but she did comment that *'it's taught me to stay calm and not get too involved, that's what it's done.'* In effect, she could see that this had some value in helping her to maintain some critical distance. She had enjoyed teaching GCSE, but was doubtful about whether she would do so again as the college had over recruited staff in that area.

Eleanor was getting to use technology more in her classrooms. She was happy with her teaching and said *'I'm not bored with it and I'm still learning things and still brushing up on my skills and using things that I didn't use before.'* Anita, too, was using the smartboard in her teaching, particularly when she was introducing quizzes and games, and was enjoying this new tool for her teaching.

5.4.3.2 Taking time out – work life balance

Finally, I turn to the two who were going on maternity leave. Jasmine speculated that she might not return to teaching. She said, unequivocally '*I don't think teaching is made for parents.'* She thought that she might come back from maternity leave and cut her hours or even *'just change jobs and do something in administration, PA [work] or something.'* Eleanor said *'I want to keep my options open. I don't want to but if I have to end up teaching in schools…'* But she did say that she was going to study for GCSE maths even though she hated maths. Both wanted to continue to teach ESOL but were somewhat unsure of the future, especially how they would fit the demands of their ESOL teaching work alongside their changing family lives.

5.4.4 Section summary

The attrition rate here is worth noting. I was able to interview four of the original eight participants. Three of the eight had left ESOL teaching and one was uncontactable (though still teaching ESOL). For those remaining, their concerns still focused on a few key topics. The funding and fees issues were still relevant. In this last phase of interviews, the policies associated with the Prevent duty and the associated embedding of British values in all classes were new issues. The participants felt that orientating learners to life in Britain, such as required by the promotion of British values, was already something they did as ESOL teachers as they were ever conscious of the diversity of their student population. There were still serious concerns about the use of non-ESOL qualifications for ESOL students and about the value of including maths as part of an ESOL programme. In addition, they mentioned the shrinkage of their ESOL departments over the 5 years of the interviews. Looking to the future, the teacher participants were concerned about the

impact of Brexit on them, and ESOL. The two who were pregnant wondered if teaching ESOL, with all its challenges and changes, was compatible with family life and so were unsure of their return to teaching after their maternity leave, even though they enjoyed it so much.

Having analysed the reoccurring themes from the three sets of interviews, in the next chapter I focus on specific ‘small stories’ (Bamberg 1997, 2006, Georgakopoulou, 2014) narrated by three of the participants. I use Barkhuizen’s (2010) three level approach to positioning analysis (detailed in chapter 4) which allows for a more nuanced examination of the accounts of the consequences of policy changes as narrated by three of the participants in their conversations with me and for more in-depth insights into the agentive ways in which the different teachers interpreted and appropriated the policy changes.

CHAPTER SIX: CONSTRUCTING PROFESSIONAL SELVES IN NEW TIMES: ESOL TEACHERS' NARRATIVES

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I take a close look at the ways in which the teachers in this study talked about and represented their lived experiences as ESOL practitioners, at different points in time, in relation to the changing policy landscape around them. In doing so, I move to a more fine-grained, linguistic approach to the data and focus on the co-construction of the teachers' narratives as they talked with me. I have chosen three examples of 'small stories' which are 'discursively constructed accounts of identity making' (Barkhuizen, 2010: 283) and can illuminate the way that everyday interactions co-construct ways of being and representing selfhood in the world (see chapter 4). Such stories also reveal the ways in which identity-making shifts as the world around us changes, and how we agentively position ourselves in relation to those changes, here policy changes. I use the three level approach used by Barkhuizen (2010) as presented in chapter 4. To recap, the first level concerns the characters and the content of the story, while the second level considers the positioning of the narrator within the interaction. The third level views the ways the narrator positions themselves vis-à-vis the wider normative discourses of the context.

Koven noted that 'stories are always told in some social context' (2002:176). The three stories here were told in the context set out in chapter 3. This was a context, shaped by the increasing bureaucratisation of ESOL teaching, where national policies regarding the process of observation monitored by Ofsted had the potential to drive good teachers into leaving the profession; where huge reductions in educational funding for specific groups of students had already led to teachers being compelled to teach subjects that they were not confident to teach and where reduced or limited access to administrative staff had led teachers to take on gate-keeping roles regarding eligibility of students for funded ESOL provision. The use of narrative analysis, specifically positioning analysis, has allowed me some insight into the ways that these three ESOL teachers see their everyday teaching practices and their working lives being affected by policy changes beyond their control.

The first extract is from the initial interview with Jana in June 2011. Her story illustrates how she, as an ESOL teacher, reacted to the national agenda of change around observations, driven by Ofsted. The second extract is from the second interview with Jasmine (in May 2013) where she related her experiences of teaching numeracy, a subject she was reluctant to teach. This reveals how she was adapting to change at an institutional level. The third extract is from the third and last interview with Anita in July 2016. In it she narrated the changes she had encountered in her role as teacher, and how her work-life balance had shifted as a result of her college changing the availability of support staff at her main teaching building. This had led to her taking on more admissions work, a responsibility for which she felt under-prepared.

6.2 Jana's narrative about an Ofsted-driven observation: asserting her voice

In this rather long extract, which lasted over five minutes, Jana recounted the experience of the process of teacher observation. She referred to issues on the national, institutional and personal level, linking these together in her narrative. It was a powerful small story which illustrated the interweaving of the impact of language education policy on different levels and the way in which ESOL teachers such as Jana are positioned by policy shifts. The policy decision to mandate regular inspection visits by Ofsted has meant that many colleges prepare for these visits through the observation of teaching – whether through internal observations or by employing outside consultants to provide 'mocksteds' (mock Ofsted inspections). This is Jana's story.

1. ***Jana:*** The one area that I think you know I have an issue with but again I don't
2. really know what the institution could do about it, if anything, because it's
3. the observation process, erm, because they are bound, as I say, to
4. produce figures, and grades, numbers. Well, that's the impression I have
5. been **given** because I thought it all tied up with Ofsted ultimately. So we
6. had grading, but my recent experience where I was graded a three for a
7. lesson and quite frankly I argued my case. I felt I **was** completely justified
8. in saying that it was a two. I then had to go through the whole process of
9. being re-observed and I was given a **one**. The first grade was given by an
10. external ESOL consultant [sighs] which I should probably stop there, you

11. know, but the second one was done, the re-observation was done by
12. someone who is **not** an ESOL consultant. Therefore, I think that just raises
13. quite a few questions because what does that say? My institution is happy
14. that a non ESOL specialist will give me a one… but an “ESOL specialist”,
15. and I say that in inverted commas… erm, she said it was a three and I
16. know personally that it was not a three, but I do believe I was penalised for
17. the fact that it was in the outreach class with no IT equipment erm, so
18. that’s beyond my control. So I think that is just incredible that any, that
19. anybody should be, erm, kind of assessed in their job, based on numbers
20. and based on things that are beyond their control. I cannot believe that
21. that’s actually legal, first of all. I can’t believe that that’s acceptable. And
22. what I **did** find when I tried to protest to my institution and say that I wanted
23. to make a complaint I was very much dissuaded from doing it and then but
24. I was quite adamant and I was told, ‘well if it will make you feel happier you
25. can, but, I have to say that it won’t change the grade and this person’s
26. already gone for the day and she won’t be...’ so I just thought, basically,
27. the whole thing, for want of a better word, is farcical. You know, because
28. now people are saying to me ‘ok, you were re-observed, that’s fantastic,
29. you got a grade one.’ Well a) it was from, no disrespect to him, I was just
30. glad I hadn’t got to be re-observed again… but to give me a one, what
31. does that mean? It means **nothing**, because a) he is not an ESOL
32. specialist, ok, but b) it’s all so subjective.
33. ***CL:*** It **is** subjective, yeah.
34. ***Jana*:** and I think, just think, I know you can’t make it completely objective,
35. the process, but, I just think the whole grading system’s wrong and, you
36. know, wouldn’t it be… they have the audacity to say it is a **supportive**
37. process… it’s nothing like. It just sounds like it’s punitive … because it’s
38. basically… It seems like they, you know, to catch people out and you
39. have to prove yourself as a teacher as well and I think at what
40. point do you ever become qualified? Well you don’t as far as I’m
41. concerned, if you are going to be graded. You know, you get grades…
42. erm, when you’re sort of going through your, your formative years in
43. education and so on, erm, to kind of show, show what level you are and
44. where you can progress but I think when you’ve actually been told that
45. ‘you’re ok we’ll give you this contract and you are a teacher’ why am
46. I still being graded? Why am I not being… observed by all means
47. because peer observations are fantastic, but, you know, and if there was a
48. real problem then, yes, just keep going through the channels of
49. supporting and suggesting, but that is just completely destructive to
50. people’s con, erm, confidence and also it’s just made me furious…
51. ***CL:*** I bet.
52. ***Jana:*** and it’s made me have absolutely no respect for the observation system.
53. Erm, but as I say, even though I have expressed that to my institution, it’s
54. not going to change because, that’s what I say, they’re kind of, they’re
55. between a rock and hard place and they’re not going to rock the boat.

56. And so, another reason why I shouldn't be in it! Be in the job. It's just…
57. unfortunate when big things like this are coming through then, you know?

Table 6.2: Extract from Jana's first interview

6.2.1 *The characters and the content of Jana's account of an Ofsted-driven observation (Barkhuizen's level 1)*

Eight distinct social actors were represented in this extract. The first was Jana herself, through her use of 'I' (me/my). There were two other key individuals - the ESOL consultant who observed her (line 10), and the second observer (line 12 –'*someone who is* ***not*** *an ESOL consultant*'). Other actors in the story were less visible. They included the senior management in her institution (in line 13 she said, '*my institution is happy'* and in line 22 she said *'I tried to protest to my institution'*); and a representative of her institution who told her that her protest won't make any difference (lines 24-26). Jana represented this through reported speech – a feature I will return to later. She also referred to her peers (and their observations of her - line 47) and to 'people'. These 'people' are other teachers (lines 28, 38 and 50), though perhaps not just her peers, but teachers in general. The eighth 'actor' in the story is Ofsted which she only referred to directly in line 5, but which pervaded the story as the instigator of the observation process.

The main event in this extract was an observation of Jana's teaching that was undertaken by a specialist observer who gave her a grade three. As was seen in chapter 3, a grade three is a failing grade for Ofsted purposes and many institutions have adverse reactions to any teacher receiving it. Jana recounted the negative grading and the consequences - a second observation by an internal college observer. In her storying of this event, Jana referred to the external observer in three ways: as '*an external ESOL consultant'* (line 10); an '*ESOL specialist*' (line 14) and as '*this perso*n' (line 25). Initially, Jana made references the specialised nature of the observer's position, as someone who shared a background in ESOL. But her second reference signified her attitude to the consultant when she added, '*and I say that in inverted comas'* showing that she was problematising the notion that this observer **was** a specialist. Indeed, there were hints of this attitude in her first

mention of the observer when Jana said, '*I should probably stop there'* which was preceded by a sigh, a marker of her exasperation. Hoey (2013:63) states that, 'a sigh is put 'out there' in order that others may perceive it and retroactively reconstitute its meaning in its contextualized environment.' Jana was questioning the judgement of the observer, stating that the reason for the poor grade was due to the circumstances in which she found herself. The observation was carried out in a community setting which did not have any technology - '*no IT equipment'* in line 17 - which was nothing to do with Jana's teaching. This event was followed by Jana's protest to her institution, then being given a grade one after the next (internal) observation. All this led Jana to conclude that she should not be in teaching. As she put it, this was '*another reason why I shouldn't be in it*' (line 56). Here Jana indexed the wider audit culture inherent in most colleges, in her words '*big things like this'* in line 57. She explicitly stated that she now had no respect for the observation process (line 52) and implied that the sources of problems such as those she experienced were not with her own institution but government policies and bodies on a national level such as Ofsted. Nevertheless, she conceded that her college and their observation practices complied with Ofsted's policies, and that this had an impact on herself as a teacher.

6.2.1.1 Ambivalent representations of her college

Within this extract, Jana referred to her employer in ambivalent terms. The college was, as she stated, '*between a rock and a hard place*' regarding compliance with the Ofsted observation process, and yet it was also '*not going to rock the boat*' (line 55). It was clear that Jana was more in sympathy with her institution than with Ofsted and the prescribed observation process requiring '*figures and grade, numbers'* (line 4). Jana called her college '*my institution'* three times (and once, in line 2, she referred to it as '*the institution'*) rather than refer to it by name. Her use of '*my institution'* here suggested that she identified with her place of work. However, she also used '*they*' twice to refer to the management in the college (lines 3 and 54), indexing a 'them against us' attitude. Two other uses of 'they' were rather more ambiguous (lines 36 and 38). Here the pronoun could be read as the college, Ofsted or perhaps the government. But whoever 'they'

were, Jana was holding them responsible for the negative impact of observation on teachers' lives. The use of the passive voice in lines 23 and 24 also added to this impression: Jana represented the college here as a distant bureaucratic structure that impersonally dictated the rules. (I will return to the use of the passive voice later). However, in contrast to the somewhat ambivalent account Jana gave of her institution, she was positive about her peers as co-teachers. For example, she stated '*peer observations are fantastic'* (line 47). One of these peers was the second, internal observer and he gave Jana a grade one for her teaching, helping her to avoid being observed yet again and, perhaps, allowing her to stay in her job – even though she did not believe in his grade.

6.2.1.2. Representing herself: her thoughts, her agentive verbal actions and reactions

Throughout this extract, Jana represented herself as determined to defend her ability as a teacher and capable of challenging a grade given by an external specialist ESOL observer. She was not only expressing disquiet at her grade three to me, but also recounted how she had made a clear protest to her college, challenging the grade and asking for it to be changed. Indeed, she demonstrated that she was resisting and critiquing Ofsted and the college's observation practices in highly agentive ways. Jana reported her thoughts and views throughout the extract. Take, for example, in line 27 when she said she thought the whole thing was '*farcical*' and in lines 34-35 when she used '*I think*' twice, and '*I know'* once, in quick succession, leaving her interlocutor with no doubt about her negative evaluation of the situation. She also used reported speech in lines 24-26 to represent the voice of her institution and, in line 28, for her unnamed peers. Her use of narrative resources such as reported speech and reporting of her thoughts and reactions animated her account and she represented herself as someone with conviction ('*I was completely justified*' in line 7 and '*I was quite adamant*' in line 24), capable of challenging institutional practices she disapproved of. Her use of reported speech and reported thoughts will be further explored in the next section.

6.2.2 The interactive construction of Jana's narrative in the interview (Barkhuizen's level 2)

Barkhuizen's second level of narrative analysis involves a focus on the interactional performance of the story. The ways in which Jana told this story to me revealed her perception of me as someone with similar views on observation and grading and as someone who had shared knowledge of developments in adult ESOL policy and practice. The construction of me as her interlocutor involved the use of discourse markers such as 'you know' (lines 22, 38, 41, 47 and 55) where she anticipated my alignment with her perception of the events in the world she was describing. She also indicated that this story about this observation was one we had already discussed, for in line 1 she stated, '*I think you know I have an issue…*' clearly linking to previous times when she had shared aspects of this painful episode with me. My support for her interpretation of the significance of the episode and her lines of argument was made explicit in my comment in line 33: '*It* ***is*** *subjective'* with my emphasis on 'is'. My support was also indexed in line 51 when I showed that I understood why she felt furious via my affirming interjection of '*I bet*'. However, apart from these two utterances, I contributed rather little to the interaction shown in this extract; Jana was telling this particular small story almost in a monologue, with minimum verbal feedback from me.

The absence of reference to any named social actor by Jana was more difficult to interpret. As I showed above, she made use of the pronoun 'they', or 'my institution' or she used the passive voice to describe actions taken by staff at the college and her verbal interactions with them. This could reveal a professional concern with avoidance of naming individuals at the college – whom I might know – or it could simply reveal that she perceived the college as an impersonal system rather than comprising social actors with whom she had different relationships.

Jana also reported speech in her story three times to refer to interactions with different individual and institutional actors. This is a narrative feature worth exploring more closely (de Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012; Koven, 2002; Maybin, 1996). I have chosen the term

’reported speech’ but there are other terms for this feature of storytelling. Maybin calls it ‘reproduced speech’ (2008:85), while Baynham calls it ‘performed direct speech’ (2011:64) and de Fina and Georgakopoulou (2012) cite Tannen’s (1989) use of the term ‘constructed dialogue’. Whilst I like this last term in that it does, as de Fina and Georgakopoulou state (2012:70), ‘stress the creative processes involved in any voice animation and the impossibility of any straightforward link between what is being reported and what - let alone if - was actually said’, the term ‘reported speech’ is the one I have used throughout this study as it is the most common term used. The first occurrence of Jana reporting speech was in lines 24-26 when she recounted her insistence on making a complaint and then reported the remembered (or imagined) response of an unnamed and de-personified representative of her college who indicated that her complaint would not change her grade and that the ESOL consultant had left for the day anyway. The words of the representative were introduced in Jana’s narrative with the past tense and passive voice (‘*I was told’*, line 24). This use of the passive indexed this asymmetry of power between Jana and the college representative.

The next instance of reported speech occurred when Jana was recounting the reaction of her peers (‘*now people are saying to me’* lines 28-29). This instance of reported speech shifts the story to the present and the use of the progressive form implies that there is ongoing support and positive commentary from her peers. The third time that Jana used reported speech (lines 44 to 45) brought in a voice of authority – though the actual identity of this institutional actor was not specified. Here Jana was questioning the practice of continuing to observe teachers after they have qualified. The voice of authority – possibly her college – was represented as making a speech act (Austin, 1962), recognising her qualification and offering her a job contract; *‘you’re ok, we’ll give you this contract and you are a teacher’*. As Maybin states, ‘reproduced speech invokes past events and brings them to bear on what is happening in the present, drawing the listener in’ (2008:5). Jana’s performance of this speech act from the past did indeed show the weight she placed on the interaction and the effect that it had on her sense of self as a teacher. Again, the voice of the unnamed institutional actor was preceded by a verb in

the passive voice in the present perfect tense, thus linking the action to both the past and the present. The words, '*you've actually been told*' (line 44) indexed an asymmetrical relationship of power between Jana and the speaker, signifying that the voice is an employer, someone who was in a position to decide on her status – and her identity – as a teacher. This reported speech was followed by Jana's reported thought; *'why am I still being graded?'*(lines 45-46), something of a rhetorical question.

6.2.3 *Taking a stance vis-à-vis normative discourses about Ofsted and observation (Barkhuizen's level 3)*

Barkhuizen's third level of narrative analysis involves exploring the 'normative discourses (the broader ideological context) within which the characters agentively position themselves and by which they are positioned' (2010:284). Throughout this extract, Jana used emotionally charged lexis in her evaluation of the observation process she had experienced, and these lexical items were often used with an intensifier such as '***just** incredible*' (line 18), '***just** completely destructive'* (49), '***very much** dissuaded'* (23) and '***absolutely** no respect'* (52). Such categorical utterances conveyed Jana's heightened state of negative emotion about the incident and advanced her strong critique of the '*audacity*' of reasoning behind the practice of observations. She was making the argument that the observation process was not supportive ('*it is nothing like'*, line 37) and that it was quite the opposite; indeed she felt it was '*punitive*' (line 37). There were repeated references to her reported thoughts and views about the wider system of Ofsted-driven observations and grading (lines 34-51) which culminated in her statement '*it has made me have absolutely no respect for the observation system'*. The distinction between Ofsted and the college was blurred in this part of her narrative in the use of 'they' in line 36, though by line 52 she reported that her stance on Ofsted-driven discourses and practices had been '*expressed to my institution'*. Jana positioned herself as a teacher who not only challenged a poor grade given to her for her teaching, but who was prepared to challenge the external agent who awarded her that grade. At the end of the narrative, we see that this and other lived experiences were leading her to the point of questioning her commitment to a career as an ESOL teacher.

In the second interview I had with Jana, two years later in June 2015, she recalled the same episode, but this time I observed what Wortham (2004) has called a 'thickening' of this self-positioning as a critic of the system of observation and grading of teachers. Jana stated during the second interview that she thought the observation process was, *'**very, very,** like **extremely** subjective'* using three intensifiers to ensure that I understood the magnitude of the subjectivity. Once again I replied with, *'But it is!'* By this time, Jana had received two more grade ones for her teaching, both with internal observers, but she had the following to say about this: '*Goal posts seem to change: you never know what is expected. And quite frankly I am not willing to be part of it.*' By this time Jana was not just thinking that perhaps she should not be in teaching, but that her experiences were such that she no longer **wanted** to be part of such a system.

6.3 Jasmine's narrative about teaching numeracy: adapting her teaching

The next small story was one told by Jasmine in her second interview in 2013. In this interview, I asked Jasmine to review her first interview and to tell me how things were currently for her. After mentioning the changes in the levels of her ESOL classes, Jasmine raised the issue of teaching numeracy. In chapter 3, I explained how the drastic reduction in the national funding for ESOL provision from 2010, and the subsequent shift to Functional Skills had led many colleges to offer other courses to ESOL students. Numeracy was one of those possible courses, as it was for Jasmine's college. This was a localised 'solution' to the nationally imposed problem of reduced funding for ESOL students. For Jasmine, this was clearly an issue and this section comprised almost 6 minutes of the 20 minute interview. I have omitted some 16 lines from the middle of the conversation because of limited space; the omitted section focused on a question and answer exchange between Jasmine and myself where I sought to establish quite what she was doing (the whole extract can be found in the appendix). The names of Jasmine's colleagues in lines 48-50 have been replaced by pseudonyms to preserve confidentially.

1. ***Jas*: **But I have taught **numeracy** classes which are mixed level from Entry 1 to Entry 3.
2. ***CL:*** OK. Can you tell me a bit about the numeracy then?
3. ***Jas**:* [Laughs] The numeracy is **really** difficult to teach.

4. ***CL:*** Is it?
5. ***Jas:*** Because, what I find is that students are… better than what we teach them, if that
6. makes sense. They've got, normally, they've got higher qualifications in their own country
7. in numeracy. It is the language side that they find…
8. ***CL:*** OK...so what are you actually teaching them? Are you teaching them a qualification?
9. ***Jas:*** Yeah, er it's the … Edexcel Numeracy Functional Skills.
10. ***CL:*** So, they are doing Functional Skills, entry, entry level though?
11. ***Jas:*** Entry level.
12. ***CL:*** Yeah, yeah.
13. ***Jas:*** So, it's most of it, they have a problem with the language, rather than anything else.
14. Erm. But it's difficult for me to teach numeracy cos I'm not a maths person [laughs].
15. ***CL:*** [Laughs] So, what's your highest level of maths qualification?
16. ***Jas:*** GCSE.
17. ***CL:*** OK.
18. ***Jas:*** And the last time I had any involvement was… with maths was GCSE maths [laughs].
19. Which is just going back 15 years ago.

[16 lines removed]

20. ***Jas:*** Yeah, we were doing it last year, but it wasn't as difficult for me. It was foundation
21. learners so with, with them, they had to, I think, count up to ten or, you know, add up to
22. ten. So it wasn't as difficult.
23. ***CL:*** OK. Right
24. ***Jas:*** But now it is **really** challenging [laughs] because of the higher level students. And,
25. ahhh! They've got so much more knowledge than I have with numeracy.
26. ***CL:*** So, how do you work that? How do you do that then?
27. ***Jas:*** Erm, I think you **pretend** that you've got a lot more knowledge [laughs].
28. ***CL:*** [Laughs] Yeah.
29. ***Jas:*** You **look** confident, like you know what you are talking about! And then, it was a case
30. of talking to other numeracy lecturers I think, and looking at what **they're** doing. And kind
31. of integrating it into what, you know, the **English** side of it.
32. ***CL:*** And did you…?
33. ***Jas:*** For example, reading bus timetables, things like that… But you can't do two hours of
34. reading bus timetables.
35. ***CL:*** No, no.
36. ***Jas:*** So, [hhh] I think for me it was finding, erm… The difficult part was finding interesting,
37. entertaining activities to do. I could teach them maths, but boring. [Laughs] I can't
38. make it exciting for them. And also differentiating, 'cause it is not my subject specialism.
39. ***CL:*** So, did you have any support from the college?
40. ***Jas:*** Erm, not really. We were kind of just told to teach it.
41. ***CL:*** So, there was nothing formalised about…
42. ***Jas****:* No.
43. ***CL:*** supporting you into teaching numeracy?
44. ***Jas:*** Nothing.
45. ***CL:*** Gosh. OK. So, it was support from your peers?
46. ***Jas:*** Yep. Support from peers.
47. ***CL:*** Peers who are co-ESOL teachers, but also maths, numeracy teachers as well? OK.

48. ***Jas:*** Many people like Mike Smith, you know, er,
49. ***CL:*** Chantelle?
50. ***Jas:*** Chantelle.
51. ***CL:*** Gosh. So is that, is that the biggest change for the **ESOL** teaching, do you think?
52. ***Jas:*** Yeah. And it is quite difficult because, I mean, you'd go through the week of … erm
53. planning **English** lessons and you'd feel comfortable. By the end of the week you'd be
54. really on edge [laughs] because you know the numeracy class would be coming up and,
55. erm, students, they are really on the ball. They know numeracy from, you know, their
56. own countries. You know, they've got… er, you know, degrees, really high qualifications
57. ***CL:*** Yeah
58. ***Jas:*** in, in numeracy.
59. ***CL:*** Yeah, yeah. So what was their reaction to it do you think, then?
60. ***Jas:*** Erm, some of them really enjoyed it. They, er, and I think the people that enjoyed it
61. most are… the people who didn't get much of a chance to do it in their own countries.
62. They don't have very high qualification in numeracy in their own country.
63. ***CL:*** Right.
64. ***Jas:*** But most of the students **do** have a high qualification from their country and they just
65. kind of saw it as something they need to pass, an exam they need to take…
66. ***CL:*** so they're
67. ***Jas:*** to improve their chances of getting a job.
68. ***CL:*** Right. So that's what it is about. So is that how it's sold?
69. ***Jas:*** That's right, yeah.

Table 6.3: Extract from Jasmine's second interview

6.3.1. The characters and the content of Jasmine's account of institutionally imposed teaching of numeracy to ESOL learners (level 1)

This story unfolded as part of the dialogue between Jasmine and me. It was co-constructed, with questions from me and answers from her. There are a number of different social actors in this extract. Jasmine herself was at the centre of the story describing the change in circumstances from her own viewpoint: '*what I find*' (line 5) and '*I'm not a maths person'* (line 14) are two examples of references to herself. Jasmine's students (or learners as she referred to them in line 21) were also featured in her account since they had also been affected by the changes in institutional practice. She referred to 'people' (lines 60-61) when talking about those who actually enjoyed taking numeracy classes. She then contrasted these 'people' with 'the students' (line 64) implying that those who like numeracy were not in her classes, were not *her* students who, she noted, mostly *'**do** have a high qualification from their own country'*, with a strong emphasis on the word 'do' (line 64). There were also references to lecturers in her college. Two of

these lecturers were named – one mentioned by Jasmine and the other by me, (lines 47-50) as a token to indicate that I knew her context well. As interviewer, I made mention of the college (line 39) and also her peers (line 45). In addition, Jasmine used the pronoun 'we' (lines 5, 20 and 40). This could have indicated either her fellow ESOL teachers or the college, though her use of 'we' in line 40 suggests that she was referring to her peers in the teaching team. Again, as in Jana's interview, the passive voice was used in a way that indexes the asymmetrical relationship of power between the managers of the college and the teaching staff as in line 40 when Jasmine said '*we were just kind of told to teach it'*. The force of her utterance is, however, somewhat mitigated by the use of 'kind of'. I take this point up again in the next section.

The content of the story concerned how Jasmine's college had imposed on ESOL teachers the teaching of lower level numeracy to ESOL students and how she, and other teachers, had responded. The story began with Jasmine's revelation to me that she was now, unhappily, teaching numeracy and it unfolded showing how this situation had come about, how she had interpreted this new subject and had found a way to teach it. She did not have a choice. She did not have any support from her college, but she did have support from her ESOL team. She also had looked into what her numeracy teaching peers did and tried to 'integrate' this with her ESOL knowledge (line 31). As a teacher, her emphasis was clearly on English, a subject which she felt skilled to teach, in sharp contrast to numeracy, which she did not.

6.3.1.1. Representing the college and the students

There is a substantial contrast with Jana's story in the way Jasmine represented her college and her peers in this extract. Jana was very outspoken whereas Jasmine was more cautious. In response to my question as to whether she had received any support from her institution for her move to teach numeracy, Jasmine responded with the utterance I touched on above: '*we were kind of just told to teach it'* (line 40). With this brief hedge, 'kind of ', Jasmine was revealing a cautious stance towards the imposition of the teaching of numeracy and was endeavouring to be diplomatic in telling me that it was imposed on

her. When pressed by me for clarification she responded without hesitation in one word answers – '*no*' and '*nothing*' (lines 42 and 44) whereas almost all of Jasmine's other turns in the conversation had been longer than a single word. The definitive nature of her responses in a bare negative form made her view of this policy initiative clear without having to spell it out to me. The impact of her two utterances was revealed in my response. On both occasions I said '*Gosh*' (lines 45 and 51). Although Jasmine told her story in a more cautious and diplomatic way than Jana, she was clearly unhappy about the way that the teaching of numeracy had been imposed.

In contrast, her peers were represented as providing support which included advice from other ESOL teachers on how to incorporate numeracy activities for ESOL students as well as advice from those specialising in numeracy teaching. The terms *numeracy* and *math*s were both used, though they do have somewhat different connotations. *Numeracy* was the term prevalent in the *Skills for Life* era (2001-2010) but it was replaced with the term *maths* circa 2012. The change of terminology from *numeracy* to *maths*, as with the change from *literacy* to *English* was a deliberate act (see chapter 3, where I note the change from the term *literacy* to *English* for teacher education courses). It was to replace what had been known as the basic skills of *literacy* and *numeracy* (as per *Skills for Life*) with the more academic, higher status terms of *English* and *maths*, in line with the reinvigoration of GCSE exams for 16-19 year old age group. It is interesting to note that Jasmine declared herself as '*not a maths person'* (line 14) and then both she and I used the term *maths* in relation to her personal qualifications (lines 15, and 18). Jasmine used the term *maths* in line 37 – which was in direct contrast with her use of the term *English*, said with great emphasis, in line 31. I used the words maths and numeracy side by side in line 47, showing that the terms could be almost interchangeable in college-talk, despite there being the subtle difference in implied level and status.

The students were represented in different ways. Firstly, Jasmine spoke three times of students being more highly qualified than her. She said, '*they've got higher qualifications in their own country in numeracy*'(lines 6-7) and then noted that '*students, they, they are*

really on the ball. They know numeracy from, you know, their own countries. You know, they've got… er, you know, degrees, really high qualifications' (lines 55-56) and also, '*most of the students* ***do*** *have a high qualification from their country'* (line 64). Jasmine clearly respected the numeracy knowledge that most of her ESOL student brought to her classroom and was aware that it was the English language that they needed support with, as she noted on line 7. Secondly, we see in her story that she briefly pointed to two specific groups of students who were in her classes: those who were currently in her classes and were already qualified in numeracy but took her course '*as something they need to pass, an exam they need to take'* which would *'improve their chances of getting a job'* (lines 65 then 67) and then those whom she had taught the previous year and were at foundation level. She had worked through basic mathematical routines such as counting (lines 20-21) with them. She looked back positively at the latter group, stating twice in quick succession that it '*wasn't as difficult'* (lines 20 and 22) with those students.

6.3.1.2. Representing herself and her thoughts about numeracy

In the extract, Jasmine made it clear that she did not like teaching numeracy and she felt badly prepared for it, both with regard to her own subject knowledge and with regard to the support from her college. There was a lot of laughter in the extract, starting in line 3. Jasmine's response to my question began with a separate laugh, but then she made the following utterance in a laughing style:

> **Jas:** [Laughs] The numeracy is **really** difficult to teach.

Speaking through laughter carried extra meaning; it indexed her emotional response to the situation. Soilevuo Grønnerød, in her analysis of laughter as an interactional feature of interviews states that, 'laughter plays an important role in meaning-making by moulding the meanings of words' (2004:46). Jasmine's laughing style moulded the meaning of her words to convey the irony of the fact that she was teaching maths, and her continued in-word laughter indicated that this was a problem for her. Soilevuo Grønnerød states that laughter can 'overcome problematic moments' (2004:37). The laughter helped both of us to acknowledge the problem without dwelling on it. There

were two instances of shared laughter during this narrative. The first is shown in lines 14 and 15 where both of us laughed at her declaration that she was '*not a maths person'*; and the second is shown in lines 27 and 28 when Jasmine responded to my two questions: '*so how do you work that? How do you do that*?' She hesitated briefly then said '*I think that you **pretend** you've got a lot more knowledge'*. The word 'pretend' was emphasised in her response and her utterance was followed by laughter from us both.

From this point in the narrative onwards, Jasmine used the second person pronoun 'you' to describe her thoughts and her ways of dealing with the challenges of teaching numeracy. She said *'you look confident, like you know what you are talking about'* (line 29). This use of 'you' is akin to the indirect form of 'one', indexing an imaginary person, someone taken as an example. Her use of 'you' recurred in line 33 when she referred to the use of the bus timetable to bring an ESOL activity into the numeracy class, even though she was narrating her own experience. She then slipped back into the use of the first person pronoun 'I' in recounting her beliefs in lines 36-38, claiming what she could and could not do in these numeracy sessions. Later, in response to a question from me, *'is that the biggest change for the ESOL teaching, do you think?*' she once again reverted to the indirect 'you' as she elaborated her narrative of lived experiences, breaking into laughter when she described her emotional state at the end of the week as *'really on edge*'(line 54). This use of laughter, as before, mitigated the negative impact of her words, attempting to make light of a stressful situation.

6.3.2. The interactive construction of Jasmine's narrative in the interview (level 2)

Jasmine seemed comfortable in sharing her predicament with me. She shared the ways she worked in her role as a reluctant teacher of numeracy, identifying what could be perceived as a weakness stemming from being '*not a maths person'*. Her uneasiness about not being a maths teacher was revealed by her repeated use of the word 'difficult': it appeared six times in this extract alongside 'problem' (line 13) and 'challenging' (line 24). I was asking Jasmine a lot of questions, and she was answering them, mostly in a

fairly detailed way. This often led to another question, which Jasmine again tried to answer. In all, I asked 17 questions, often trying to soften them by the use of ‘so’. In retrospect I think that I used the word ‘**so’** at the start of my questions to ensure that Jasmine saw a link between what she was saying and what I was asking next, a type of continuity indicator. Johnson (2002) explores the use of ‘so’ in questions in interviews and notes that they are often used as a way to open up the narrative and may ‘take on a narrative sequence and organisational importance’ (Johnson, 2002:108). Johnson refers to them as ‘so-prefaced questions’ (2002: 91). In her study, Johnson argues that so-prefaced questions were supportive and provided a scaffold for those who were reluctant to take on the recounting of the story themselves. While so-prefaced questions do not generally occur in informal conversation, they can occur in institutional settings or in interviews about past experiences. They can also occur in the form of declarative questions such as those that I used: ‘*So, they are doing Functional Skills, entry, entry level though?’* (line 10) and ‘*So, it was support from your peers?*’ (line 45). I was certainly interacting more in Jasmine’s interview than in Jana’s interview extract (or in Anita’s as will be seen in extract 6.4). This could be construed as Jasmine’s hesitance with regard to saying too much about the issues she faced, and therefore I had to ask her questions to elicit details of the story.

There was a considerable amount of agreement between us: I used ‘yeah’ seven times, twice emphasising my agreement by saying ‘yeah, yeah’ – and once, also signalling my agreement, I used the repeated negative ‘no, no’ (line 35). Jasmine uttered ‘yeah’ in response to questions and I used the word ‘ok’ seven times, three of which were positioned immediately before another question. I also used ‘right’ in a similar way to ‘yeah’ and ‘ok’ – as a way of signalling acceptance of Jasmine’s account. Condon (2001: 491) believes that the use of what she calls ‘discourse-ok’ signals ‘the current state of the talk as a routine transition’ In this interaction, this is what 'ok', ‘yeah’ and ‘right’ seem to be doing.

Throughout the interview, Jasmine presented herself to me as a teacher caught between the directives of her college (to teach numeracy, something she felt she could not do) and the expectations of the students (who were better than her at numeracy). As a result of this dilemma, Jasmine revealed that she had to 'pretend' (line 27) and 'look confident' (line29). She was clearly uncomfortable about this course of action. This was signified when she said, '*I think you pretend…*' where the use of 'think' showed her doubt. Nevertheless, Jasmine showed her agentive self as she related how she had sought advice from other ESOL teachers and her numeracy specialist colleagues, in the absence of any support from her institution. This situated her as part of a small team of ESOL teachers rather than as part of the larger team of the college. Twice she referred to the ESOL learners in her numeracy classes as needing English rather than maths – on line 7 and line 13. She also indicated how she integrated the numeracy into the '*English side of it'* (line 31) revealing how aware she was of the needs of the learners. This image of a conscientious and capable teacher was further consolidated with her expression of despair at not being able to differentiate effectively for numeracy as she was not a specialist in that subject. Jasmine said she wanted to make her classes *'interesting, entertaining'* and she was concerned that they were 'boring' and lacked excitement.

6.3.3 Taking a stance regarding normative discourses about teaching numeracy (level 3)

Moving to the third level of analysis that Barkhuizen (2010) advocates, it is clear in this extract from her second interview that Jasmine positioned herself in the world as an English teacher who was, reluctantly, no longer teaching only her subject specialism. She represented herself as a teacher who could take control of her situation and adapt it to make it better, despite being put in a difficult position as a recipient of an institutional change that she did not like. As shown above, she used the word 'difficult' repeatedly in this extract. Four of these occasions related her emotions about teaching numeracy. The sixth occurrence (line 52) told of her emotions about the shadow that the teaching of numeracy cast over the whole teaching week. Jasmine did not state explicitly that her college (and ultimately government policy) had imposed the teaching of numeracy on

her, against her will. But she would not have chosen to teach maths, and she indicated this was the case by repeatedly stating these negative feelings about the numeracy teaching.

The *National Numeracy Organisation* produced a report (no date - circa 2015) on attitudes towards maths in the UK and stated, 'it is culturally acceptable in the UK to be negative about maths.' Jasmine clearly positioned herself in alignment with this national perception that it is acceptable to openly state a dislike of maths. She felt the weight of trying to teach numeracy well, despite not feeling confident to do so. She did not explain to me why she had been required to teach numeracy to ESOL students, just that '*we were kind of just told to teach it'*. Maths teaching is normatively viewed as being a specialist subject and the government offers an unusually large bursary to attract people to train to teach it in schools and colleges. Here, Jasmine was told to teach maths, with no offer of extra salary or retraining. There were distinct claims to an identity of being an English teacher (lines 31 and 53), and claims to **not** being a maths teacher: '*it is not my subject specialism'* (line 38). At this third level, Jasmine wanted me to know that she was an English teacher; she rejected the positioning her college and national policy change had enforced upon her as a part-time numeracy teacher and insisted that she was an English specialist.

6.4 Anita's narrative about change in working practices: accepting her lot

This is an extract from the third interview with Anita in June 2016. This particular story occurred roughly five minutes into the interview, which lasted almost an hour. I had asked Anita to tell me how things had been for her since our previous interview almost three years beforehand. She told me that there had been many changes in her college, which was an adult and community education provider. She had been working for two separate institutions that were loosely connected, but that had proved detrimental to her pay, so she had transferred all of her teaching to the main institution. As I explained in chapter 3, redundancies had become a common experience for colleges during the Coalition Government between 2010 and 2015. Anita's college had been protected

somewhat as it was part of the adult and community education sector. However, a huge reduction in the adult education funding budget in 2015-2016 (chapter 3) had taken its toll on Anita's college. She told me about the appointment of a new principal, about redundancies and moving staff locations. Her story recorded significant changes in the working conditions of teachers as a result of the major cuts in funding and a complete shift to the provision of accredited courses only (that is, those with a qualification at the end). The college centres where Anita worked have been given pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

1. ***Anita**:* I haven't got anything to say against the principal but what I'm saying is
2. there's been so many changes happening in the college, so like I said, we
3. used to have a Guidance Team at Manor Hall Centre, erm, like a team of 2 or 3
4. people at least who were present there all the time.
5. ***CL:*** Guidance for students?
6. ***Anita**:* Yes, guidance and support. So they used to do the initial assessments and
7. they used to interview the people and then allocate them to their
8. appropriate classes, and then erm, help students with whatever queries, and
9. then some people, if somebody needed transfers from one course to another
10 or, you know, application for support, like erm other costs like travel costs,
11 child care costs and this and that and a million other queries, and in terms of
12 enrolment as well. Because the tutors are not…though we have been given a
13 basic training as to how to enrol a learner, because there's so many erm, you
14 know, legal aspects of the enrolment form, especially whether they need to
15 pay or not and what sort of benefit they're on, how long have they lived in
16 the country, we need to do a lot of checks before, you know, we make it free
17 for them, before we announce that it's fully funded. And some people have
18 to pay, some people have to pay half the fees, some people have to pay full
19 fees, so there's a lot of clauses there. So the basic form anybody can fill in like
20 with their details, like name and address and things, but there's a lot of
21 intricacies, you know, complications that we are not aware of, and every time we
22 had a problem we used to run to them and ask for er their opinion, you know,
23 because they handle it day in and day out, they were aware of what the problems
24 were. But the whole team has now been moved to Yew Tree we have nobody there
25 at Manor Hall for guidance and support, and any query comes in we have to like
26 literally run to the manager or take it up with somebody else at Yew Tree. And the
27 teachers' role has changed as a result to do much more than what we have been
28 used to doing. We have always done a little bit of enrolment as well, but then it's **so**
29 much more now that it's entirely dependent. And last term there was a little bit of
30 chaos in terms of enrolment forms being done towards still, till the end for a course
31 that had started before. So what happened was, there were some courses which
32 were non-accredited and there were some which were accredited, erm, so the non-

33	accredited courses then went on to become accredited because that was the
34	progression the learners were, you know, achieving. So the community course, as
35	we call them, community course non-accredited, erm, then went on to become an
36	accredited one. And they're all erm, multi….what can I say?
37	CL: Mixed?

Table 6.4: Extract from Anita's third interview

6.4.1 The characters and the content of Anita's account of an increase in her workload (level 1)

There were four main social actors (or group of actors) in this narrative: Anita (and her team, that is, her college and/or the other teachers), the Guidance Team, the students (sometimes potential students) and the Principal. Anita referred to herself directly three times in relation to the verb 'say' ('*I haven't got anything to say'* and '*what I'm saying'* both on line 1 and *'what can I say?*' line 36). At all other times, Anita used the first person plural pronoun 'we' to signify her identity as part of a team. She used 'we' to refer to both herself as part of her college (as in lines 3, 16-17 and 35) as well as to herself with other ESOL teachers (such as in lines 12, 21-22, 27-28). This expression of solidarity and collegiality stood in contrast to her representation of the principal (line 1) who was set in direct opposition to the 'we' that Anita used throughout. Although Anita explicitly said *'I have nothing against the principal'* (in line 1), her use of 'but' as the next word strongly indicated that she did indeed have issues. She went on to outline those issues in this extract (see appendix for fuller transcript). Immediately before this extract, Anita had stated, *'the previous principal did quite a lot for the college and now we've got a new principal for the last year or so'*. Anita then identified a list of changes which were the direct responsibility of this new principal, with a focus, in this excerpt, on the changes to the location of the Guidance Team and the unintended consequences of this move. In line 3, Anita referred to this team as 'a Guidance Team' and '*like a team of two or three people'*. After that, Anita referenced this group using the third person plural of 'they' or 'them' and once in absence as 'nobody' (line 24 – see comment later). The other social actors who were represented in the story were the students. Anita referred to the students in several ways. She used the term 'student' just once, and the term 'learner' twice (lines 13 and 34). Interestingly she also called them 'some people' on four

occasions, indicating that they were not quite students. These were individuals who had not yet been fully assessed regarding their ability to pay fees, so were not yet students of the college. Once they were with the college as students, Anita referred to them as 'they' and 'them'.

6.4.1.1 Representing unnamed others

Anita used the lexical items 'anybody', 'nobody' and 'somebody' in revealing ways. The use of 'anybody' in line 19 ('the basic form anybody can fill in') meant that the focus was not on the actor here (which could be a teacher, a member of staff or a student, it was not clear and it did not matter) but the focus was on the **act** of filling in the form itself. It was a basic form which was easy to complete. This was in contrast to the 'intricacies' and 'complications' that were behind the form (line 21) which even the teachers were not aware of. But, there was 'nobody' (line 24) to help to complete the forms as the guidance team had moved. This signified an absence of support for Anita and her peers. Because there was 'nobody' to help at her teaching centre, Anita had to '*literally run'* to the manager or 'somebody' (line 26) for help. The unspecified, generic 'somebody' adds to the feeling of despair at the changed situation, while the use of the verb 'run' showed Anita's concern for the immediacy with which the need for guidance had to be addressed.

6.4.1.2 Representing the tasks

Anita clearly associated the changes to her place of work with the arrival of a new principal, the event that opened this story. At the centre where Anita taught, the guidance team of people who supported both teachers and students in the complicated process of admission had been moved to a different, and distant, part of the college. The admissions procedure was a particularly onerous task for ESOL teachers because of the complex nature of the fee structure. Anita listed the tasks that the guidance team had carried out, itemising seven different tasks (lines 6-11) noting that there were '*a million other queries'* that they had dealt with. She then added yet one more task to the list, that of enrolment, thus further exemplifying the complex and time-consuming nature of these tasks. The consequence of the removal of this team and their expertise meant that the

workload of the teachers had increased, as indicated earlier, and the teachers had, in effect, taken on the role of gatekeepers for free ESOL classes. This role included '*many … legal aspects'* (lines 13-14) of the process including checking on the type of benefits received, time in the UK and '*other checks'*. The teachers' role had changed and they had much more to do than before the guidance team relocated (lines 27-28). Anita used a great deal of very specific lexis concerning the technicalities of courses in the college such as 'initial assessments', 'transfers', 'application', 'enrolment', (lines 6-12) and again regarding the classification of courses as 'accredited', 'non-accredited' and 'community' (lines 32-36). This provided a window into the new bureaucratic language and categories that she had become familiar with as her life as a teacher had been changed by the endless additional non-teaching tasks that had been imposed upon her. Also, these additional tasks had the potential to alter the relationship that Anita had with her students as she took on the responsibility of monitoring access to free ESOL provision, a responsibility that would not be imposed on non-ESOL teachers.

6.4.2 The interactive construction of Anita's narrative in the interview (level 2)

In the interview, Anita positioned me as someone who was familiar with the ins and outs of college life, and as someone who would understand the challenging nature of her additional work load. She did not explain the technical vocabulary related in these new tasks for ESOL teachers because she knew that I would be familiar with procedures such as interviews, initial assessment, enrolment and with the accreditation system operating in colleges. This was her third interview with me and she had shared details of her life as a teacher with me before. In this interview, she explicitly built on these earlier conversations and our pre-existing rapport by using the inclusive filler 'you know' six times (lines 10, 14, 16, 21, 22 and 34). Much of this time she was indexing the fact that I was familiar with the aspects of her work, past and present. She used it mostly as she was planning her next utterance. Another use of 'you know' has been described by Fox Tree and Schrock (2002:737) as a means to 'signal to addressees that they fill out unspoken

intention.' In effect, Anita drew on both meanings here, as she positioned me as her sympathetic listener, knowing that I knew her context well.

Anita used the present tense and the past tense to contrast her current situation with how it had been when the guidance team were in the same building as her. For example, on lines 6 and 7, Anita told me what the team 'used to' do, namely, complete initial assessments and interview students. This was echoed on line 22 when she stated that '*we used to run to them'*. The guidance team was positioned as having been very useful, very important and a much missed part of her teaching life. In most references to the guidance team, Anita used verbs in the past tense signifying the change to her current situation. The two non-past tense forms were on line 23 ('*they handle it day in and day out'*) noting that the team was still knowledgeable and up-to-date - and on line 24 ('*the team has been moved*') in the present perfect tense, signifying that this happened in the recent past. This clause was also in the passive voice, indexing the asymmetrical relationship of power of the college over the teachers and other staff who are mere recipients of the change, not instigators.

As noted above, Anita did not give a name to the social actor who had moved the team – but there was an underlying implication that this was a done by the new principal. Anita was not only listing her new burdens but also complaining about the changes since the new principal had taken over. This complaint was made explicit in line 27 when she stated that *'the teachers' role has changed as a result to do much more than what we have been used to doing*'. Doing more than before was not a positive outcome, especially if, as Anita said in line 21, there are '*intricacies and, you know, complications that we are not aware of*'. The change presented Anita and her peers with '*problems*' (lines 22 and 23) with '*legal aspects'* (line 14), such as finding out from learners '*the sort of benefit they are on'* (line 15). All of this was intimidating to Anita as she positioned herself as being burdened with a raft of complex tasks that she felt ill prepared for. She began to say something (line 12) with the words '*the tutors are not…*' but did not complete her utterance. Instead she moved from the present tense (**are not**) to the present perfect tense in stating that '*we*

have been given a basic training'. The use of the passive voice here once again avoided the direct attributing of blame for this sorry state of affairs, but alluded to the presence of a powerful other who gave the (basic) training to staff. Here, Anita and her team **had** been given some training for their new role, in contrast to Jasmine who was not given any preparation for the changes in her role as an ESOL numeracy teacher.

Anita also gave an example of the chaos that had been created by the new allocation of tasks at her centre. She did this by describing the problems with enrolment forms that were caused by a change in the status of a course from non- accredited to accredited. She began her account with an overt signal for the commencement of a story with the phrase '*so what happened was'*, positioning herself firmly in the narrator role. A few minutes later, she was lost for words and paused, then asked me a direct question *'what can I say?*' (line 36). Her dismay and incredulity regarding this chaotic management scenario was clearly evident. I made a minimal and not entirely adequate response in the circumstances. My response took the form of a one word question. I was asking for clarification as I had in line 5. Anita's point had already been clearly made and her evaluation of this incident was obvious. Like Jana in the first narrative extract, Anita had a story to tell and did not need much interaction with me to tell it, positioning me as her listener more than an interlocutor.

In discussing the issue of fees and who had to pay for ESOL classes, Anita aligned herself and her institution to the current restrictive policy on the allocation of free courses through the use of 'we'. She said, '*we need to do a lot of checks before, you know, we make it free for them, before we announce that it's fully funded'* (line 16-17). Anita herself could not make it free for the students. Nor could she make announcements about courses being fully funded. She and her colleagues were constrained by the rules and regulations imposed on colleges. What is striking here was the way she aligned herself with the current policy for ESOL students and the managerial language she adopted when talking about this issues. Of course, if Anita did not complete these tasks, she would not have any students. She was thus placed in a situation where she had to perform these

(governmental) surveillance tasks to ensure her students had all the documentary evidence required to learn English for free, which then allowed them to be students in her classes.

6.4.3. Taking a stance vis-à-vis normative discourses about teachers and workloads (level 3)

There are normative discourses that now circulate about teachers' workloads and time-poor teachers (see chapter 3). A key theme in my analysis in chapter 5 was that the teachers in the study felt that their teaching time was being stolen from them by the administrative duties their colleges imposed upon them. Anita brought this common thread into her narrative by mentioning the increased workload that the displacement of the guidance team from her centre had created. She did not allocate blame directly, although, as seen above, there was an implicit assumption that the changes were the result of the new principal and that they had been at his instigation. Anita did not refer to any outside agency, such as the government, or the cuts that had impacted on the college, resulting in the changes that she was reporting. She did mention the legal aspects of the tasks which indexed the complicated processes at play in the fulfilling of onerous administrative duties required by a college, now requiring her direct involvement, unlike that of most other teachers. This aspect of her workload concerned eligibility of students rather than the day-to-day administrative work required for actual teaching.

Throughout, Anita positioned herself as a compliant, if somewhat unhappy and overwhelmed, teacher, doing her duties diligently, checking with other more knowledgeable staff members (such as the guidance team, her manager or '*somebody else at Yew Tree*' on line 26). She clearly felt that she was put-upon as she stated that teachers '*do much more'* (line 27) repeated just a little later on, with a stress on the word 'so' ('***so*** *much more now'*, lines 28-29). There was little in her story to indicate that she felt she had much independence of action, let alone agency, for she used the first person plural pronoun 'we' a great deal, melding herself with her co-teachers or her institution.

In addition to this, there was an underlying assumption in her account that the ESOL students Anita encountered would be on benefits. She did not say (line 15) that the college would need to know **if** they were on benefits, but rather what type of benefits they were on. She also indicated that these students would be claiming child care costs and travel costs, too (lines 12 and 13). Another normative assumption was that the students **would** be told that the course was free to them, that it **was** fully funded. As an addition, Anita expressed the view that '*some people have to pay, some people have to pay half of the fees, some people have to pay full fees*' indicating that she knew there were clear guidelines about who was eligible and who was not, and that there were free types of provision that students would be able to access.

In summary, what came over in the nature of Anita's narrative was that she positioned herself in the world as a teacher who accepted her lot. She chose to share with me her negative reaction to the imposition of more administrative duties on teachers in her place of work, but also accepted the new status quo. This included the gate keeping vis-à-vis allocating free courses to ESOL students, taking account of their benefit details, how long they had been in the UK and other checks. The verification of passports, visas, birth certificates and other official paperwork were all included in this role as 'border guard' (see chapter 5 reference to Abbot 2016). As I have observed above, the changes of location for staff in her workplace had the consequence of positioning Anita, and her teaching peers, as agents of government surveillance in terms of entitlement to ESOL. Anita gave little hint of resistance to this shift in her role – from teacher to gate keeper. Rather she seemed keen for me to know that she was a good teacher, a good employee, compliant and attentive to her duties, however many they were. She did not like the increase in her administrative work load, but she did not shirk from it. Anita felt forced to accept the institutional changes imposed on her, knowing that they were detrimental to her work-life balance.

Immediately after this extract Anita described the nature of the community classes, those that had been moved from non-accredited to accredited. The groups in these classes

were very diverse, with possibly four or five levels within the same class, and Anita struggled to differentiate appropriately for them all. The change from non-accredited to accredited status meant that Anita had to ask students to provide a raft of evidence they had not needed at the start of the course, and this added considerably to the time she spent, in class and after class, gathering the paperwork. The 'big story' for Anita was that she was a good and dutiful employee, a teacher who wanted to be viewed as good (or maybe even excellent) in all aspects of her job. Ideologically, the spectre of hegemony was evident as Anita pushed herself to complete the ever-increasing set of tasks required to ensure she had students in her classes, and that they were taught well.

6.5 Chapter summary

In discussing his interviews with ESOL teachers, Baynham (2011:73) states that 'those interviewed construct accounts of professional practice rich in evidence of their professional stance.' Jana, Jasmine and Anita all demonstrated their professional stance in their interviews with me. In answer to the question 'who am I?', the teachers in this study were clear in their identity claims. Of course, these were not identities that were fixed, but ones that were realised through their telling and retelling of their stories to me, on that day, in that place. As de Fina and Georgakopoulou (2012:167) have pointed out 'identities are taken to be articulated and constructed in talk where they can be negotiated, contested and redrafted.' During the interactions with me, all three ESOL teachers negotiated their identities during a moment of conflict in their working lives that they had dealt with, presenting an image of themselves that felt comfortable in their revelations to me, at that time.

Jana presented herself as a strong individual who had the courage of her convictions. She felt that she had been wronged by the external ESOL consultant and also by her college which did not challenge the grade she was given for her community-based class. The other main characters in her story were there to confirm how right she was and how wrong the grade had been. She was able to place the blame for her predicament at the feet of the ESOL consultant. She also critiqued the system which demanded constant

observation and grading of teaching. Her stance was one of asserting her rights, asserting her agency to determine her future.

Jasmine presented herself as a reluctant but ultimately compliant teacher of numeracy. She demonstrated self-sufficiency in solving her problem of how to teach a subject she did not like and did not want to teach. She reframed the numeracy sessions as activities akin to English teaching and aligned herself with her fellow ESOL teachers as well as helpful numeracy teachers. She distanced the management and the generic ‘college’, representing them as unsupportive and retrograde in their duties. Blame was implied, but not explicitly assigned. Her stance was one of adapting to her circumstances and making the best of a challenging situation.

Anita showed the least agency in her narrative. She positioned herself as a teacher who was given too many tasks to do and too little time to teach effectively. She wanted to be a good teacher and a good employee and so did not allocate blame, although there was an implicit attribution of responsibility to the new principal. She felt that she was very much part of a team (of other ESOL teachers) and was positive towards the members of the guidance team who were supportive. In her account, her stance was that of accepting the changes that were imposed upon her, changes that had led to a workload in which she felt administrative tasks almost outweighed her actual teaching.

The next chapter discusses the findings from my study, linking them to the theoretical orientations from chapter 2. It provides a basis for the final chapter and demonstrates the contribution the study makes to research into teacher agency in the context of significant changes in language education policy.

CHAPTER SEVEN: TEACHER NARRATIVES AND POLICY AS PROCESS: RESEARCH LENSES ON TEACHER BELIEFS AND AGENCY AND ON THE DYNAMIC SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES INVOLVED IN POLICY CHANGE

7.1 Introduction

The focus of this study has been on changes over time in language education policy vis-à-vis provision of ESOL in the further and adult education sector, and on ESOL teachers' accounts of their responses to these changes.

The study was guided by a view of policy as a 'complex social practice' (Levinson and Sutton, 2001:1), and as social processes which unfold over time, involving different social actors positioned on different levels of society: national policy makers, managers of FE colleges and Adult Education providers as well as teachers of ESOL to adults (the latter being the participants in my study). My analytic focus, in the two data analysis chapters (chapter 5 and chapter 6) was as follows. Firstly, I identified the themes that recurred in the teachers' accounts of the changes in policies affecting their daily lives as educators. I did this through the lines of thematic analysis presented in chapter 5. Here, I addressed research question 3, 'in what ways do the ESOL teachers in this study talk about the changes in language-in-education policy, funding arrangements and institutional change?' In addressing this question, I traced the themes that occurred across the interviews with all the teacher participants in this study. Secondly, I carried out a more fine-grained analysis of the narratives of just three of the ESOL teachers in my study about these policy changes. This analysis was presented in chapter 6, which addressed research question 4, 'how do ESOL teachers see the identified changes as shaping their practices?' where I drew on the approach to the analysis of small stories developed by Barkhuizen (2008, 2010, 2011). This epistemological approach was described in chapter 4. I examined the ways that three of the ESOL teachers positioned themselves in specific small stories regarding the consequences of policy change. These two approaches to data analysis took account of the ways in which the teachers were positioned at national and institutional

levels and of the degree of agency that the teachers were able to exercise, how they exercised it and the specific nature of the constraints on their agency.

In this chapter, I aim to bring this all together and address the overarching question of 'how do ESOL teachers narrate their response to policy change in the adult and further education sector?' In doing so, I make reference to some of the ways in which the policy processes at different levels were talked about by the teachers in my study. I refer to some of the agentive ways in which they reacted to change and I will consider how their views of the significance of these policy changes were shaped by their personal and professional circumstances.

There is currently considerable debate in the field of language policy and planning about how agency is actually exercised (and constrained), particularly at the level of local classrooms and in the lived experiences of educators 'on the ground', as new policies are introduced. This study thus makes a contribution to the new strand of empirical research on agency in language policy and planning (see Bouchard and Glasgow 2019, Glasgow and Bouchard 2019) providing the first study with this explicit focus relating to adult ESOL provision in the UK.

7.2. Policy making processes: policy creation, interpretation and appropriation by different social actors

As pointed out in chapter 2, Johnson (2013) critiques the binary distinction between policy creation and policy implementation, arguing that we need to build a keener understanding of the complexity of the processes involved in policy 'implementation'. He argues that implementation needs to be understood as both 'interpretation' **and** as 'appropriation'. This follows Levinson and Sutton (2001) who, in relation to policy processes, introduced the term 'appropriation' to foreground the diverse ways in which social actors engage with policy processes across multiple contexts. In this approach, the role that both local managers and classroom teachers play in the negotiation of the enactment of any given policy is highlighted, along with an awareness that policy certainly

does not move in a straight line from the powerful pen of the creator (central or local government) to the actions of educators who are directly affected by policy prescriptions. Appropriation, then, 'is a kind of taking of policy and making it one's own' (Levinson and Sutton 2001:2) which allows for agentive acts along the way. Ball *et al* (2012), in their study of policy in schools, also contest the notion that teachers are mere ciphers who implement the policies of government as this would mean that 'all the other moments in processes of policy and policy enactments that go on in and around schools are marginalised or go unrecognised' (2012:2). Their focus is on the different enactors in policy processes in schools and how a policy is implemented. For them, policy is 'enacted' by multiple social agents and is always 'a process of becoming' (2012:4). Whilst the notion of 'enactment' is useful in focusing on the dynamic nature of policy processes, my study focussed more on the processes of interpretation and appropriation of policies, policies created by national government, as defined by Johnson (2013). I examined the ways national, institutional and personal processes were perceived and narrated by the ESOL teachers in my study in chapters 5 and 6.

7.3 Teacher agency in the face of constraining policy processes

In chapter 2, I noted that Priestly *et al* (2015:3) see agency as 'something that people do or, more precisely, something they achieve.' They identify the importance of recognising such achievements as an interplay of past, present and future. In my study, I set out to understand the shaping of the lives and beliefs of the participants over time and to uncover what it is possible for individuals to achieve in terms of agentive responses to policy. In this study, the eight ESOL teachers had differing responses to the policy changes. Their responses stemmed, in part, from their differing personal contexts and belief systems. I identified a continuum of agentive responses from the teachers, ranging from reluctant acceptance to active rejection, with differing practices of accommodation and appropriation in between. Their differing ways of appropriating, navigating, adapting or rejecting the policies were indexed in their accounts of their lived experiences in the workplace, and in the small stories they told about particular actions they had taken within the everyday cycles of teaching and administration. In chapters 5 and 6 I showed

the differing ways these teachers talked of taking and making the policy their own (Levinson and Sutton 2001) and the ways in which their agentive actions were highly situated in their personal and professional contexts. In chapter 6 I focussed in on the specific ways in which the teachers narrated the processes of policy interpretation and appropriation by different social actors within their respective institutions and the ways in which they represented their own interpretations of and reactions to institutional policy decision. I showed how their accounts indexed their professional values, their personal lives and their sense of self through the analysis of their small stories, using Barkhuizen's (2010) approach.

7.4 Policy processes: change and response

Drawing together the literature reviewed in chapter 2, the history of policy change described in chapter 3 and the data analyses from chapters 5 and 6, I now turn to three interrelated policy processes which have already been discussed in those chapters. All three policies were created at national level, then interpreted and appropriated at the institutional level and responded to at the personal level of the individual teachers. I highlight both the policy processes that were at work and the agentive responses of the teachers in my study as revealed in their accounts and in their narratives about their lived experiences. Firstly I take the abrupt changes to fees for ESOL students announced in November 2010, subsequently somewhat diluted in July 2011. This drastically reduced a large funding stream to further and adult education (FAE) institutions across the nation. Secondly I turn to the follow-on action by many of these institutions to offer the free-to-all English and Maths Functional Skills qualifications to ESOL students, despite them not being designed for students for whom English is a first language. Thirdly, I consider the effects on teachers' lives of a particular aspect of the audit culture related to the policy of monitoring student radicalisation through the Prevent agenda and the related embedding of 'British values' in classes. All three policy changes were described in chapter 3 and featured in the interviews with the ESOL teacher participants regarding policy change (chapters 5 and 6). These policy changes are presented here in date order, as the chronology of the change was a significant factor in my research design.

7.4.1 Policy change regarding access to free ESOL classes

The changes to funding and fees for ESOL at the level of national policy creation were highly significant at the institutional level, as discussed in chapter 3 (see section 3.4 in particular). This was a recurring theme in the accounts of all eight of the ESOL teachers as seen in chapter 5. Institutions reacted differently to the change in funding as it was announced, in November 2010, and later as it was amended in July 2011. The impact of the changes in fees for ESOL students forced the managers of colleges and local adult education providers to review their provision. As was seen in both chapters 3 and 5, the interpretation of this policy change differed, with some institutions responding by cutting all of their ESOL provision for the autumn term of 2011, while others reviewed ways to alter their provision so that they did not lose out on such a large income stream. The impact of these policy moves was clearly reflected in the accounts of the ESOL teachers in my study, as they talked about the diversification of their teaching timetable from the autumn term of 2011, as well as referring directly to the cuts and the impact of those cuts. As shown in chapter 5, all but one of the teachers directly mentioned these funding changes in their first interview, and even the eighth participant (Monica) talked about the need for her to diversify her teaching to ensure she had a full teaching timetable, noting that she would need to start teaching a younger age group.

Jana and Cherry responded to this policy change, and the way it was interpreted and appropriated by their respective institutions, by talking about moving away from teaching ESOL, rejecting the particular means of institutional appropriation of this policy in their context. Other participants, more constrained by personal conditions and motivated by different personal values, were agentively seeking ways to accommodate the implications of this policy change through alterations to their teaching timetables, by teaching younger students, as in Monica’s case, or participating in community-based, family learning programmes (Liz’s case) or even contemplating teaching numeracy (Eleanor’s account). Two of the participants (Jana and Eleanor) explicitly noted the element of adaptation in their colleges’ response to this policy change and the uncertainty about funding. Both colleges openly stated that they were not going to cause mass

redundancies (unlike other colleges that were doing so at the time – see chapter 3). This reference to a college-based 'no redundancy' policy indexed a concern of the teachers regarding the risk to their job security at that time.

The eight ESOL teachers in my study engaged with these changes in different ways, in the contexts of their respective intuitions. All revealed that they had taken action in agentive ways in the face of the cuts to ESOL funding and the subsequent threat to ESOL student numbers at their place of work. This was evidenced in the different courses of action they told me they had chosen as a result of these cuts (chapters 3 and 5). Several of them talked of making explicitly political acts of protests to try to affect policy decisions. Liz was encouraging other staff to be involved in the NATECLA-led protests; Anita referred to the *Action for ESOL* campaign and Anna believed it was time to '*get the placards out'* and be involved in public protests. They demonstrated a very clear belief that involvement in political protest was worthwhile. Involving themselves in this political resistance beyond the classroom was informed by their own personal values and beliefs.

My findings are noticeably different from those in two other studies on teachers and their interactions with policy. Ball *et al* (2012) state that they did not encounter open resistance from the teachers in their research, although they did find 'evidence of discontents, murmurings, indifference and disengagements' (2012:150). Bathmaker and Avis (2013:736) report that the teachers they worked with did not 'consciously and coherently' seek to address inequalities through their working practices, but were focused on their individual work context and their desire to support their students. The authors note that this 'personal professionalism' was not necessarily linked to any awareness of the wider policy context.

The different findings in my study and the overtly political stance taken by all but one of these eight ESOL teachers may be due to the nature of the context in which these teachers were working. ESOL has been a highly politicised field for some time, linked as it is to immigration and cultural diversity. This is echoed the histories and lived experiences

of the ESOL teachers in my study (see appendix two for pen portraits of the participants). I would argue that their everyday encounters of the inequalities meted out to ESOL students made these teachers more keenly aware of social justice issues in ways that may stay hidden for those who do not directly teach ESOL students.

As the policy to cut government funding for many ESOL courses took effect, the local institutions responded and interpreted this directive differently. The teachers in my study agentively responded in different ways to the changes: a few contemplated moving away from teaching ESOL all together; some took direct political action to resist the cuts; most sought diversity in their teaching timetable and took on teaching of the non-ESOL courses, including Functional Skills. Next, I turn to the ways in which my findings shed light on this shift to Functional Skills in more detail.

7.4.2. Policy change regarding national qualifications: Functional Skills

As seen in chapter 3, Functional Skills qualifications were trialled from 2007, but came to be more prominent in the further and adult education (FAE) sector from 2010 onwards. Functional Skills assume a particular importance in my study because of the funding stream policy change cited above, which directly targeted ESOL provision. At the level of institutional reaction to this national change in policy, FAE providers looked for alternatives to ESOL qualifications. As stated, they did not want to lose the large amount of money from ESOL that had formed a substantial part of their income since the start of the *Skills for Life* agenda in in 2000. There were choices to be made which reflected institutional views of the nature of ESOL and of how those with ESOL needs should be catered for. For those colleges that did not close all ESOL classes, the decision was either to stay with qualifications explicitly designed for students for whom English was not their first language, or to look for replacements that would allow providers continued access to government funding streams, commensurate with those that were to be lost. For some colleges, the final changes to fees/ funding announced in July 2011 would have little impact on their student numbers. For others the changes would result in a massive loss of income if ESOL students were turned away.

The participants in my study made reference to their institution's policy interpretation and appropriation with regard to those different funding streams. Many colleges and adult education providers appropriated the policy by replacing ESOL qualifications with those of Functional Skills. Both maths and English Functional Skills were free for students who had not achieved an equivalent (such as GCSE or Key Skills) and so attracted full funding to the college budget, thus ensuring that their provision 'followed the money' and that the institutions could keep income and staffing levels the same. At first glance, this change seemed an easy step to take. However, to offer a non-specialised course in English to ESOL students could be seen as distinctly disadvantaging them. These Functional Skills qualifications were intended to support students who had been through the English secondary educational system but had not managed to pass their GCSEs in maths and English. For those taking the Functional Skills in English, students who did not have a familiarity with a broad spoken vocabulary or who had not acquired a robust grammatical correctness would struggle with a qualification based on the premise that this knowledge was already in place. In effect, this institutional policy move discriminated against students for whom English was not their first language. It encouraged ESOL students to take a qualification that they were at greater risk of failing than were first language speakers.

Initially, the teachers talked of this change in different ways. During interview two, Anna talked quite enthusiastically about how her institution had adopted Functional Skills English for ESOL students. She felt this local policy move was good for both students and teachers and she was keen to appropriate it. She felt that a functional approach to language was already the hallmark of her institution's approach to teaching ESOL and felt the shift to these mainstream qualifications would be positive for all. This change fitted her view of ESOL teaching and she enthusiastically embraced the change, even declaring that she did not know why her college had not done this sooner. In contrast, at her second interview Cherry was certain that this move in her institution was discriminatory and cited students who had passed the ESOL qualifications at Level 1, but who were then placed on Functional Skills English at Level 1 again. She strongly believed that Functional

Skills were for '*native speakers*' (her words) and were not appropriate for ESOL students and she was clear in her rejection of this change. These two ESOL teachers engaged very differently with their institution's appropriation of a national policy decision. Their different reactions clearly emerged in their interviews, one appropriating it whilst the other rejected it. Other teachers had reacted in other ways: Monica mentioned at her second interview that she had managed to escape teaching Functional Skills, so she did not have to face this change of policy. Jana had reduced her teaching hours to ensure she remained teaching ESOL only, while Liz and Anita did not directly mention a shift to teaching Functional Skills, but both stated they were considering teaching other subjects.

As well as offering the seemingly simple swap of ESOL qualifications for Functional Skills English, by the second round of interviews, some of the participants were making reference to their institution's decision to offer Functional Skills maths to ESOL students. This was shown in chapter 6 where I explored Jasmine's response to this policy change in detail, examining the positions she took up regarding her interactions with her managers, her colleagues and her students in regard to teaching numeracy. The introduction of maths for ESOL students was another interpretation of the change of rules that some of the colleges had made in order to continue to access funding streams. This policy had been foreshadowed by Eleanor at her first interview when she had stated categorically that she would not teach maths, even if she was asked. By the second interview she was, in fact, doing just that - but she had made a conscious choice to make the best of it. Jasmine, too, was reluctantly teaching maths to ESOL students.

The accounts of both Eleanor and Jasmine revealed that neither of their institutions had made any adjustments or offered any support to the teaching staff for the transition from teaching ESOL specialist qualifications to teaching more general English or maths to the same cohort of ESOL students. By not supporting staff with this transition, these institutions were devolving all the pedagogical decisions and policy appropriation processes related to the policy changes to the teachers, absolving themselves from direct responsibility for success or failure of the change.

The teachers demonstrated that they were flexible and able to accommodate change, even though they did not like it. Both Jasmine and Eleanor talked of how they sought support from their co-teachers as they had no support from their managers in teaching numeracy to ESOL students. They both mentioned how they tried to make sure they were still teaching ESOL, while incorporating maths as the subject-focus of their classes. They demonstrated their agency in accommodating the conditions they found themselves in, but both stated that they were ESOL teachers first and foremost (expressing a strong commitment to their professional identity as educators trained in ESOL). They also indicated that they would find ways to adapt (or even subvert) the maths sessions so as to focus instead on the language needs of their students. Indeed, this could almost be seen as re-imagining their own policy of maths as a vehicle for ESOL, rather than merely 'implementing' the colleges' policy decision in favour of maths teaching for ESOL students as a way to ensure continued income. These teachers both wanted to make the policy shift meaningful for the students in their care and appropriated it to fit their values regarding educational practice.

7.4.3. Policy change regarding social values: the Prevent agenda

During the third set of interviews, which were conducted with just four of the teacher participants, two of them directly referred to the Prevent agenda as part of the changes in their institutions since their previous interviews. As seen in chapter 3, in 2011 the Coalition government declared that the anti-terrorism strategy implemented by the previous government was 'flawed' (see section 3.6) and they wanted to alert public bodies in education, health and social services to potential acts of terrorism and made it the duty of a wider range of public employees to be on the outlook for possible perpetrators. These employees included teachers in schools and colleges. There was a series of special Ofsted inspections focusing on teachers' awareness of and appropriation of the Prevent duty in many colleges and adult education providers between November 2015 and May 2016, involving five establishments in the West Midlands (Ofsted, 2016). This included the colleges that both Anita and Eleanor were teaching in.

The policy regarding the Prevent duty was then appropriated by colleges and adult education centres. They had begun providing specific training sessions for all their employees and requiring that 'British values' should be taught as an explicit, auditable part of every lesson (as seen in chapter 3). Many colleges also produced posters on 'British values' and on being aware of radicalisation, and displayed these around their buildings as a highly visible show of engagement with the policy. Some FAE institutions produced aide memoirs for teachers and implemented strategies to ensure that all teachers made reference to British values in their teaching.

In the third round of interviews two of the teachers, Anita and Eleanor, spoke at some length about the emphasis by their colleges on the Prevent agenda and on the imposition of 'British values' in their daily teaching. Anita mentioned that her college was focusing on the Prevent agenda and Eleanor related that she had received training on 'British values' and her colleges was putting up laminated posters all about these values. Eleanor felt that she already covered the notion of British cultural values through the work she did on citizenship and life in the UK. She was able to appropriate the policy of directly teaching these set 'British values' as this fitted in with her belief in exploring cultural values with her students. She talked of her explicit teaching about democracy (one of the 'British values') around the time of the referendum on Brexit. Eleanor said she had never taught politics before, but that she thought it was necessary as some of her students were '*completely clueless*' about how to vote. Jasmine, too, talked about her direct political engagement with policy change within her teaching. At her third interview she noted how it was good to involve her students in what was going on politically. She recounted how she had assisted her students to write to their MPs to protest against further cuts to ESOL funding and how they had created 'Save ESOL' posters that she displayed in her classroom.

At this time, colleges were monitoring the inclusion of 'British values' in lesson plans and requiring all staff to take online or face-to-face training sessions regarding both the Prevent agenda and the embedding of British values in teaching, with certificates given to

evidence compliance. This evidenced-based, auditable implementation of the Prevent agenda left little room for teacher agency, but Eleanor adapted this policy process to fit into her belief system, to ensure her students were initiated into a specific aspect of the British way of life, that is, voting. She took advantage of the requirement to teach the 'British value' of democracy to educate her students in how the British voting system worked, and to create a safe space in her classroom for students to talk to about their views of the referendum. She was notable among the eight participants in the study in endeavouring to navigate the particular policy processes in a positive way, despite the considerable constraints.

7.5 Chapter summary

The discussion above illustrates how the teachers in my study gave accounts of how they did or did not appropriate the various institutional interpretations of national policies created during a time of rapid change regarding ESOL. The teachers in my study were aware of the wider implications of the changes, and they were responding to these changes in different ways. A few rejected the changes and sought different ways out of teaching ESOL. This included Cherry and her rejection of the possibilities of teaching Functional Skills to ESOL students. It also includes Jana and the ways in which she was positioned and labelled through observation of her teaching. For both Cherry and for Jana, the constraints and the demands placed on ESOL teachers, and the expectations regarding the challenges they could take on, resulted in agentive decisions about leaving the profession. This happened within the duration of the study. For Liz, retirement gave a way out of the day-to-day dilemmas of her teaching context.

Others were able to accommodate the changes, to take the policies – as interpreted by their institutions - and work them into their teaching. They demonstrated a range of ways of appropriating the policies, sometimes trying to resolve the differences between their values and the values underpinning the policy. For example, Eleanor and Jasmine's narratives showed their ability to exercise agency and navigate change so as to make the best of the task of numeracy teaching imposed on them.

The ESOL teachers I interviewed communicated their awareness of the wider political situation they were living through and were all actively engaged in considering the wider needs of their students in a potentially hostile environment. For the four teachers who were present in the third and final round of interviews, the difficulties of the Brexit referendum, the Prevent agenda and the continuous change in ESOL provision dominated their conversations. Nevertheless, despite all of the constraints and restrictions, the audits and the instructions, these four teachers in my study remained positive about teaching ESOL students and about taking an active part in the development of the wider society. They sought to navigate change and, wherever possible, absorb the shifts in funding, the varying student groupings, the modification of subjects taught and the alteration in forms of support offered. Despite the severe constraints imposed by policy changes, they took pride in being able to exercise a degree of agency and in being in a position to make a small difference in the lives of their students.

The use of consecutive interviews with these teachers, over an extended period of time, along with thematic analysis and close narrative analysis of some of the small stories they told me (following Barkhuizen's approach), gave me detailed insights into their interpretations of the social and pedagogical significance of the policy changes taking place in their respective institutions. It also provided insights into the specific ways in which they saw themselves as being positioned by these policy changes, into their stance on these policy processes (largely shaped by their beliefs and personal circumstances) and, ultimately, into the degree of agency they exercised in responding to the policies. In addition, focusing on the processual nature of policy-making, and adopting Johnson's (2013) tri-partite model of policy-making as policy creation, interpretation and appropriation, provided a valuable research lens on the complex, situated and dynamic social and institutional processes involved in policy-making in this particular context of ESOL provision for adults.

In the next, final chapter, I summarise the findings of the thesis, addressing each of the research questions in turn. I also outline implications for practice.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

Policy troubles the professional lives of ESOL teachers. ESOL sits at the cross roads of language, literacy and numeracy provision, immigration, adult education and social justice. The anti-migrant, pro-Brexit press of recent years has heightened awareness among ESOL teachers of the significance of these intersections for their students. The teachers in my study were politically aware, perhaps more so than other, non-ESOL teachers, because they regularly encountered issues related to immigration, the challenges faced by refugees, growing inequalities and questions related to social justice through their work with people in the migrant population in their area, in this case, the West Midlands. Their students face issues associated with immigration status, housing, health, prejudice and hostility, as well as the ever dwindling access to ESOL provision. As shown in chapters 5 and 6, unlike other teachers, ESOL teachers are often asked to check passports, visa permissions and benefits statements to establish the eligibility of their students, an invasive act that may alter the nature of the teacher-student relationship before the classes even begin.

My research began in 2010 when, in my role as teacher educator, I became concerned about the morale of the ESOL teachers with whom I came into contact. They were anxious about the future of ESOL and their future as ESOL teachers. In this chapter I demonstrate how I have addressed the research questions. I note the significance of the study, and I point to future scenarios for practice.

8.2 Addressing the research questions

In chapter 7, I addressed the overarching research question, ‘how do ESOL teachers narrate their experiences of policy change in the adult and further education sector?’ I did this by drawing together research on policy processes and research on the perspectives of teachers, specifically their representations of the agentive actions they had taken in response to policy change, actions that had been shaped by their personal beliefs and

values and by their professional experiences. In the following sections I take each of the other research questions in turn and identify how my study has addressed them.

8.2.1. How has national policy regarding ESOL in the further and adult education sector changed since 1997?

In chapter 3, I documented the upheavals and vicissitudes in educational policy for the further and adult education (FAE) sector from 1997. My account traced these policy processes through the changing governments in England over the last 20 years. I focussed on policy related to ESOL and on funding streams. Here, my concerns were primarily with policy creation on the national level. I demonstrated that, while none of the policies were specifically designed to address language education, they affected the provision of ESOL across the country. Shifts in emphasis away from the education of those in need of support with literacy, numeracy and ESOL, evident in the New Labour Government's *Skills for Life* policy, to the education of those in the 16-19 age range, along with continual cuts to the budget for the sector since 2010, meant that change has been ever present.

The commodification of education has been clearly evident in the FAE sector's move from a focus on the students (and their learning) to the 'unit' (of funding). These outcomes-led funding regimes in FAE have seen education change from being part of the social support agenda to being part of the business world: colleges 'follow the money' and vary their provision to suit the funding streams available. The move away from the generous funding for *Skills for Life* courses that was available during the New Labour Government, to the exponential rise in provision for Functional Skills and GCSE English and maths in the sector, forms part of this change. Whilst this marketisation of education is not new, it has increased rapidly since 2010 as the government shifts the cost of any public service from the public to the private sector and, in the case of education, where possible to the individual. Fees introduced to restrict ESOL provision have meant limited access for those not on specific benefits, unless they are able to pay. Provision has been reduced, or renamed, to fit the policy changes. Documenting these changes has allowed for a closer examination of their effects on teachers, and on their working lives (as seen in chapter 3).

8.2.2. How have policy-generated funding arrangements, on national and institutional levels, shifted ESOL provision in the West Midlands since 1997?

The policy changes for ESOL provision have been largely shaped by the constant cuts in the budget allocated for the post-19 sector, as I demonstrated in chapter 3, as well as in chapters 5 and 6. As national funding drives the provision on offer at colleges and in adult and community education contexts, when funding is so drastically reduced, colleges have to become adept at interpreting policy shifts and at finding ways to continue offering courses to students presenting themselves at their doors. Across the West Midlands, through the data gathered for the policy review in chapter 3 and through the thematic analysis of the teacher participants' interviews in chapter 5, it is clear that local providers have altered their provision due to these funding changes. In chapter 3, I showed that, instead of offering classes labelled as 'ESOL', from 2010 FAE providers began to offer Functional Skills (FS) courses to ESOL students because they were still free for all. This included both English FS and maths FS. This shift was also evident in my analysis of the interview data in both chapters 5 and 6. In addition, local colleges and adult and community venues offered vocationally specific courses for ESOL students. All eight ESOL teacher participants mentioned that they had to diversify their teaching timetable to include these non-ESOL courses, something which was new to them. These were institutionally constructed interpretations and solutions to the national problem of the reduction of free ESOL courses. Some colleges dropped all their ESOL provision for a while and others focused on the under-19 ESOL cohort as adult ESOL went from being a reliable money-maker to a being a risky option for the FAE sector.

8.2.3. In what way do the ESOL teachers in this study talk about the changes in language education policy, funding arrangements and institutional changes?

In chapter 5, I provided a thematic analysis of the interviews carried out with the teacher participants over a five year period. My aim was to identify the recurring themes in their interviews regarding the changes and to document the impact of policy and funding changes on their working lives. During the first interviews, the teachers were deeply concerned that they might not have jobs in the near future, and were worried for the

ESOL students they thought would not be able to access provision. They talked of ESOL as a particular type of education due to the extreme variability amongst their student groups: diversity of languages spoken, prior educational background, levels of English in spoken or written modes. This lack of awareness, among college managers and policy creators, of the difficulties of teaching ESOL exasperated them and they expressed this to me very clearly. The changing conditions had impacted on their practices and they were concerned about providing support for students' lives outside the classroom - 'bringing the outside in' (Simpson 2011:10). These educators also feared that cutting classes for ESOL students, all of whom were migrants, would not be of concern to the general public because of anti-immigrant views exacerbated and perpetuated by certain sections of the press. Increase in workload was another way that the policy changes regarding funding affected them. They felt they had more administrative duties and less time for teaching preparation.

The fear of loss of their jobs had subsided somewhat by the second set of interviews but a recurring theme in these interviews was the impact of the policy changes on the sort of teaching they were having to do – Functional Skills English, Functional Skills maths, GCSE English and other subjects (community courses and family learning) – alongside reduced staffing quotas. Another recurring theme was the shift to the teaching of younger learners. The teachers were keenly aware that the shift to this cohort was due to funding priorities of the government. At the same time, in chapter 6, they represented themselves as pragmatic and resilient teachers who addressed these changes to their teaching in agentive and constructive ways.

In the third interviews, the four teacher participants still in the study were concerned about the latest Ofsted focus – the Prevent agenda and British values (Ofsted 2016). They felt that the senior management in their colleges did not trust them (or any teacher) and subjected them to constant forms of surveillance – learning walks, new builds with glass classroom walls, monitoring of marking and feedback. ESOL teaching teams had dwindled further and several teachers were talking about mergers between their college and others

in the area because of the Area Reviews which were starting at this time (see chapter 3). The future of a post-Brexit Britain was a worry for them, too. Two expressed a clear concern about the compatibility of being an ESOL teacher and making a full contribution to family life.

As they talked about these changes to the sector landscapes and the effects on their practices, the teachers laughed, they sighed and at some points showed considerable emotion, recalling troublesome events and practices, sharing them with a sympathetic other. They represented ESOL teaching as a something that they loved to do and they talked of the changes in policy as threatening their practices and their equilibrium.

8.2.4. How do the ESOL teachers see the identified changes as shaping their practice?

In chapter 6, the combination of narrative analysis with positioning analysis allowed me to reveal the specific significance for Jana, Jasmine and Anita of some of these policy processes. The finely detailed analysis of small stories from three interviews showed how each teacher constructed her identity as 'good teacher' (Ball *et al*, 2012) despite the constant changes to their teaching contexts. The teachers did this in different ways. Jana resisted the constraints placed upon her, asserted her agency and eventually decided she would leave the profession. Jasmine and Anita found agentive ways of accommodating the changes their institution forced upon them. Both felt these changes were cause for complaint, though the audience for their complaint was primarily me.

In their narratives, Jana, Jasmine and Anita revealed in detail how their practices as ESOL teachers had changed. They were all teaching younger cohorts of students. They were no longer teaching the pre-entry level as their college deemed the progress of these students too slow for funding purposes. They also had to teach to a pre-defined checklist of 'must-see' characteristics in their observed lesson. When some of these features were not present due to issues beyond their control (such as technology equipment), these teachers were the ones penalised for this, never management. They had to teach subjects

that they did not want to, in conditions that challenged them, often with little or no support from their managers, their institutions or the government to help implement the change. In addition, they felt that the ever-increasing administrative work took time, and energy, away from their teaching. At the same time, their teaching was scrutinised by managers, and this put greater pressure on them to ensure that every lesson included such elements as appropriate differentiation (Jasmine), stimulating tasks (Anita) or use of technology (Jana).

8.2.3. What are the implications from the findings of the research?

The study shows that ESOL teachers are directly involved in the appropriation of policy changes on a daily basis. They are at the 'talk face' of policy: in teaching different qualifications, new cohorts of students or preparing for observations and inspections of the quality of their teaching. They have to decide if the perpetual surveillance and the repeated grading of their practices is a price worth paying for working with the student group they are highly committed to. For most, this **is** worthwhile and they are happiest when with their students, teaching them English, not thinking about the persistent alterations in the regulations they need to work within. As a group, these eight ESOL teachers were aware of the difficult social contexts in which their students found themselves and they offered them more than just the content of a lesson. ESOL has been poorly served by the policies of recent governments and often poorly supported by college systems. But the teachers I interviewed still loved the work they do and were committed to making the best of it.

The findings demonstrate that these eight ESOL teachers were keenly aware of the context in which they worked. They were able to see the significance of policy change for their students and for themselves, and were often prepared to take agentive actions to challenge those changes they saw as detrimental to ESOL. Indeed, they showed that they were not part of the 'delivery' metaphor so prevalent in policy discourses regarding teaching in the further and adult education sector (see Education and Training Foundation 2014, Professional Standards 14 which states 'Plan and **deliver** effective

learning programmes for diverse groups or individuals in a safe and inclusive environment'). The teachers in my study were striving to make all their teaching meaningful and relevant to their needs of the students they taught. The use of positioning analysis and narrative analysis in this study allowed for very focused and detailed insights into the ways in which teachers represent themselves and their everyday experiences in times of great policy shift.

While this study has explored the impact of policy changes regarding ESOL provision in recent years on the participants in this study, there is more research to be carried out regarding the 'instantiation' (E.J. Johnson , 2012) of these changes. One such investigation that leads directly from my findings would be to carry out an ethnographic study of the ways in which ESOL teachers practise their specialism when teaching maths Functional Skills to ESOL students. This would build on the analysis of the experiences of both Eleanor and Jasmine in this study, and allow further insight into the processes of appropriation and instantiation of policy processes within the classroom setting.

8.3. Significance of the study

Since this study was designed around interviews conducted with the same group of ESOL teachers at three points in time, over more than five years, I was able to capture the ways in which specific policy changes were impacting on the working lives of these teachers at different political and historical junctures. The thematic analysis in chapter 5 allowed me to identify the issues that recurred most often in the teachers' accounts of their lived experiences during each phase of the study. This showed that the teachers battled with constant change at work which affected their sense of self as educators and led to stress and resentment.

In chapter 6, I was able to focus in on the narratives of three teachers which provided detailed insight into their perspectives on the changes in their working lives generated by the far-reaching policy shifts, and on the ways in which they represented their professional identities and sense of agency in these changing circumstances. In particular,

the use of positioning analysis, in the narrative analysis of their small stories, provided a powerful lens on the ways in which these teachers were positioned by policy change, on the ways in which they positioned themselves with respect to the policy changes, and on the different ways in which they navigated these positionings.

This study adds to the existing research on language educational policy processes and focusses in depth on a specific group of ESOL teachers by documenting the ways in which they narrated their agentive responses to the shifting and constraining policy processes. It combines positioning analysis with close analysis of narratives-in-interaction, building on the research of scholars such as Barkhuizen (2010), Bamberg (1997) and Georgakopoulou (2000, 2006a) and bringing new lenses to the study of policy as a complex social process, along the lines proposed by Levinson and Sutton (2001), Hornberger and Johnson (2007) and Johnson (2013). The study also adds to the recent research on agency within the area of language policy (See Bouchard and Glasgow, 2019, Glasgow and Bouchard, 2019).

8.4. Implications for teacher-education practice

My research has strengthened my belief that there needs to be more discussion about the impact of policy changes on the lives not only of teachers but of the students they are teaching. I advocate that this be part of all teacher education programmes. At a recent talk on his research (at the University of Birmingham in 2017), Francis Hult reported on work with pre-service student teachers in Sweden and showed how detailed discussions with these new teachers helped them to become 'active agents in policy processes' (Hult, 2017). With an emphasis like this, on reflexivity and awareness-raising, teachers can achieve greater ownership of the policies they have to implement and it may help them in appropriating them, making them their own (Levinson and Sutton, 2001). Following this talk, I was inspired to go back to my own practice as a teacher educator and explore the new set of Functional Skills reforms facilitated by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) for the government (ETF, 2015), and opened for consultation from September to November 2017 (DfE,2017b). I encouraged a group of PGCE English teachers to think about how the reforms would impact on their teaching and I also asked them to engage

directly with the consultation process. If more teachers took part in such consultations, it would be harder for the policy makers to ignore the teachers who must find the means of putting those changes into practice. Such engagement should become a part of all teacher education courses to ensure a deeper awareness of the ways that the political impacts on their everyday teaching lives. There is always the potential for agency for ESOL teachers and consideration of this should be part of any teacher education programme. Promotion of involvement in organisations such as NATECLA and *Action for ESOL* (see chapter 3) should also be advocated by teacher educators in their courses as well as by all further and adult education providers of ESOL. Encouraging teachers to be involved in their wider political context should be a goal for all educational establishments.

8.5 Final reflection

Policy does not stop at the production and distribution of guidance documents. Funding regimes do not necessarily shape institutional practices in the ways that those who hold the purse strings imagine. National level changes to both funding and policy are managed through the ways each educational institution interprets and implements them on a local level. Teachers are those who ultimately enact the changes with the students. National and institutional level recommendations, specifications and directions all come down to the specific local ways in which teachers appropriate them and make them work – or not. This is, perhaps, something that policy makers forget when they imagine the idealised recipients of their carefully constructed and politically aligned directives. This study has gazed, with intent, at the rich practices of eight ESOL teachers, who were directly involved in policy processes of change every day. The ESOL teachers in this study demonstrated their ongoing commitment to their students and their learning. Teachers such as these will always find spaces in which they can see - and bring about - hope for the future.

APPENDICES

Appendix One:

My life in ESOL

Here I offer a brief account of 'where I am coming from'. I include key periods in my personal history in the ESOL field and I attempt to make explicit my own values and beliefs with regard to It is an open account of my own history and is, necessarily, subject to my understandings and evaluations. I am aware that this is not written in as formal a style as the thesis itself, but feel the genre is appropriate to the task of situating my study within my personal experiences.

At university, I was lucky enough to be able to study for a degree in English language and I have since found it useful in all aspects of my working life. During the last year of my degree I decided I wanted to become a teacher of the D/deaf and went happily along to the interview for a post graduate certificate in education (PGCE). While there I was told that the policy for both the course and the schools used for teaching practice was to enforce spoken language and that even profoundly deaf children were forbidden to sign. As you can see from my choice of verbs – 'enforce' and 'forbid' – this was not an ideology I could accept and so I left the interview midway through and retracted my application for this particular PGCE.

I did take a PGCE, in primary/middle school years, at Roehampton Institute which was, at the time, affiliated to the Institute of Education (IoE) in London. Whilst there, a friend and I would go to all the lectures we could that were hosted at The Institute. This was 1981-1982 and multicultural education was a big part of the discourse in education. But it was a hard time for a newly qualified teacher to find a job and I applied for many. Whilst looking for a post as a teacher, I stayed in London and joined various local groups. I was living in Brixton and worked as a volunteer for Oxfam, for a paper called *The Leveller* and also some anti-apartheid movements. One of these was the Namibia Support Committee. I helped out at their office, staffed stalls to promote the organisation and helped raise money for the cause. I mixed with like-minded Londoners and met with visitors from

Namibia and South Africa who were campaigning to highlight the situation in both countries. I vividly remember a long conversation with one of the officers from SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organisation, those fighting for independence in Namibia which was then still occupied by South Africa against the dictate of the United Nations resolution 435). She was interested in my capacity as a teacher of English as well as an activist. So it happened that, in February 1983, I went to work for SWAPO as a volunteer on a United Nations project, to teach English to female refugees living in Zambia. The project lasted 6 months and then I returned to London that summer and found a job teaching in a primary school in Hackney. The job was funded by Section 11. This was the eleventh section of the 1966 Local Government Act which gave funding for the 'additional education needs' for those from the New Commonwealth. The role was as a teacher for English as a Second Language (ESL). My duties included working with all classes across the primary school to support the language development of those whose English was not yet proficient enough to deal effectively enough with the curriculum.

These were the days before the implementation of the National Curriculum (which happened in 1988) and so there was an enormous amount of freedom in what teachers could do. The school was part of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) which had a very participatory approach to developing literacy and language skills. ILEA's approach was often referred to as 'whole language' and was linked to the ideas of Ken and Yetta Goodman (e.g. Goodman 1986). Children were encouraged to read what they wanted and would receive support from the teacher. They read aloud frequently, and shared books in small groups and with the whole class. They also wrote books, shared story creation and were allowed to develop spelling rules in collaboration with more knowledgeable others – the teacher, a peer, a child a bit older than them. It was an inspired time to be working with children developing their language skills and I saw children take real ownership of their reading, writing and oracy.

For the next few years I alternated between working with adult refugees in Zambia for UN/ SWAPO projects and working with children in London primary schools. The posts in

schools were all funded through Section 11 with a remit to develop children's language and support educational development. The work in Zambia for SWAPO focused on developing English skills with adults who spoke Oshivambo, Ndonga and occasionally other Namibian languages. For both jobs I was supporting the transition from first, acquired languages to the dominant, learnt language of English. I loved it: devising tasks to encourage spoken fluency, creating scenarios to focus on the language needs for the moment of learning and for their future. In Zambia I even worked with an illustrator to produce a pack of easily reproducible worksheets that used the Freirian approach of 'codes' (pictures of relevant local scenes) to provide the basis for a simple English course for the soon-to-be created state of Namibia.

I loved the work so much that I decided I wanted to follow my degree in English language with a master's in teaching English language. I did this at the University of Birmingham, in 1990. English language was once again at the heart of my studies. While studying I needed to support myself and so I began teaching Namibian teachers who were at a college near the university. This was my first foray into teacher education. This helped consolidate my desire to teach adults, but I was not sure how to take this further. I did not want to become an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher. For me then, as now, teaching English to temporary 'foreigners' has such strong overtones of working with the privileged to help them become more privileged, not supporting the everyday use of a language needed to survive and thrive. This was, and still is, an ideological choice for me. So, I went back to teaching ESL in schools, this time in Nottingham (my home town). I struggled with some of the opinions of the teachers, most of whom lived in the leafy suburbs whilst teaching in an inner city school, complaining how different their own children were from the city children they taught. I did not like the way they 'othered' these children. I was uncomfortable and was eager to escape. During this time I volunteered with the local council for a scheme which encouraged fluent English speakers to support migrant women in their own homes, teaching them basic English.

Whilst looking for a new job, I saw and applied for a Section 11 post in a college in Birmingham. I was offered the job, much to my surprise, and found myself back working with adults – or at least those over 16. Once again, I had found something I loved. I taught on various language and communication study classes linked to vocational courses such as Motor Vehicles, Information Technology, Business Studies and Child Care. I taught GCSE English and Access to Higher Education study skills courses. And I also taught ESOL, English for Speakers of Other Languages. I liked this different name. It showed that this was not about teaching English to those who had just one other language – it had a plurality and in that a notion, for me, of equity and diversity, and could also be seen as symbolic of the beginning of a shift I the thinking about multilingualism.

It was 1991 and the college where I worked had a fairly simple management structure of just three layers; teachers, managers and the principals. This seemed to engender trust between layers, considerable freedom for innovation with a clear focus on the needs of the locality. I was involved in courses that taught bilingual classroom assistants to work with the mainly Mirpuri Punjabi speaking primary school populations in the east of Birmingham. These bilingual classroom assistants were then able to use both their Mirpuri (or Sylheti and sometimes Urdu) and their English to support children in local primary schools develop both languages. The ESOL I taught was often to the mothers of these children, settled communities from Pakistan or Bangladesh. I also taught their older sisters (much of my teaching was in a women's centre) who were born and educated in east Birmingham but who still needed support with their academic English. These students were, then, EAL (English as an Additional Language) students – that is, they still needed some support with English as it was in addition to their home language.

As I moved from being teacher to being course leader and then to support manager I thought a lot about the different English language needs of the learners I was teaching. I kept my membership of NALDIC (National Association of Language Development in Education) which is focused on schools and also joined NATECLA (National Association for Teaching English and other Community Languages to Adults) which has an adult focus. In

1998 I began a doctorate in exploring the literacy skills of young bilingual Muslim women. However, this was a time of huge change for me at work and I had several promotions in the space of a year which eventually meant I was in a new college, as head of department and I was unable to continue with my studies. My move to the new college came in 2001 and the *Skills for Life* strategy had just been launched. This was an enormous government project that eventually cost over £9 billion, with a focus on developing the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic for the population of England. The project funded new core curricula for literacy, numeracy and, a year later, for ESOL. There were resources, qualifications, assessment materials, specialist teaching awards and offshoot projects, all to enhance the basic skills of the nation. Teachers were sent on training courses for the curricula – and I was one of the trainers for the literacy curriculum. I absorbed myself fully in the new found focus on basic skills. At last, the area of education that was closest to my heart was being given the attention I felt it needed.

Then the chance to work as a teacher educator, in the field of basic skills, was advertised for a local university. I wanted the job so much and was delighted to be appointed in May 2003. I soon found myself in charge of nine subject-specialist teacher education courses. All three strands – literacy, numeracy and ESOL – were catered for and at three different levels. This meant that the university I worked at was one of the biggest providers of subject specialist post-sixteen education in the country.

The culture shock for me, from being a head of department in a sector I knew well to being a so-called academic at a university, was profound. I went around with my resignation letter already written for the first three months at least, sure that I was unable to do the job. Brookfield's (1995) imposter syndrome hit me hard. In fact, I knew an awful lot about the area of basic skills, about its history and about the way I wanted it to be. The rich approach in university of talking about teaching, talking about what happens in the classroom with other academics and with the student teachers I came into contact with, was uplifting. I was able to step back a little from the hurley-burley of classroom teaching and focus on the whys and the hows as well as the whats, whens and

whos. Since then, I have been working in teacher education for ESOL, Literacy and numeracy teachers across the West Midlands, trying to pass on my enthusiasm for teaching in the FAE sector, encouraging teachers – both new and experienced – to value their students and keep their interests always at the centre of their teaching. It has been a privilege to support new teachers – ESOL included – as they begin their teaching careers.

Brookfield's statement – 'I teach to change the world' (1995:1) has been a constant touchstone throughout my life whilst teaching in Zambia, in the homes of Asian women, in east London, in inner-city Nottingham and Birmingham; when teaching adult refugees in apartheid southern Africa, when teaching council estate children in London's east end and when teaching young Asian women in the heart of east Birmingham, I wanted to make a difference. All of these spaces and places have supported my belief that ESOL teaching is more than just teaching skills in English.

Appendix Two:

Pen portraits of the participants

Cherry had completed a degree in Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Studies and then taken a specialist PGCE in maths. She had worked as a maths teacher in various settings such as prisons and FE colleges. At one of the colleges she was offered cover work for an ESOL class and became interested in teaching this subject. When she was in her early thirties, she studied for the ESOL subject specialist course. She stated that this was so she had 'another string to her bow' and would supplement her main interest of Special Educational Needs. When first interviewed in 2010 she had already begun to move away from teaching ESOL and maths to taking on responsibilities for dyslexia screening and support in her college. Since then she has become an expert in dyslexia and other areas of inclusion, focusing in support for university students and screening across all educational sectors. She also studied extensively at master's level for several qualifications in special educational needs. Cherry was interviewed twice (November 2010 and July 2013) but had moved to supporting university-level students by the time of the third interviews and was not teaching any ESOL, so not interviewed for a third time.

Anna had been a line-manager of ESOL for a few years at the time of the first interview in 2011. She had been teaching in adult education for some years before deciding to take the ESOL subject specialism course. With a degree in Foreign Languages, she had experience in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) abroad before finding that she preferred to work in the public sector and moved to teaching in adult education. At the time of the first interview, Anna was in her mid-40s. She was passionate about her teaching and wanted to ensure that her sense of social justice was satisfied in her working environment. In her future-gazing, she was considering a move to teaching abroad when her children were older. Over the time of the three interviews (March 2011, June 2013 and July 2016), Anna had been given more management duties and by her last interview was only teaching a little ESOL.

Anita was in her early forties in 2011, teaching ESOL part time in an adult education service. She had taught in another country before teaching in England, and she stated that she wanted to support the immigrant population as they adjusted to life in the UK. She had small children and wanted to make sure she had plenty of time for them in their formative years, so she had made a conscious decision not to teach full-time. Anita was aware that this might have an impact on her career, but felt that this was the right way to go for the sake of her family. Anita gave three interviews – March 2011, June 2013 and July 2016.

At the initial interview, **Eleanor** was in her early thirties, having taught ESOL in a few colleges on a part time basis before completing the ESOL subject specialism course. She had been teaching full time in her current college for a while – and much preferred this to the college she had worked in before, feeling she had become much more a part of the community of practice. Eleanor was very community focused and loved English, both language and literature. She had considered teaching literature, but had found herself teaching ESOL, which she thoroughly enjoyed, especially the lower levels. Eleanor participated in interviews in March 2011, September 2011 and then in July 2016.

Liz was the oldest of the teacher participants. In fact, she was thinking (and talking about) retirement at the first interview in 2011 as she was already 60. She had been a teacher of ESOL for a while, coming to this later in life after working with Deaf students and completing a degree which involved Deaf Studies. Liz had a real passion for supporting those who were not so privileged, and had entered teaching through supporting women in the community. For some years she had been managing the ESOL department in her college very successfully, brought in to do so after a damming Ofsted report in the early noughties. She was aware of the changing roles of management within the college system and was concerned about those changes. She still loved to teach ESOL and wanted to ensure she taught a range of levels so she could support the staff she was managing. Interviews with Liz took place in May 2011 and in July 2013. She retired soon after the interview in July 2013 and no longer taught ESOL.

Jana was in her early thirties at her interview in 2011 and was thinking about her career. Her background in Foreign Languages had encouraged her to consider teaching ESOL, but she was not certain that it was allowing her to make the best of her interests and so was considering a change of direction when we held our first interview in 2011. Jana was finding it hard to maintain the work-life balance that she wanted. She was caring for a family member and this was straining her equilibrium in terms of how much time she wanted to give to the administrative aspects of her teaching job. She loved the face-to-face teaching but hated the way she felt pressured about being 'perfect' as a teacher. Her first interview was in June 2011 and the second in June 2013. Jana then left teaching to study for a degree at a local university and was no longer teaching ESOL.

Monica was nearly forty in 2011, with small children to care for at home and a real sense of involvement with her students at work. She focused on the students and their everyday lives. As she worked predominantly with women, her sense of shared experiences of being a mother was part of her everyday experience. Her background was in a non-related degree subject that led her to work at an airport for a while. This whetted her appetite for travel and she felt that she could combine this with teaching English. She taught English to children abroad then came back to the UK and applied for jobs teaching adults. She had some management responsibility for the ESOL provision in her small college, but it was not particularly onerous. Her two interviews were in June 2011 and in June 2013. She was not contactable for the third round of interviews.

The eighth person interviewed in 2011 was **Jasmine**. She was also the youngest, at 27. She had a degree in English and had wanted to become a journalist. However, she went to work in a college and started teaching a bit of mainstream English. As she did this the college cut almost all of the A levels and most of the GCSE English courses. She realised that there was a big department for ESOL and began to teach this instead. Jasmine said she moved into ESOL really slowly, spending time observing teachers before daring to take on any direct teaching herself. When interviewed for the first time, she was teaching entry and pre-entry levels, enjoying the interaction but felt overburdened with the

amount of lesson preparation needed at the lower levels of ESOL. It was the end of her first year as a full time teacher and she had also completed the subject specialism that year, too. She felt she did not have a good work life balance and she was hoping for it to be better the following year. Jasmine was interviewed three times – in November 2011, May 2013 and June 2016.

Appendix Three:

Email to possible participants

Email sent to ex-students on 27/10/2010

Hello

Sorry to email you to ask something of you - I am emailing all ESOL stand alone-ers in the past 4 years. I want to conduct some interviews with 4-6 ESOL teachers for my research. I would like to have half of the interviewees who taught ESOL before the 2001 (and are still teaching ESOL) and half who began post 2001.

If you think you might be interested in this, please email me and I will let you know more about it - the sort of questions I'd like to ask, the process and so on.

I do hope you are well and enjoying this half term break.

With all best wishes (and in hopeful anticipation!)

Cathie

Appendix Four:

Consent form

Researcher: Cathie Lacey

I have asked you if you will take part in my research about the lives of ESOL teachers because you are either a past or current student of the ESOL subject specialist course at the University of Wolverhampton (2006-2010).

I am seeking your approval to digitally record then transcribe the interview with you. The discussion will last about an hour, with a follow up discussion (also recorded and transcribed) when the first has been transcribed. You will have access to copies of the transcriptions – and the audio, if you wish.

You are free to withdraw your participation at any time.

Confidentiality: Participation in this study is confidential and all information will be written in such a manner that you, and your college/colleagues, will not be identifiable.

Consent: I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

Participant's signature	
Participant's name (printed) and date	
Researcher's signature/ date	

Appendix Five:

ESOL interview questions

Thank you for taking part in my project. These are the questions I will ask you in the face-to-face interview. I have sent them to you now as you may want to consider your responses. I will ask you each question in turn and record the whole session. When I have the recording transcribed I will send it to you with some additional questions that we can discuss face-to-face or via phone/email.

1. Can you tell me why you became an ESOL teacher in the first place?
2. Tell me a bit about the class/classes you are teaching this year.
3. How do you currently feel about being an ESOL teacher?
4. What are your main achievements as an ESOL teacher?
5. How confident do you feel that you are making a difference in the lives/learning of the students?
6. What's it like working in your college/institution?
7. Where do you see yourself in five years' time?
8. What are the connections between you as a person (your life) and you as an ESOL teacher (your work)?
9. What are your biggest fears?
10. What are you most looking forward to/concerned about in the next year?
11. How do you feel about being involved in this research?
12. Any questions?

Appendix Six:

Longer extract for Jana's story

(The extract in the thesis is in the darker ink)

Cathie: Interesting. Okay number 6. What's it like working in your college institution?

Jana: Well, I have to say in terms of the team that I work with, fantastic. I could not ask for better work colleagues, erm, we are just honestly … if you need any ideas any suggestions any help, we're all there for each other. The sad thing is that the team has become smaller with, we had someone retire and they didn't replace her. We had someone else leave, they didn't replace **her**. So, um, we've had one person who teaches other subjects and she has been taken away now from the ESOL, so we kind of felt like we are diminishing but we're a fantastic team, er, and I just think we are so lucky for that and I think we have developed a lot because the course leader that we've got now, and also just the way we, we relate to each other. I think the institution is a different thing because… obviously, er, they're, it's kind of stuck between a rock and a hard place isn't it, any institution. It's like I say, it all goes back ultimately to politics and funding so… you know, decisions have got to be made about finance and that filters down to our hours. I think, I think I went through a phase where I felt like the institution, the institution wasn't supportive of us as individuals. Recently I think that has changed a little bit, erm, because we have been told that because of the funding cuts our institution has a no redundancy policy so, which is a good thing, you know. Obviously you hear people losing their jobs but the downside is that, you know, it may be that you're put into other areas erm, which is, erm, but I do think everybody appreciates at the moment in the institution that, that we kind of feel a little bit reassured by the principal and so on. Erm, so in that way I think certain things have improved.

The one area that I think you know I have an issue with but again I don't really know what the institution could do about it, if anything, because it's the observation process, erm, because they are bound, as I say, to produce figures, and grades, numbers. Well, that's the impression I have been **given** because I thought it all tied up with Ofsted ultimately. So we had grading, but my recent experience where I was graded a three for a lesson and quite frankly I argued my case. I felt I **was** completely justified in saying that it was a two. I then had to go through the whole process of being re-observed and I was given a **one**. The first grade was given by an external ESOL consultant [sighs] which I should probably stop there, you know, but

the second one was done, the re-observation was done by someone who is **not** an ESOL consultant. Therefore, I think that just raises quite a few questions because what does that say? My institution is happy that a non ESOL specialist will give me a one… but an 'ESOL specialist', and I say that in inverted commas… erm, she said it was a three and I know personally that it was not a three, but I do believe I was penalised for the fact that it was in the outreach class with no IT equipment erm, so that's beyond my control. So I think that is just incredible that any, that anybody should be, erm, kind of assessed in their job... based on numbers and based on things that are beyond their control. I cannot believe that that's actually legal, first of all. I can't believe that that's acceptable. And what I did find when I tried to protest to my institution and say that I wanted to make a complaint I was very much dissuaded from doing it and then but I was quite adamant and I was told, 'well if it will make you feel happier you can, but, I have to say that it won't change the grade and this person's already gone for the day and she won't be..' so I just thought, basically, the whole thing, for want of a better word, is farcical. You know, because now people are saying to me, 'ok, you were re-observed, that's fantastic, you got a grade one.' Well a) it was from, no disrespect to him, I was just glad I hadn't got to be re-observed again… but to give me a one, what does that mean? It means **nothing**, because a) he is not an ESOL specialist, ok, but b) it's all so subjective

Cathie: It **is** subjective, yeah.

Jana: and I think, just think. I know you can't make it completely objective, the process but, I just think the whole grading system's wrong and, you know, wouldn't it be – they have the audacity to say it is a **supportive** process - it's nothing like. It just sounds like it's punitive … because it's basically… It seems like they, you know, to catch people out and you have to prove yourself as a teacher as well and I think at what point do you ever become qualified? Well you don't as far as I'm concerned, if you are going to be graded. You know, you get grades… erm, when you're sort of going through your, your formative years in education and so on, erm, to kind of show, show what level you are and where you can progress but I think when you've actually been told that 'you're ok, we'll give you this contract and you are a teacher', why am I still being graded? Why am I not being - observed by all means because peer observations are fantastic, but, you know, and if there was a real problem then, yes, just keep going through the channels of supporting and suggesting, but that is just completely destructive to people's con, erm, confidence and also it's just made me furious…

***Cathie*:** I bet

Jana: …and it's made me have absolutely no respect for the observation system. Erm, but as I say, even though I have expressed that to my institution, it's not going to change because, that's what I say, they're kind of, they're

between a rock and hard place and they're not going to rock the boat. And so, another reason why I shouldn't be in it! Be in the job. It's just... unfortunate when big things like this are coming through then, you know?

Appendix Seven:

Longer extract of Jasmine's story

(The extract in the thesis is in the darker ink)

Cathie: OK that should be fine. I think its recording. I've just tested it earlier so it should be OK. OK, so what I want would like to do is revisit really

Jasmine: OK

Cathie: Some of the things you said and talk to you about how this year has been. Is that alright?

Jasmine: Yes, that's fine.

Cathie: OK. So, erm there was just. There was a few things that I thought would be interesting to talk about. First thing is, how has this year been?

Jasmine: [Laughs] Again, it's been another stressful year. In terms of teaching it's actually been erm…. easier for me to plan lessons

Cathie: Yeah

Jasmine: Because I've had Entry 2 students

Cathie: Yeah, cos last year you had

Jasmine: Pre-entry

Cathie: Pre-entry, didn't you?

Jasmine: So in terms of **teaching**, and prepping the lessons, Entry 2 has been lovely.

Cathie: OK. Why?

Jasmine: I think it's not so much prepping. I think you can go in there with ideas and the students do most of the work for you.

Cathie: Oh, ok

Jasmine: So, I mean, I've had really good Entry 2 students, Entry 2 bordering Entry 3

Cathie: Oh good.

Jasmine: And they have been quite confident students. Erm, you know. I've just had a good bunch of students, that kind of … love working with each other and very expressive students which made my life a little bit easier in terms of teaching so I haven't had to do as much planning as I did last year

Cathie: And how many hours a week do you do at the moment?

Jasmine: Erm, I teach 11 classes.

Cathie: 11 separate classes?

Jasmine: Yeah, 11 separate classes.

Cathie: So, separate students in each of those classes?

Jasmine: Oh, no, no, no. Classes… one, two, three, four… five.

Cathie: Five classes and all of them are Entry 2?

Jasmine: But I have taught **numeracy** classes which are mixed level from Entry 1 to Entry 3.

Cathie: OK. Can you tell me a bit about the numeracy then?

Jasmine: [Laughs] The numeracy is **really** difficult to teach.

Cathie: Is it?

Jasmine: Because, what I find is that students are… better than what we teach them, if that makes sense. They've got, normally, they've got higher qualifications in their own country in numeracy. It is the language side that they find…

Cathie: OK... so what are you actually teaching them? Are you teaching them a qualification?

Jasmine: Yeah, er it's the … Edexcel Numeracy Functional Skills.

Cathie: So, they are doing Functional Skills, entry, entry level though?

Jasmine: Entry level.

Cathie: Yeah, yeah.

Jasmine: So, it's most of it, they have a problem with the language, rather than anything else. Erm. But it's difficult for me to teach numeracy cos I'm not a maths person [laughs]

Cathie: [Laughs] So, what's your highest level of maths qualification?

Jasmine: GCSE.

Cathie: OK.

Jasmine: And the last time I had any involvement was, with maths was GCSE maths. [laughs] Which is just going back 15 years ago.

Cathie: OK. And is that just you here doing that, or are there other people?

Jasmine: No. Most of the full time lecturers are teaching maths, Functional Skills. And that is a separate lesson. So it's not…

Cathie: and is that just for ESOL students?

Jasmine: Yes, that's right. It's only for ESOL students.

Cathie: So there are no native speakers in there?

Jasmine: No. No native speakers. It's for ESOL students. Erm and it's a separate class, so it's not integrated into ESOL. It's taught as a separate lesson.

Cathie: OK. Right.

Jasmine: Although we do, on a daily basis, try and integrate numeracy.

Cathie: And er, so is that? So, do you teach the Entry 2 for their ESOL and then that same group for their maths?

Jasmine: … Maths yes, that's right. For their numeracy. But however, that Entry 2 group might be Entry 2 for the ESOL, the English part, but they maybe Entry 3 in the numeracy, or they may be Entry 1. You get a mixed level numeracy group.

Cathie: Are any of them really high?

Jasmine: Really high.

Cathie: Yeah? Like what sort of level?

Jasmine: [Sighs] Well, I think probably level 1, they could do level 1.

Cathie: Yeah, yeah? But they are not putting in for level 1?

Jasmine: Erm, we do have a Friday class, er, with Mike, who does the level 1. So some of them go with Mike if they have a **really** high level

Cathie: As well as with you? Or?

Jasmine: No. They miss that lesson and go with Mike for level 1.

Cathie: OK. So is that, is that? That sounds like a big change from last year?

Jasmine: Yeah, we were doing it last year, but it wasn't as difficult for me. It was foundation learners so with, with them, they had to, I think, count up to ten or, you know, add up to ten. So it wasn't as difficult

Cathie: OK. Right

Jasmine: But now it is **really** challenging [laughs], because of the higher levels students. And, ahhh! They've got so much more knowledge than I have with numeracy

Cathie: So, how do you work that? How do you do that then?

Jasmine: Erm, I think you **pretend** that you've got a lot more knowledge [laughs].

Cathie: [Laughs] Yeah

Jasmine: You **look** confident, like you know what you are talking about! And then, it was a case of talking to other numeracy lecturers, I think, and looking at what **they're** doing. And kind of integrating it into what, you know, the **English** side of it

Cathie: And did you…?

Jasmine: For example, reading bus timetables, things like that... But you can't do two hours of reading bus timetables.

Cathie: No, no.

Jasmine: So, [hhh] I think for me it was finding, erm… The difficult part was finding … interesting entertaining activities to do. I could teach them maths, but boring. [Laughs] I can't make it exciting for them. And also differentiating, cause it is not my subject specialism

Cathie: So, did you have any support from the college?

Jasmine: Erm, not really. We were kind of just told to teach it.

Cathie: So, there was nothing formalised about ...

Jasmine: No.

Cathie: supporting you into teaching numeracy?

Jasmine: Nothing

Cathie: Gosh. OK. So, it was support from your peers?

Jasmine: Yep. Support from peers.

Cathie: Peers who are co-ESOL teachers, but also maths, numeracy teachers, as well? OK.

Jasmine: Many people like Mike Smith*, you know, er

Cathie: Chantelle*?

Jasmine: Chantelle

Cathie: Gosh. So is that, is that the biggest change for the **ESOL** teaching, do you think?

Jasmine: Yeah. And it is quite difficult because, I mean, you'd go through the week of … erm planning **English** lessons and you'd feel comfortable. By the end of the week you'd be really on edge [laughs] because you know the numeracy class would be coming up and, erm, students they, they are really on the ball. They know numeracy from, you know, their own countries. You know, they've got … er, you know, degrees, really high qualifications

Cathie: Yeah

Jasmine: in, in numeracy

Cathie: Yeah, yeah. So what was their reaction to it do you think, then?

Jasmine: Erm, some of them really enjoyed it. They, er, and I think the people that enjoyed it most are… the people who didn't get much of a chance to do it in their own countries. They don't have very high qualification in numeracy in their own country

Cathie: Right

Jasmine: But most of the students **do** have a high qualification from their country and they just kind of saw it as something they need to pass, an exam they need to take…

Cathie: so they're

Jasmine: to improve their chances of getting a job

Cathie: Right. So that's what it is about. So is that how it is sold?

Jasmine: That's right, yeah.

Cathie: Ok, ok. So, [sigh]… is there anybody in your team who's got numeracy specialism at all?

Jasmine: Apart from Mike Smith who only comes in on a Friday

Cathie: Right. He's not in your team, is he? Is he in ESOL?

Jasmine: Er, yep.

Cathie: He is? Oh, I know, of course I do. I'm sorry. OK. Yeah. So, that's quite. OK. So what about? So that's numeracy, what about literacy? There was…you were talking last time I spoke to you about maybe doing GCSE or, English, or…

Jasmine: Yeah, I have put that on my staff appraisal, erm, to shadow someone who's teaching GCSE English, because I would like, now, to teach some GCSE English. I think, erm, I need something, another challenge.

Cathie: Yeah. You talked about liking challenges, didn't you?

Jasmine: Yeah, yeah. And I think I need that challenge. [Hhhh] I am glad I didn't do it this year, because of all the personal stuff that is going on, but, erm, next year, I would love to look at teaching GCSE. Just shadow someone to see how I can take my ESOL expertise into a GCSE English class.

* Names have been changed to protect anonymity

Appendix Eight:

Longer extract for Anita's story

(The extract in the thesis is in the darker ink)

Cathie: OK, so last time I recorded this was in June 2013 so it's 3 years ago.

Anita: That long ago? Wow.

Cathie: Yeah it's 3 years ago.

Anita: Gosh. And the first time was a couple of years before.

Cathie: It was. It was about 18 months before that in 2011. So the first one was 2011, I think March 2011, and then the last one was June 2013. So now we're in July 2016. So what's happened for you since then… at work?

Anita: At work, a lot of changes have been happening in terms of the college itself, not so much with me but… well, I'll talk about the college first and then about me. The college has gone through a huge change because it's gone private now.

Cathie: Ah, right. And you were talking about Porthouse maybe being private last time we spoke.

Anita: Porthouse has been private for a while. So when I was working with Porthouse, when I started working with Porthouse it was a part of Waverley Community College, and erm, then when Waverley Community College merged with College of Continuing Education to form Waverley Adult and Community College, Porthouse was a separate employer. So I used to be paid separately at Porthouse and separately at WCC, so er… WACC. So that's how it happened. And then I left Porthouse a couple of years ago, moved over completely, because I was doing a few hours for Manor Hall which is WACC and a few hours for Porthouse, according to me, Porthouse was a partner and they were all… because the paperwork was the same and Porthouse was… the standardisation, I mean they were observed by the erm, erm management from, you know, same management was observing and doing all the checks basically, they were following the same policies and everything and paperwork. So you know it was the same college and part of the college but it was a partner organisation, but it was privately managed. Er, complicated. So what happened was, a couple of times, I was doing a few hours at WACC and a few hours at Porthouse, totally put together I was doing enough number of hours and they were promoting teachers who had been doing sessional work to go on to become permanent tutors.

Cathie: Oh yeah?

Anita: And you needed to have a certain number of hours, you needed to be working a certain number of hours, which I was but split between the two, so because of

that I wasn't considered for that position and they said 'no, you can't Porthouse because they pay you separately, separate employer so we can't'. So unfortunately a couple of times like that I had to miss it. Then I thought… and they were paying less as well.

Cathie: Yeah you said that, they paid quite a bit less.

Anita: Yeah. So I thought, you know, let me come over to Manor Hall completely and build up my hours, because it's the same college and er because I was doing some hours with them anyway. And that's what I did. So what's been happening at the college is, over the last 2 or 3 years they announced that they were going to go private and they were still within Waverley Council, they were being, you know, assessed and supported and everything, so there have been changes happening in terms of, you know, management and a re-shuffle of the whole management and everything, senior management. And a lot of people have either been made redundant, a lot of positions have been removed. So it's been very unsettling, morale has been very low.

Cathie: Has it?

Anita: Yeah. And a lot of people have been moved from Manor Hall over to Yew Tree which is just the main college centre where they run more courses. Manor Hall is more of an ESOL centre. So a lot has been going on and there's been constant change to adapt for tutors as well and there's ongoing training all the time, expectations. By the way I'm not complaining, I'm just trying to say that there's so much to take in and it's very, very unsettling. Er, er, so all this has been happening. And since I think last year we have gone private. Now this academic year we will be completely on our own I think, and we've had a new Principal and a lot of management heads have resigned and they've gone on to something else. So the previous Principal did quite a lot for the college and now we've got a new Principal for the last year or so, year or whatever it was.

Cathie: Has it been alright?

Anita: I haven't got anything to say against the Principal but what I'm saying is there's been so many changes happening in the college, so like I said, we used to have a Guidance Team at Manor Hall Centre, erm, like a team of 2 or 3 people at least who were present there all the time

Cathie: Guidance for students?

Anita: Yes, guidance and support. So they used to do the initial assessments and they used to interview the people and then allocate them to their appropriate classes, and then erm, help students with whatever queries, and then some people, if somebody needed transfers from one course to another or, you know, application for support, like erm other costs like travel costs, child care costs and this and that and a million other queries, and in terms of enrolment as well. Because the tutors are not…though we have been given a basic training as to how to enrol a learner, because there's so many erm, you know, legal aspects of the enrolment form, especially whether they need to pay or not and what sort

of benefit they're on, how long have they lived in the country, we need to do a lot of checks before, you know, we make it free for them, before we announce that it's fully funded. And some people have to pay, some people have to pay half the fees, some people have to pay full fees, so there's a lot of clauses there. So the basic form anybody can fill in like with their details, like name and address and things, but there's a lot of intricacies, you know, complications that we are not aware of, and every time we had a problem we used to run to them and ask for er their opinion, you know, because they handle it day in and day out, they were aware of what the problems were. But the whole team has now been moved to Yew Tree we have nobody there at Manor Hall for guidance and support, and any query comes in we have to like literally run to the manager or take it up with somebody else at Yew Tree. And the teacher's role has changed as a result to do much more than what we have been used to doing. We have always done a little bit of enrolment as well, but then it's so much more now that it's entirely dependent. And last term there was a little bit of chaos in terms of enrolment forms being done towards still till the end for a course that had started before. So what happened was, there were some courses which were non-accredited and there were some which were accredited, erm, so the non-accredited courses then went on to become accredited because that was the progression the learners were, you know, achieving. So the community course, as we call them, community course non-accredited, erm, then went on to become an accredited one. And they're all erm, multi….what can I say?

Cathie: Mixed.

Anita: Yeah mixed level classes and huge numbers as well sometimes fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, up to twenty as well, and when there are mixed levels and mixed abilities… not just levels, and abilities, I mean, I say some of them are really basic, some of them are quite confident, lots of abilities, and you have two hours to teach a lesson in, how can you differentiate? And basically it comes down to spending time with that group or that learner, how much time can you afford to spend with each learner or each group? They don't get much because if you have four levels or five levels in one class it just gets diluted so much and it becomes chaotic. Erm, so that's what used to happen in community classes. And then what happened was, when the community course changed into an accredited one initially we were given an internal enrolment form sort of thing, which is a, er… smaller form or a quick form, because we had all their details, it was just you know something like that. And then half the course was done, we were approached then by the management who said that 'we haven't got enough details of these people, we want all the enrolment forms to be done again' and this we had already like reached half term or… so we started then, we were preparing them for exams because this was now an accredited course and we were preparing them for exams. And there's so many levels and everything and then we had to start doing enrolment forms, you know to do the proper ones. And you have to keep chasing them up to bring their benefit letters in, they forget sometimes or they are not in

Cathie: Benefit forms?

Anita: Yeah, if they're not in then you have to wait until they come in the next time and ask them again. So every lesson I used to find myself doing the same job, or stay until after the class. Or sometimes they have to rush after the class so you have to try and fit it in somewhere, plus teach as well, plus have the tension of having anyone walk in any time to observe you because it's unannounced observation. I'll come to that later.

Cathie: [Laughs]

Appendix Nine:

Ethics form

(Please note that the original was lost during a change of staff at the University of Birmingham)

School of Education Research Ethics Protocol for Staff, Postgraduate and Undergraduate Students

Form EC2 for POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH (PGR) STUDENTS
MPhilA, MPhilB, MPhil/PhD, EdD, PhD IS

This form MUST be completed by ALL students studying for postgraduate research degrees and can be included as part of the thesis even in cases where no formal submission is made to the Ethics Committee. Supervisors are also responsible for checking and conforming to the ethical guidelines and frameworks of other societies, bodies or agencies that may be relevant to the student's work.

Tracking the Form

I. Part A completed by the student
II. Part B completed by the supervisor
III. Supervisor refers proposal to Ethics Committee if necessary
IV. Supervisor keeps a copy of the form and send the original to the Student Research Office, School of Education
V. Student Research Office – form signed by Management Team, original kept in student file.

Part A: to be completed by the STUDENT

NAME: Cathie Lacey

COURSE OF STUDY: EdD

POSTAL ADDRESS FOR REPLY:
(Given in the original)

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER:
(Given in the original)

EMAIL ADDRESS:
(Given in the original)

DATE:
13/12/10

NAME OF SUPERVISOR:
Deirdre Martin

PROPOSED PROJECT TITLE:
The lives of ESOL teachers – a local inquiry into the beliefs and motivations of teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

BRIEF OUTLINE OF PROJECT: (100-250 words; this may be attached separately)

There are several inquiries into the lives of teachers in the UK (eg VITAE and Becoming a Teacher BaT) but none explore the lives of ESOL teachers. Adapting some of the questions from the VITAE project (which was a large scale longitudinal study commissioned by the DfES 2001-2005), I intend to find out more about the lives of ESOL teachers – the reasons they came into teaching, teaching ESOL and what motivates them to stay. At a time when the whole idea of publicly funded education post 16 is being questioned, this group of teachers are particularly at risk. Are the reasons that they entered teaching/ESOL teaching still relevant and are they still motivated to work in such an at-risk sector? How do they deal with the threats to their chosen career? I also want to explore their beliefs about the effectiveness of their teaching and the purpose of ESOL provision to society. An online survey of 15-30 teachers will be conducted as will some (4-6) case studies via semi structured, iterative interviews.

MAIN ETHICAL CONSIDERATION(S) OF THE PROJECT (e.g. working with vulnerable adults; children with disabilities; photographs of participants; material that could give offence etc):

None evident. All participants are adult teachers (of ESOL to adults) who have had prior contact with the researcher through taught courses (CPD and/or PGCE)

RESEARCH FUNDING AGENCY (if any):
None

DURATION OF PROPOSED PROJECT (please provide dates as month/year):
January 2011-December 2011

DATE YOU WISH TO START DATA COLLECTION:
January 2011

Please provide details on the following aspects of the research:

1. What are your intended methods of recruitment, data collection and analysis? [see note 1] Please outline (in 100-250 words) the intended methods for your project and give what detail you can. However, it is not expected that you will be able to answer fully these questions at the proposal stage.

I intend to recruit up to 30 participants via email. All participants are college lecturers teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). They have been on a course of study, required by their colleges, at the university where I work. The course confers subject specialist status on those who successfully complete it. The course combines academic study and direct observation of the teaching of ESOL. So, I have been the teacher for all participants. Most are ex-students but some are current.
Some will take part in an online questionnaire but up to 8 will be asked to take part in a more detailed face-to-face set of semi-structured interviews with prompt questions, which will be audio-recorded. These will then be transcribed, shared with the interviewee and another interview arranged to discuss the emerging themes and ideas. This will also be transcribed and one last discussion will take place with the interviewee.
Analysis will be via specific and general themes – that is, themes that are local to each interviewee as well as those themes which seem to be more general to these subject specialist teachers.

2. *How will you make sure that all participants understand the process in which they are to be engaged and that they provide their voluntary and informed consent? If the study involves working with children or other vulnerable groups, how have you considered their rights and protection? [see note 2]*

All participants will be asked to take part as volunteers. They are all working adults. The initial email will go to all whose current emails I have from when they took part in a CPD course I taught. I will ask for volunteers. Those who want to take part can reply. Those who do not want to, need not reply. In addition, I will ensure all those taking part in either the online survey or the face-to-face interviews give written permission.

3. How will you make sure that participants clearly understand their right to withdraw from the study?

All participants for the semi structured interviews will be asked to sign a consent form (see attached at end) which clearly states on it that they may withdraw at any time. Those who take part in the online survey will also be notified of this via a statement at the beginning of the survey.

4. Please describe how you will ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Where this is not guaranteed, please justify your approach. [see note 3]

Anonymity will be established and maintained via each interviewed participant being asked to offer (or be given) a pseudonym. Places of work and names of other people will also be replaced. The participants will agree these changes. All will be told that the report will be in the public domain and be asked for any final changes before any of the work (it will be available to all who took part).

5. Describe any possible detrimental effects of the study and your strategies for dealing with them. [see note 4]

At the moment I cannot see any detrimental effects of the study. Where questions might seem too probing, participants will have the right to refuse to answer. As with in any discussion, there might be an occasion when a participant realises an aspect of their work/life is not how they would like it to be. Participants will be made aware that there are counselling services available at the university for them, as ex students, to access.

6. How will you ensure the safe and appropriate storage and handling of data?

All recordings and transcripts will be held on my personal computer (at my home) and on a designated usb stick for transportation to and from transcription. There are no details such as full names, contact details and so on – just conversations and transcriptions of two adults talking about ESOL teaching.

7. If during the course of the research you are made aware of harmful or illegal behaviour, how do you intend to handle disclosure or nondisclosure of such information? [see note 5]

I would refer all such issues to my line manager at work.

8. If the research design demands some degree of subterfuge or undisclosed research activity, how have you justified this and how and when will this be discussed with participants?

No subterfuge in the research.

9. How do you intend to disseminate your research findings to participants?

All interviewed participants will be given a copy of their transcripts and kept informed as to the progress and findings of the research. Those who have taken part in the online survey will be sent a copy of the basic analysis. At the end, all participants will be offered a copy of the research paper.

<u>Part B: to be completed by the SUPERVISOR</u>

1. Have the appropriate guidelines from relevant research bodies / agencies / societies (e.g. BERA, BPS, SRA, Research Governance Framework, Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act) been checked and applied to this project?

Yes ☐ Not applicable ☐

If Yes, which:

2. If relevant, have you ensured that the student holds a current Criminal Records Bureau check for the participants they will be working with during their research project? [see note 6]

Yes ☐ Not applicable ☐

If not applicable, please state why:

3. Have you seen information and consent forms relevant to the present research project? [if not relevant at this time, please review this within 6 months]

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Is a referral to the Ethics Committee necessary?

Yes ☐ No ☐

5. Do you require a formal letter of approval from the Ethics Committee?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable ☐

Declaration by Project Supervisor

I have read the University's Code of Conduct for Research and the information contained herein is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate.

I am satisfied that I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting this research and acknowledge my obligations as Project Supervisor and the rights of participants. I am satisfied that those working on the project have the appropriate qualifications, experience and facilities to conduct the research set out in the attached document and that I, as Project Supervisor, take full responsibility for the ethical conduct of the research in accordance with the School of Education Ethical Guidelines, and any other condition laid down by the School of Education Ethics Committee.

Print name: Signature:

Declaration by the Chair of the School of Education Ethics Committee (only to be completed if making a formal submission for approval)

The Committee confirms that this project fits within the University's Code of Conduct for Research and I approve the proposal on behalf of the University of Birmingham's School of Education Ethics Committee.

Print name:
(Chair of the Ethics Committee)

Signature:
Date

Supervisor – please keep a copy of this form for your records and send the original to the Student Research Office, School of Education.

Date sent to Student Research Office:

STUDENT RESEARCH OFFICE – PLEASE OBTAIN SIGNATURE FROM MANAGEMENT TEAM AND RETAIN ORIGINAL IN STUDENT FILE

Date Form Received:

Print name: Signature
For and on behalf of
Student Research Office
Date:

Notes for completion of forms EC1, EC2 and EC3

1. If your methods, methodology and /or participant group(s) alter substantially from those outlined in this submission during the course of the project, continued ethical approval by the Committee must not be assumed. Under such circumstances, you may wish to complete an updated submission for consideration by the Committee. Please contact the Chair of the Ethics Committee in the first instance for advice on how to proceed. This may be particularly appropriate for longitudinal studies where research populations and indeed content/focus can change over time.

2. Please consider the 'chains' or hierarchies of consent that may be necessary for e.g. working with children and young people. There may be a number of people / agencies /organisations who may be required to provide consent or agreement to participate. For example, project work in a Local Authority may require agreement from members of Senior Management before agencies/organisations may be approached. Involving children may then require agreement from (eg) Head teachers and parents/carers (as well as the child/young person themselves) plus professionals from other organisations.

3. This concern may arise, for example, in experimental or quasi-experimental designs where treatment is viewed as desirable and withheld from the control group. It might also arise in unpredictable ways in other intervention designs and, for example, in interview-based studies. Harm to the researcher if, for example, working with emotionally

difficult subject matter or in potentially dangerous contexts should also be considered here including the forms of support that will be made available in such circumstances.

4. This may apply in circumstances where methods involve the use of e.g. video or photographs that could identify participants, or in the case of interviews where the status / job role of the interviewee will enable them to be identified by others.

5. You may wish to refer to the BERA Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, 2004; paragraphs 27 & 28, p.8 for more information about this issue.

6. When applying for a CRB make it clear whether the check is for children or vulnerable adults or both. Also, organisations/schools/ services may have different requirements for how recently a CRB check should have been completed for it to be acceptable. The CRB recommend that a recheck is needed every 5 years for enhanced checks and 10 years for standard checks but it is worth clarifying with research partners whether they require a check that is more recent and an enhanced rather than standard disclosure.

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