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**ADULT MIGRANTS' WRITING IN ENGLISH:
NEGOTIATING SOCIAL PROCESSES FOR IDENTITY
CONSTRUCTION IN ENGLAND**

by

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Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis explores adult migrants' early engagement with print and digital writing as social practice in everyday life, and in classrooms in England where ESOL is taught. Migration has become part of our global world and crossing borders between countries has become easier. Writing is essential for people to access privileges and education as they contend with their immediate life needs. However, until recently, there has been limited research into adult migrant learners' early writing. This research responds to calls for the exploration of pedagogy, classroom processes and learner experiences in respect of adult migrant learners.

Over a research period of thirteen months the biographical experiences of four migrants who volunteered for case studies were investigated. They had been born in various regions of West Africa, West Asia and South Asia. It was observed how opportunities for early engagement with writing occurred and developed in six ESOL classrooms in a college of Further Education in England. Five teachers and three teacher managers were interviewed about their perceptions of classroom writing, pedagogy and migrant students' early writing and literacy practices. The case-study participants were also interviewed outside the classroom, so as to understand their everyday writing practices in different contexts.

A range of methods were used for data collection which combined audio-recorded interviews, classroom observations, field notes, focus groups, digital texts, college documents and written items. The research material was interpreted by means of thematic coding and narrative analysis.

The findings revealed that practitioners' perceptions illustrated how policy, power structures and personal histories affected migrants' writing and literacy practices. Instruction in writing often focused on skills production towards pre-set targets, which reduced opportunities to convey real meaning. For these migrants, learning to write in a new language assisted their identity construction and suggested ways to challenge labels or stereotypes that characterized them as having deficits. The (re)conceptualization of migrants as facilitators of their own changing identities, lives and aspirations for writing is a significant implication of this research.

My final reflections call for institutions to include alternative curricular content and greater flexibility for teachers to engage with migrants' everyday early writing and literacy practices for learning.

Dedication

to my mother, Ann, and my late father,
George Arthur Wheway.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Exploring migrants' early engagement with writing and identity construction

In a context of adult English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and literacy practices in England, this thesis explores migrants' early engagement with writing, both inside and outside the classroom. The research setting was a college of Further Education in England where teachers' and managers' perceptions of migrants were also investigated. All of the classrooms covered by this research were in use for a course of study for migrants who were long-term residents and newcomers to England. The migrants in this study were ordinary people who were simultaneously learning to write in a new language and coming to grips with a new country. They had come to England as asylum seekers or immigrants arriving from former colonies, or had come to work or to join other family members. They were studying in classes designated as ESOL. Primary data were collected from four migrant participant case studies who had come to England from outside Europe. Secondary data were collected from five ESOL teachers and three ESOL teaching managers. Data were also collected through opportunistic encounters within the research setting.

The research project was an interpretive study of "writing" as it sits within "literacy as social practice". It is argued that opportunities for migrants to include their everyday social practices for writing in English are challenged by the ESOL context and classroom culture. The word "practice(s)" throughout this thesis refers to:

"the social processes which connect people with one another, and they include shared cognitions represented in ideologies and social identities...[and] this usage is different from situations where the word 'practice' is used to mean learning to do something by repetition...[it is] cultural ways of utilising literacy [and] cannot wholly be contained in observable activities and tasks"

(Barton and Hamilton 1998: 6, 7)

This small-scale research project and the thesis have as their starting point my own life experiences of early engagement with writing in a new language, as a migrant to Japan, as a student of Japanese, as a teacher of English to second or other language learners and as a researcher in England where the study was conceived. The thesis then turns to biographical data from four migrant participants as they recounted their journeys from their birthplaces outside Europe to their engagement with writing in English, in England. The thesis thus begins from a "bottom-up" perspective of writing as social practice which makes links to the educational context and is guided by the belief that:

“We start from the position that people’s understanding of literacy is an important aspect of their learning, and that people’s theories guide their actions. It is here that a study of literacy practices has its most immediate links to education.”

(Barton and Hamilton 1998:13)

In this college setting migrants’ writing practices were observed and teachers’ perceptions of migrant students and pedagogy for writing in English were explored. Primary data were collected in informal interviews and from narratives that emerged as part of on-going collaborative relationships and observations in the setting. As the research progressed, multiple methods for gathering data emerged; these are explained in the summary of data collected that appears in the methodology chapter.

Finally, the research material was analysed by looking for patterns from which themes emerged. Themes were contrasted so as to reveal migrants’ perceptions of their writing in different contexts, inside and outside the classroom, and how writing as social practice in a new language impacts on identity construction. Themes arising from data also revealed teachers’ and managers’ perceptions of migrants and the pedagogy of writing.

1.1.2 Researcher motivation

This research was motivated by my experience of living in a small rural city in Japan for five years, where I taught English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in a language school and as a freelance teacher. I found myself immersed in a new language and culture. Prior to my arrival in Japan, I had never studied the Japanese language. Nevertheless, before returning to England at the end of 2008, I had achieved functional speaking skills (Norton 2000). Japanese writing, however, as an academic competence and as a set of skills to be learned, remained a challenge. However, the social processes revolving around my interaction with local people in my everyday life contexts did lead to learning and engagement with writing.

Hence, my personal experiences focused my attention closely on migrant students’ early writing when I returned to teaching in England. I was left with a heightened awareness of how writing in a new language can stem from migrants’ cultural processes as they construct social worlds in a new country, and this led to the focus of this study.

1.1.3 The focus of study

I begin the thesis with my own autobiographical account, recounting my experience of being a migrant in Japan for five years as an English foreign language (EFL) teacher, as a student of Japanese struggling to write inside and outside the context of formal classroom learning. I then explore teaching ESOL upon returning to England. Thereafter, I turn to a

college of Further Education that was the research setting and where I reflected on pedagogy with teachers and teaching managers, in particular about migrants' early writing in English in England. This exploration both provided the background and acted as the catalyst for my research and the developing thesis.

This thesis explores migrants' social practices and the cultural processes that are involved in early engagement with writing as people learn English in different contexts and enlist intermediaries inside and outside the classroom. The research explored with participants the concept of writing as a social construct and as being political as well as an aspect of literacy. It included handwritten, printed and digital texts. The thesis encapsulates the view that writing is also mediated by peoples' beliefs, values and identity positions, reflecting their diverse backgrounds (Burgess and Ivanič 2010; Barton and Hamilton 1998; Heath and Street 2008; Collins and Blot 2003; Crowther, Maclachlan, and Tett 2010; Gee 2013; Holliday 2013; Clark and Ivanič 1997; Matsuda 2001).

I acknowledge that this study incorporates a personal interpretation of my experience, as well as of these migrants' accounts and of teachers' and teacher managers' perceptions of early engagement with writing in a new language in a new country, and in this setting. Hence, I also recognize that the thesis can only scratch the surface in understanding migrants' early engagement with writing in a new language, and that the research is open to challenges and alternative interpretations by others.

1.2 The background to this study

"Nori-dashitafune"
(A ship that has already set sail or "we are in for it!")
'Patience' in Japanese Proverbs and Sayings
(Buchanan 1965: 161)

I arrived in Japan for the first time on a June afternoon, where I was to teach EFL. I had not studied Japanese previously and my first language challenge was to negotiate a passage from the international to the domestic airport by bus. Rather than designating simply regular local transport, I realized that the term "bus" in Japan also described what in England would be called an air conditioned luxury coach. This was the first of many words that took on new meanings for me in Japan, differing from my understanding of them in an English context. Locating the bus was unproblematic because airport signs were written in both Japanese and English. In addition, I followed the directions that were written in English and were clutched firmly in my right hand, as though the paper was a map to my new life. The details had arrived by e-mail which I printed off just before leaving England.

Therefore, even prior to my arrival in Japan as a migrant, writing and social practices came into play. As an artefact, the “online” e-mails that Aiko San wrote gave me clues about her identity as a confident English writer who made few spelling and grammatical slips and I knew that she was an English grammar teacher. The digital texts gave me clues about Aiko San’s identity through “the visual and material characteristics of the text as artefact, by the lexis, grammar, and spelling of the text as linguistic object, and by the writer’s literacy practices such as purposefulness, speed, or place of writing” (Burgess and Ivanič 2010: 250).

I therefore had formed an impression of Aiko San, whom I was about to meet face to face for the first time, because of our sociable e-mail conversations. However, I was soon to realize that step-by-step instructions, or the guidebooks that I had read, scarcely, if at all, prepared me for the challenges of building a life and early written language learning in a new country.

1.2.1 Moving across borders

It was after my arrival at a southern prefecture domestic airport that my true Japanese journey began. I was greeted by the Japanese school manager and the Canadian teacher whom I would replace as they pushed my suitcase into the back of a small car. After a long drive, the car stopped and the Canadian teacher told me that this was where I could buy a car. I felt challenged by the idea of negotiating a car deal at that moment, even though I had prepared to buy one.

1.2.2 Negotiating culture

As I walked into the building, I saw an office desk strewn with paperwork, a notice-board on the wall covered with written messages, but none made sense to me, except for the numbers. I noticed how I drew on my past experiences to make sense of the situation and how that helped me to ‘read’ my new context, thereby finding “the normal and ordinary in the complexity of what was going on” (Holliday 2013: 37).

I was introduced to the garage owners, Tanaka San (Mr. Tanaka) and his wife, Yuki San which was followed by polite conversation. All of us were making sense of the event, on a moment-by-moment basis, and testing out how to behave. After all, we had a vested interest in enabling a car purchase, therefore:

“this desire to make it work automatically means that they are employing underlying universal cultural processes of reading culture as it develops and collaborating in its formation”
(Holliday 2013: 47)

Part of the cultural process towards buying a car, included politely drinking green tea which I sensed was an indispensable social ritual, because of similar experiences in other countries. However, writing in Japanese (in terms of putting pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard or keypad) for me was anxiety-provoking, but it was essential for everyday life, and especially for buying a car to which I now turn.

1.2.3 Statements about culture

The garage owners spoke simultaneously in Japanese to Aiko San, who from that moment on became my translator and intermediary. A quick nod to a mechanic resulted in a shiny, nearly new, automatic car being driven to the front of the workshop. I was invited to look around the car, but I turned to Aiko and requested her to ask if they had a less expensive car with manual transmission. Aiko relayed my request to Tanaka San who gave a wry smile and with slightly raised eyebrows, drew his head back with wonder. Apparently, as the Canadian teacher told me, it was usual for Japanese to drive automatic cars, so my request seemed strange. Nevertheless, a smaller car with manual transmission was brought to the forecourt.

As I sat inside the car Tanaka San quite proudly stated: “air-con arimasu!” (“there is air conditioning”). I realized that Tanaka San had made a point about Japanese sophistication and the value set on ‘air-conditioning’; even though air-conditioning is virtually universal, this was a “statement about culture” (Holliday 2013: 20). Indeed, I too had made a statement of my “Englishness” by showing a preference for a car with a manual gear change. Hence, as I had rejected the previous, automatic car, thereby shunning what Tanaka San imagined was a symbol of something “Japanese”, I realized that a positive response was now expected from me. Fortunately I approved of the car and asked “How much?”; the major challenge was to complete the purchase, and here the social process of writing with intermediaries came to the fore.

1.3 Writing with intermediaries: getting things done

1.3.1 A car purchase

I dug deep into my bag for a notebook and Yuki San purposefully wrote an amount in Japanese yen on a clean page. I asked for a calculator and converted the Japanese yen to British pounds, which helped me to make sense of the value of a new currency. This balancing and comparing was a kind of internal barometer for negotiating or making sense of my position and how to act at any particular time. In the circumstances of purchasing a car, writing as social practice played a crucial role as the moment-by-moment process of events (agreeing a price, completing forms and signing documents) unfolded and interconnected up to the point of sale within that context at that time. These social processes enabled a deposit receipt, a duplicate money instalment agreement and car insurance documents to be written. Each document was

read by Yuki San, then translated into English for me by Aiko San and my response was written by Yuki San in Japanese, but overseen by Aiko San. Finally, I was able to sign the paperwork.

The process took time, but it related to everyday behaviour and interaction in an encounter that could be similar for almost any group of people negotiating a purchase. In fact, later, in England, research participants recounted similar experiences for a washing machine repair, opening a bank account or dealing with bureaucratic systems.

These social negotiations seemed to be captured by Holliday's (2013: 3) theory of "small culture formation on the run... [when] in the process of constructing and dealing with cultural realities", it was possible for me to engage with writing in a new language as I later found that it was for research participants. Even so, for me writing was, of course, problematic but an intermediary facilitated my writing for buying the car. I believe that these examples demonstrate how there is trepidation when approaching a new culture for the first time, but also how social processes enable a migrant to get everyday taken-for-granted things done.

1.3.2 Writing to complete forms

The completion of forms was necessary in many contexts and I now give an example of an everyday banking experience that anyone holding a bank account in any country might encounter. The need to set up monthly payments, for utility or telephone charges, usually requires the completion of a form and in this context I was expected to write in Japanese. It was in fact everyday necessities that pushed me to get things done and thereby connect to my "global" surroundings. This also meant moving beyond surface-level observations (such as politely taking off one's shoes when entering a house) to connect with more subtle cultural realities that are harder to negotiate. In this case the process involved completing each section of the bank form, which meant that I had to explain what I wanted in basic Japanese to a bank clerk and then write in the appropriate spaces. Together, the bank clerk and I constructed a dynamic context that was a moment-by-moment process of talk, bodily gestures, artefacts and time lapses for sense-making as the two of us scrutinized each section of the form (Goodwin 2000: 1517). The bank clerk then wrote what I said on a scrap of paper - Eriksson (2009: 257) found that pointing and touching might not be sufficient to recognize an object (such as payment method, in my example). However, combined linguistic and bodily activities for referring to a physical object (such as a bank card) in face-to-face interaction might include several steps. These steps were achieved by establishing common visual focus when pointing, touching, holding, picking up, shaking, and even fetching the object (for instance the bank card) as well as waiting for confirmation of recognition by the other person (Eriksson 2009: 261).

It was in this way that the bank clerk and I together made sense of what was needed to complete the form that enabled me to write by copying the “symbols”. Completion of more complex forms, such as those required by Japanese immigration authorities or the tax office, would involve a Japanese English-speaking friend accompanying me to translate and write in Japanese for me to sign.

My feelings about these writing accomplishments were two-fold. On the one hand, there was often a sense of disappointment and regret at not being able to fulfil tasks independently, almost helplessly relying on another. On the other hand, writing to get things done left me with a great sense of achievement and enabled rewarding social relationships which thereby raised my self-esteem and identity positioning. Buying a car was the first of many engagements with Japanese writing that were facilitated by intermediaries or social contexts to get me through daily life for form-filling, letter-writing, using the internet for online services, or even sending mobile phone SMS text messages. The next section turns to digital texts.

1.3.3 Digital texts: towards independence

As a migrant, I found that having daily access to the internet was essential because it connected me with friends and family at home, and with world news. The internet was also a dictionary, a virtual translator and a local encyclopaedia. In time I also accessed Japanese on-line banking which meant becoming familiar with the Japanese language needed to perform specific written functions on that website.

However, my greatest independence in writing emerged because of using my mobile phone for text messaging. Short messages were liberating, because texts enabled experimentation with words and symbols to communicate. ‘The informal context of communication in instant messaging also fosters creativity and the development of new text-making strategies’ (Lee 2007: 292). This was because mistakes, symbols or unconventional language, such as invented spelling, could be included to push learning further. Over time writing was extended to include greetings, arrangements for meetings and apologies for non-attendance or general questions, thereby opening communication between acquaintances.

Thus, grappling with social processes enabled me to extend and re-define the writing practices available to me by offering some independence, which again impacted positively on my identity construction and self-worth. Nevertheless, in order to learn quickly I anticipated that a college course was needed. In the next sub-section I will explain the effects of classroom learning when I attended a two-month Japanese programme.

1.4 Being a student of Japanese: challenging social processes

I joined four students from Cambodia, Peru, Brazil and China who had studied basic spoken and written Japanese in their home countries. Thus, as I was resident in Japan, my situation was similar to ESOL students studying in England. I was also set apart by the fact that I attended the Japanese course on a part-time basis because of work and personal commitments. I was also aware that the teacher and my peers recognized these circumstances, which could play out in many combinations of “other” (Holliday 2013; Siegal 1996). In addition to this, the Japanese teacher already perceived that I would struggle, particularly with writing, which immediately placed me in a negative position (Siegal 1996: 375). Classroom practices also added to my declining self-image.

1.4.1 Lexical challenges

The class was very formal and lessons began with flash card vocabulary drills in rote-learning style to meet the strict curriculum, which followed a common basic level textbook, *Minna no Nihongo I* (2000). One by one each student was expected to give the “right” answer and any hesitation was quickly passed over, which was often in my case, especially if the flashcard was written in Japanese Hiragana. It became clear to me that a prerequisite for educational success, in that context, for writing in a new language was lexical development and correct “spelling”. The significance of individual word recognition and spelling was also paramount as part of the monitoring process.

1.4.2 Illuminating the “illiterate” image

The end-of-week tests firmly established the monitoring procedure, with the desks being set out in a formal examination style for individual completion of papers. However, in my case a teacher sat next to me and read questions aloud, twice. At first my verbal answer was written by the teacher in Hiragana, but I was soon expected to write myself and my weekly test scores got worse. In this educational context, engagement with Japanese Hiragana writing was problematic, because I had no choice but to work alone on random de-contextualized questions. The teacher acted as if she were a “talking book”, because there was no social interaction and she assumed absolute power in the relationship.

The strict demands for correct spelling, my disempowered position and my slow production compared to peers, left me struggling with my own identity construction. This hampered potential writing opportunities. I became frustrated by not being able to write quickly and my everyday writing achievements were unrecognized in the classroom. This reminded me of my upbringing and talk about how the stigma attached to being “illiterate” in England often

symbolized ignorance and a poor educational background. I was specifically challenged to reflect on how writing can be affected by competing personal and institutional systems of values, beliefs and norms (Clark and Ivanič 1997: 76). It seemed to me that writing as a social practice and the conceptualization of “literacy” are essential to reducing low self-esteem for adults’ early engagement with writing.

1.4.3 Unlocking the social processes

In contrast to formal skill development, I found that working with peers during lessons meant that we talked about tasks in Japanese and in English, or whatever languages were accessible to class members to explore lexis. Indeed, working with peers to make sense of writing made it easier to link formal and informal structures, which exemplifies learning as social practice (Howard 2006: 37). The social process enabled working with others to focus on content, rather than form, for making sense of the meaning, and to contextualize tasks, which in turn encouraged me to attempt Japanese writing. As mentioned above, in Sub-Sections 1.3.1. and 1.3.2., intermediaries can play a significant role in enabling writing in a new language, but the relationships can be challenging.

1.4.4 Enlisting intermediaries

Intermediaries often play a significant role in enabling writing in a new language. I met several Englishmen who claimed to have lived in Japan for over twenty years without mastering the written language, happily relying on others for writing. In another case an Iranian who spoke English claimed to have lived in Japan as a professional engineer and manager without writing in Japanese for twenty-five years, and he actually expressed his irritation by exclaiming; “I feel like a child!”. He explained that for writing he enlisted his estranged wife or his friends. He became more agitated when I suggested that he might enlist his secretary for writing, when he said; “I have worked in Japan for over twenty years, how can I admit that I cannot write!”. He explained that; “spoken Japanese and English are used at work, but I travel to other countries to do business where technical documents are written or negotiated in English”. Here, I thought that intermediaries provided essential support, but being unable to write exposed the vulnerability of the identity constructed and showed how English can be privileged over other languages. I was also acutely aware of how influences from personal history may enhance or limit the possibilities for positive identity construction and the effects of writing in different contexts (Heath 1983; Barton and Hamilton 1998; Clark and Ivanič 1997).

1.5 Summary processes

In the last sub-sections I have explained how being an English-speaking migrant and moving to a country outside Europe led to struggles to write in a new language. These struggles pushed me to read cultural processes and to enlist intermediaries to engage with writing in Japanese so as to complete everyday tasks and increased my positive identity construction. On the other hand, I have also explained the challenges for me that being a student and learning to write in the classroom brought to the foreground. These were: concentration on staged lexical development and accuracy, insistence on speaking the dominant language, the power relations between the teacher and students, and the negative impact on identity construction and learning that frequent monitoring invoked.

These experiences had a profound effect on my thoughts concerning ESOL teaching and learning upon my return to England. I envisaged participating with people by listening to their stories about their writing needs and valuing our differences in the spirit of social justice which also recognizes the socio-economic and power regimes that influence us all in social practices (Tett 2006: 48-49). In the next section, I shall turn to my experiences of teaching ESOL upon my return to England and highlight the factors which focused this research project.

1.6 Retuning to teaching ESOL in England

In this section I recount my first experiences of returning to England and teaching “low level” English to migrant students. I provide a brief background to my thinking which shaped the direction of this thesis. I arrive at my focus by reflecting with migrants about learning to write, by looking at adaptation of the curriculum to meet migrants’ needs for writing and dealing with lexical complexity, and by taking insights from a professional observation of my own work.

I will refer to ESOL qualifications by the labels used by teachers and teacher managers. This is because practitioners often define groups of migrant students by the level of the qualification for which they are studying, such as Entry Level 1 or Entry Level 2¹. Otherwise, I will refer to “migrants’ early engagement with writing” rather than assigning a qualification level as a label.

¹Entry Level 1 is three qualification stages, and Entry Level 2 is two, below ESOL Level 1, which is the first rung of the National Qualifications Framework in England (see Appendix 4).

I will now turn to my reflections with migrant students as they recounted their early engagement with writing in English where I initially worked.

1.6.1 Reflecting with migrants

The first college of Further Education where I taught upon my return from Japan included a class of migrant students who were studying ESOL Entry Level 1 (see Appendix 4) in a community setting. I was optimistic about the possibilities of teaching writing as a social practice because at that time the literature welcomed a “social turn” for ESOL teaching and learning. In fact, researchers were calling for pedagogy to “bring the outside in” to classrooms to assist teaching and learning and there was increased interest in socio-cultural perspectives for second language pedagogy.

The college where I began work advised me that classroom attendance was expected to be poor. With this in mind, lessons concentrated on student involvement to maximize the social processes for team building, as would be the practice of most teachers. What surprised me, however, was that the morning break became an arena for discussion about how English developed and was evaluated by students. These regular social gatherings provided me with insights into people’s motivation for study, life histories and future aspirations, and this “social” collaboration appeared to strengthen class morale and increase interest in learning (Norton 2000; Ivanič et al 2006). This social process helped me to interpret students’ needs for writing in English, which turned out to be the skill they most feared tackling. Indeed, most students thought that they could not write at all. These migrants’ experiences and needs for writing reflected my own concerns when I had been a student of Japanese in Japan. I will now turn to adapting writing lessons to these students’ needs.

1.6.2 Adapting to students’ needs

The specific writing needs of students were identified through informal conversations that developed with them over time. In turn, I found myself drawing heavily on my past experiences of being a migrant and learning to write in Japan. My reflections helped me to make eclectic selections of tasks from across the curriculum for writing to match these migrants’ needs. This created a vision of a writing curriculum that opened possibilities for meeting the socially negotiated needs of the students involved. Students were set writing challenges according to their real-life contexts. The purpose of this was to reduce student anxiety about writing in new or imagined situations and to prepare them for increased challenges, such as examinations. Writing practice continued and included free writing in various genres and contexts. Students seemed enthusiastic and completed homework which was taken up in the classroom for further

discussion. These social processes appeared to generate further interaction and vocabulary learning.

Classroom interaction that focused on student's writing seemed to raise their confidence to explore vocabulary, and writing generally showed evidence of more complex sentence structures. I noticed that writing for these students also impacted positively on spoken language production, or perhaps it was students' interest in writing that encouraged talk.

1.6.3 Professional observation: the lesson was too fast

In a routine lesson observation, the curriculum manager sat at the back of my classroom for forty-five minutes of a three-hour lesson. I was then given almost entirely negative feedback. Many assumptions were made about me, my teaching, and how I was using the curriculum, as the observer put it, "to jump from one unit to another" and "frighten the students by using vocabulary beyond their capability" along with "teaching English structures that are too advanced for the curriculum level". Any possibility that there was evidence of student enthusiasm, progression and a marked improvement in writing was dismissed.

I was concerned that if true student needs and life histories were dismissed in this way, then barriers against real progress for engagement with writing seemed inevitable. The interpretation of how lessons are "delivered" appeared to have implicit negative perceptions. This professional observation left me with concerns about the challenges of introducing alternatives to established conventions, especially for migrants who are constructing new identities in a new country.

1.6.4 Section summary

In this college context in England, it appeared to me that the curriculum manager assumed an organizational role as policy "gatekeeper" in the context of a lesson observation that could result in a "linguistic penalty" for the migrants involved (Roberts and Campbell 2007: 47). It appeared to me that setting pedagogical objectives for a particular prescriptive purpose was counter-productive. This was because I knew from my own experience of being a migrant in Japan that writing developed as part of complex social practices in meaningful contexts. Therefore, by drawing on my personal and professional experiences of migrants' writing, specific research questions emerged.

1.7 The research questions

These experiences evoked powerful emotions that pushed me to want to understand more about social practices for engagement with writing in a new language and the inter-play of cultural processes. My beliefs about learning to write as a migrant, the meaning of literacy and the possibilities of meeting conventional educational expectations were challenged. I thus set out to explore the phenomena by asking the following research questions:

1. How do migrants in this study engage with writing?
2. How do opportunities for writing occur and develop in a college context in England?
3. What are these teachers' perceptions of migrants' writing and learning aspirations?
4. How does engagement in writing impact on these migrants' identity construction?

1.7.1 Why this research is important

This research is important because migration has become part of being global and crossing borders between countries has become easier. However, in our contemporary fast-moving world writing also travels, becomes merged and changed within and between societies and technologies in digital texts. It is perhaps unsurprising that when people move they creatively manage complex processes that enable them to deal spontaneously with challenges and also seek opportunities to build successful new lives. It is perhaps no surprise, either, that migrants envisage lives to meet their aspirations that could include settling in one country for life or moving to several countries over a lifetime. Technology has opened further prospects for communication between countries; the world seems smaller, travel is easier and more country borders are open.

Consequently, people need to learn new languages, and especially writing, quickly. This is because writing gives people access to privileges and to education as they contend with their immediate life needs, yet ESOL pedagogy has attracted criticism stemming from a reported narrow curriculum, preparing learners for menial employment prospects (Simpson 2007; Baynham et al 2007; Roberts et al 2004; Gardner and Rea-Dickins 1999). This research therefore responds to calls for the exploration of “bottom-up” pedagogy and classroom processes with a view to understanding how to accommodate migrants' life experiences so as to “bring the outside in” to inform on policy from different perspectives (Simpson 2007; Roberts 2006a 2006b, Burns and de Silva Joyce cited in Barton and Pitt 2003). This research also

speaks to the calls for learners' and teachers' perspectives to be taken seriously to foster belonging and identity in second language learning (Norton 1997; Dörnyei 2001; Norton and Toohey 2001; Norton 2006; Ushioda 2006; Cuban 2009).

There are also calls for wider conceptualizations of migrants and language learning; Kumaradivavelu (2011) calls for new pedagogical perspectives on being global that focus on people as they engage with different languages in new cultures across the world and for varying periods of time. This means understanding how learners' and practitioners' knowledge is valued and built on towards including a social practice approach into professional development (Tett 2006: 49). Finally, my interpretive study from a "bottom-up" perspective thus responds to the call for insights that are capable of raising the values of cultural and linguistic identity for all students in ways that treat difference as a resource rather than as a cause of risk (Lee and Anderson 2009).

1.7.2 The study outline: location, timing, subjects and methods

The research for the study was carried out in England and the time span was over two academic years commencing in March 2011 and until December 2011, although further contacts were made up to April 2013. Data were collected in English.

Data was collected during thirteen months of the research period (see Appendices 1-3). I investigated the biographical experiences of four migrant volunteer case studies. I observed how opportunities for early engagement with writing occurred and developed in six ESOL classrooms in a college of Further Education in England. I interviewed five teachers and three teaching managers about their perceptions of the pedagogy of classroom writing and of migrant students' early writing and literacy practices. I also engaged with the case-study participants outside the classroom to understand their everyday writing practices in different contexts.

The four self-selected case study participants came to England from outside Europe and were studying ESOL Entry Levels 1 and 2 (Appendix 4) when they were recruited to the research project. There were initially four teachers and a teaching manager as informants, while one further teacher and an additional teacher manager were recruited in the second academic year of the study. The events surrounding my involvement in the setting as a participant researcher led to collaborative relationships. Multiple methods of data collection were negotiated and formed the basis for a flexible interpretive study.

1.8 The study structure

The study is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the thesis, its catalysts and focus, defines key terms and explains the study rationale. Chapter 2 provides the global and local contexts for the development of migrants' writing in English. Chapter 3 goes deeper into the debate relating to the social aspects of writing and identity construction. Chapter 4 introduces the rationale for the research methodology and explains the methods used for data collection and describes how the data were analysed.

Chapters 5 and 6 present the themes identified during analysis of the data. Chapter 5 presents data relating to teachers' and teacher managers' perceptions and shows the college's influences on migrants' writing. Chapter 6 foregrounds the complexity of these migrants' processes for negotiating their engagement with writing and identity construction.

Finally, in Chapter 7, the conclusion identifies hidden aspects of these migrants' processes for their early engagement with writing and identity construction. These processes suggest increasing democratic flexible learning spaces for migrants' negotiation of meaning and identity construction with teachers and teacher managers where all concerned are free to build on prior knowledge and experiences reflexively.

1.9 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I have recounted my experience of moving across borders, negotiating culture and the significance of understanding the cultural processes for writing with intermediaries. This raised my awareness of the influence of social processes for writing, and the opportunities for, and challenges to, successful encounters. I found that writing developed as part of complex social practices in meaningful contexts. I have reflected on my experience of being a student and learning to write in a new language in a college context. I have also explained how the setting of pre-specified pedagogical objectives and monitoring appears counter-productive for early writing. The reflections on my personal and professional experiences and insights from migrants' early engagement with writing in a college context in England led to the emergence of specific research questions.

Next, in Chapter 2, a conceptual framework will be provided that relates to the challenges for migrants' early engagement with writing both in England and globally.

Chapter 2: Learning to Write: Global and Local Challenges

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, in Section 2.2, I explain some challenges for migrants' engagement with writing in the twenty-first Century and the current debates surrounding globalization. I then provide the background for ESOL in England. This enables me, in Section 2.3, to discuss migrants' multiple needs for writing, the curriculum and pedagogy, how writing targets for learning are negotiated and the prominence of skills development. I then present literature that shows how writing pedagogy for migrants can be influenced by teachers' perceptions of classroom writing, skills development and literacy as social practices and digital texts. In Section 2.4 I discuss New Literacy Studies (NLS) and the perceptions of literacy for skills production, the social practice perspective, and challenges. I then, in Section 2.5, turn to how migrants' engagement with writing has been theorized across contexts, inside and outside a college setting. Finally, in Section 2.6, I conclude that opportunities for migrants to include their everyday social practices for writing in English are challenged by the ESOL context and classroom culture.

2.2 Challenges for the twenty-first century

2.2.1 Super-diversity and global influences on migrants' writing

Globalization brings a vision of a complex form of linguistics and cultural diversity that has been termed "super-diversity" (Vertovec 2007: 1024). Super-diversity relates to how people move from country to country voluntarily as migrants who temporarily or permanently build a new life, or are forced through war or political conflict to relocate. Indeed, adults who study ESOL have either chosen to migrate for individual reasons, such as family, work or for education or come to England as asylum seekers or refugees from war-torn areas, and many are long-term residents (Block 2007; Simpson 2007; BIS 2009). Whatever the reason for migration, it is likely that people will maintain connections with family and friends in other countries, which is often facilitated by the myriad forms of technology and digital texts that support contemporary communication networks and lifestyles.

This in itself suggests that, rather than people moving from one country to another and learning one language or another for life-long residency in one country, new visions of language learning emerge. In this thesis I explore the perspective that the case study migrants had of engagement with writing in a new language as a biographical trajectory along which these individuals chose (or were forced) to travel for economic, social or idealistic reasons. For these

migrants print and digital text and the internet were essential in order to engage with writing to fulfil their life purposes. They often brought in intermediaries to fulfil an urgent writing need at a particular time and for a particular purpose, and learning happened spontaneously in social encounters which demanded a flexible approach to everyday writing needs. This suggested that time is limited for adult migrants to engage with writing from a homogenous or a static point of departure, from basic skills to fluency, in the staged levels of development that are synonymous with prolonged schooled learning.

Therefore globalization suggests perspectives for flexible and social learning that will reduce the influence of separable language units in terms of labels such as “English”, “Spanish”, or “multilingual” repertoires, or “mixed” and “hybrid” identities, which can mark out communities as an “ethnic minority” (Blommaert 2013: 613). Flexibility suggests increased and diversified learning opportunities for marginalized or oppressed groups, but when situated within power relations of dominance and subordination it could lead to disempowerment. Therefore, globalization does have an impact on adult education by reshaping goals and practices, as noted by Edwards and Usher (1996) cited in Trantalidi 2004. Thus, institutions have no choice but to respond to “super-diversity”, especially in the field of language and adult education for migrants. Digital texts and new technology also provide new ways of communicating in our global world.

2.2.2 Digital texts create new opportunities

Super-diversity and the Internet have brought an abundance of technology that has a huge impact on language, and especially on writing, as people connect using digital texts, such as e-mail and mobile phone text messaging for global communication. Future directions are also indicated by influential commentators such as Christine Lagarde (the first woman to head the International Monetary Fund), for example, who gave Richard Dimpleby Lecture for 2014 proposing that:

“...the breakneck pattern of integration and inter-connectedness that defines our time...[and] the great linking of the global economy of the last two decades... trade has grown exponentially ... we are also living through a communications revolution. ... The world has become a hum of interconnected voices and a hive of inter-linked lives. Today, three billion people are connected to each other on the net. Three million emails are sent each second and there are almost as many mobile devices as people on the planet. And the mobile mind-set is deeply embedded in all regions of the world. Actually the fastest and deepest penetration is to be found in Africa and Asia.”

(Lagarde 2014)

(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03ttn4b> accessed 8.2.14)

There seems to be no doubt that these influences add to the pressures for teaching and learning as institutions have no choice but to respond to migrants' needs for writing in our interconnected world. Therefore, migrant students, in addition to the current socio-political context, must also be considered in their educational context, which is also conditioned by the larger processes of globalization and marketization (Fairclough 1992). These rapid social and technological changes have focused attention on the fundamental nature of future pedagogy, of which Barton (2006: 29) asserts:

“current forms of educational provision do not fit with the future and we need to return to basic questions about what kind of citizens we want our education system to produce ... new curricula and new pedagogies ... to take account of the fact that everyday learning is often more interesting, more immediate, more fun, better designed and quicker than learning in educational institutions ... this raises challenges about what should be taught, how it should be taught and where it should be taught.”

The emerging horizons shown above suggest that differences between individuals go beyond their country of origin, or country of residence, or even an educational examination score, and just as migrants bring with them personal characteristics (life difficulties and opportunities) they also bring wide capabilities for teachers to draw on (Ivanič et al 2006). Therefore, the processes of globalization have significant implications and raise profound questions for teachers in ESOL when there are calls for:

“...a holistic approach for adult education, based on humanistic ideology and democratic values. Additionally ...adult education consider ... ‘flexibility’, as a key component in the new division of labour and ‘multiskilling’ to better support global competition, lead to a sense of crisis in the meaning of adult education and a re-configuration of adult education practices in order to become ‘relevant’ and ‘flexible’.”

(Edwards and Usher (1996: 221) cited in Trantalidi 2004: 10-11)

It seems plausible that these effects of globalization on education have been identified in literature that shows adult migrant classrooms as sites of identity struggles where the low skilled and highly literate professionals may learn together, with varying rates of target language progression or motivation, depending on their prior experience and literacy history (Cumming 2009; Baynham et al 2007; Barton and Pitt 2003; Gardner Polyzoi, Rampaul 1996). In the next sub-section I present literature that provides the background to ESOL in England and contemporary circumstances that are emerging for teaching and learning.

2.2.3 ESOL in England; political background

Considerable investment in ESOL, funded by the Learning Skills Council (LSC) in a United Kingdom Government initiative, was reinforced by the New Approach to ESOL (DIUS 2009) to provide 85% funding for low-level priority learners of ESOL. ESOL in England was located within the Skills for Life (SfL) policy with literacy and numeracy as an adult basic skill (DfEE 2000). The SfL programme was implemented to address the problem of low levels of basic skills among adults in the UK, particularly literacy and numeracy (Moser 1999). However, in many related documents and policy ESOL remained undermentioned (Roberts 2006a: 67). In addition, a closely related factor noted by Appleby and Bathmaker (2006) is that policy changed direction because of concerns about basic skills for employment in the context of claims that seven million adults in England were not functionally literate. These factors appear in Government documents:

“The Leitch Review (‘Prosperity for all in the global economy - world class skills’, December 2006) concluded that there was a need for the UK to have 95% of adults achieving the basic skills of functional literacy and numeracy by 2020, in order to maintain the economy’s competitiveness in the global market. The Coalition Government’s strategy for skills was set out in ‘Skills for Sustainable Growth’, and ‘Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth’ (both published in late 2010). The three key principles of the plans were promoting fairness through skills, ensuring that employers and individuals take greater responsibility for ensuring their skills needs are met, and lessening central control and bureaucracy in the skills system... The Government’s aim is to focus adult learning on the low skilled groups to promote access to employment, and therefore deliver return on investment in terms of social mobility and economic benefits”

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/264391/bis-13-p196-prior-qualifications-of-adults-undertaking-skills-for-life-courses-2010-11.pdf

Therefore the rapid “top-down” investment appeared to demand evidence of progress by monitoring and recording achievements, which entailed a statutory national curriculum (DfES 2001/2), a qualifications framework, an inspection regime and links with adult education and businesses. Indeed, the incorporation of adult education into the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (DBIS) in 2009 suggested that ESOL students were viewed as adding to economic productivity that also linked to global policy trends connecting English language provision and ‘employability’ (Simpson 2011: 11). Moreover, ESOL learners were reported as being less likely to have any prior qualifications with 42% having no qualifications prior to their ESOL course (DBIS 2013: 6). This increased college focus on the core curriculum, standards, national tests and professional qualifications for teachers (Hamilton and Hillier 2007: 574) and in addition:

“Those migrants required to prove their competence in English language are expected to attend citizenship-based language classes based on a curriculum which aims to introduce them to life in the UK. The Life in the UK test (commonly known as the citizenship test) was introduced for adults seeking naturalization in November 2005 and was extended to cover those seeking permanent residence from April 2007. Permanent residents who acquired their rights to live in the UK before April 2005 are also obliged to take the test, if and when they apply for British citizenship.”

(Osler 2009: 64).

The foregoing factors added pressure to the requirement for migrants to learn English and in fact in recent years ESOL programmes in England have been reported as being in crisis (Phillimore 2011: 320).

Moreover, the research agenda surrounding the inception of this project arose from previous studies. These included four preliminary studies on reading, writing, ESOL and ICT, that were undertaken between 2002 and 2004 (Besser et al. 2004; Kelly et al. 2004; Roberts et al. 2004; Mellar et al. 2004) and the findings raised the urgency for further studies. In addition, other reviews such as Barton and Pitt's (2003) NRDC publication entitled 'Adult ESOL pedagogy: a review of research, an annotated bibliography and recommendations for future research' supported the foregoing. Therefore, five National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC) at London University Institute of Education, funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) reports, or 'Effective Practice *Studies*' were undertaken. The most relevant to this research explored teaching and learning in reading (Brooks et al 2007), writing, numeracy, ESOL (Baynham et al 2007) and ICT (Mellar et al 2007). What is more, it was especially recognised that there was an urgent need to build on previous studies to increase the research base for teaching and learning in respect of adult writing (Grief et al 2007: 6).

Furthermore, the crisis deepened as the rapid Government policy changes put pressure on colleges of further education, being the principal providers of ESOL for migrants in England. Indeed, The Guardian newspaper (Shepherd 2011) reported practitioners' reactions: "teachers of English said new rules ... mean far fewer immigrants could afford to learn basic English". It also quoted Judith Kirsh of the National Association for Teaching English and Community Languages to Adults (NATECLA), "We think that this change could mean that about half of all ESOL students in some cities will be shut out from attending lessons,"

(<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/apr/14/english-lessons-funding-immigrants>; accessed 01.04.14)

These changes also prompted a serious reaction from migrants and teachers which led to the rise of “Action for ESOL”. There seems to be a paradox whereby migrants to the UK on the one hand may be criticized for not learning English (when people might want to, or are even obliged to), but on the other hand, are limited by reduced enrolment and access to freely available lessons (Simpson 2007: 210). The climate of economic austerity, Government policy changes and funding cuts, has also meant that colleges have to ensure that migrants take and pass examinations to move up the ESOL qualifications framework in order to be eligible for funding to enable courses to be provided (Phillimore 2011: 324). The people who study for ESOL examinations are described in the ESOL SfL handbook for teachers as:

“Who are ESOL migrant students in England who take SfL tests?

The SfL tests are designed for learners who are aged 16 and over whose first language is not English, and who are living or trying to settle in England. These ESOL learners may include refugees or asylum seekers, migrant workers, people from settled communities, and partners or spouses of people who are settled in this country for a number of years. It is expected that the learners’ educational and employment backgrounds will be diverse, as well as their aspirations, literacy levels and language learning skills. This diversity is reflected in the range of material selected for use in these tests and in the task types which candidates need to complete ...”

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/151165-esol-skills-for-life-handbook-for-teachers-document.pdf> (accessed 27.2.14)

The migrant students described above are often recognized as belonging to a “linguistic minority”, in other words a smaller portion of the population relative to the linguistic majority (Heller 1999: 7). Therefore, on the one hand, the AECC (DfES 2001) is designed to assist people who are speakers of languages other than English, or linguistic minorities, to gain functional skills. On the other hand, the adult basic skills agenda also aims to reduce the number of people from the dominant population with low functional literacy skills in English (Appleby and Bathmaker 2006). The possibility of such ambivalence and the effects of globalization, as discussed above, may give rise to inequalities, as suggested in the following quotation in respect of SfL:

“a critical reading of the policy texts, and recent funding priorities, show the strategy rooted more in a response to what is perceived as the skills demands of a knowledge economy for global competitiveness than to issues of social inclusion and increased opportunities for lifelong learning...[creating] new sites of inequality that affect older women and adult ESOL learners disproportionately, the very people that are identified as being needed to fill skill gaps in the economy.”

(Appleby and Bathmaker 2006: 703)

Therefore, the functional skills of migrants and of adult literacy learners generally, as Roberts (2006: 67) noted, have been affected by the fact that “policymakers have, traditionally, been rather uncomfortable with where to place linguistic minority learners when dealing with

literacy, numeracy and language development”. This has led to people who are studying ESOL being found in basic skills literacy and numeracy classes, and not just in ESOL classes (Brooks et al 2001), a mixing that may not always be optimal. However, notwithstanding policy debates, the fact remains that adult migrants to English-dominant countries want and need to learn English for all sorts of reasons, such as matters concerning employment, housing, children’s education, or just getting by in a new country (Simpson 2011; Phillimore 2011). Thus, the introduction of the statutory Adult ESOL Core Curriculum (AECC), (DfES 2001), linked to the adult basic skills agenda, was introduced to ensure that people who were speakers of languages other than English gain skills that enable them to function independently in society and the workplace. I now provide details of the writing element of the AECC at the time of this research.

The AECC is organised by level across four skills: ‘...Speaking Entry 1 is followed by Listening Entry 1, Reading Entry 1 and Writing Entry 1’ (DfES 2001:5). The contents draws on a wide range of existing curricula from a variety of contexts, including the core curriculum for adult literacy, the national literacy strategy in schools and curricula for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (DfES 2001:2).

This research project is concerned with adult migrants who study AECC writing at Entry Level 1 and Entry Level 2 (see Appendix 4). The ‘Adult Literacy’ and ‘Adult ESOL’ core curricula use the overarching framework of the National Literacy Strategy for schools for teaching (reading and) writing (DfES 2001: 6). Skills and activities for learning are based on text, sentence and word level (reading and) writing relating to the different levels on which fluent (readers and) writers operate, as the following explains:

- “Text level addresses the overall meaning of the text, the ability to read critically and flexibly and write in different styles and forms;
- Sentence level deals with grammar, sentence structure and punctuation;
- World level looks at the individual words themselves, their structure, spelling and meaning.
- Conveying meaning, whether orally or in writing, involves operating at these three levels simultaneously: for instance, ‘Stop!’ is simultaneously a text, a sentence and a word.
- To develop understanding of the principles underpinning reading and writing, the teacher may unpick different features at text, sentence or word level, but always with the ultimate aim of producing or understanding whole texts.”

“‘*Adult ESOL Core Curriculum*’ (DfES 2001: 6)”

The AECC provides detailed markers for teaching and learning, and the relationship to qualifications and referencing (see Appendix 4). The AECC (see DfES 2001: 7, 8) is therefore

read/presented over double pages: the left-hand page gives level descriptors, component skills and knowledge and understanding, along with examples of application and level. Then, the right-hand page presents sample activities, National standards, detailed curriculum referencing indicators and terms with cross-reference to key skills (see the example in Appendix 4). Therefore, this has meant that in order for pedagogy to meet specified standards, the AECC provides detailed guidance in relation to the teaching of grammar, punctuation, and spelling by separating out skills at word, sentence and text level and where the importance of integrating skills is stressed (Kelly et al 2004: 11).

Nonetheless, as shown above, reading and writing often appear together and I have placed brackets around the reference to 'reading' to emphasise 'writing' which has sometimes been presented as a skill that adults need to a lesser extent (Kelly et al 2004:11). Indeed, an example is found in Roberts et al (2004) 'ESOL - *case studies of provision, learners' needs and resources*' report, where the five case studies discussed in that report relate to 'asylum issues', 'heterogeneity', 'numeracy and ESOL', 'reading' and 'advanced learners'. Indeed, this report called for future research in ESOL to focus on the role of spoken language in literacy and numeracy contexts along with wider cultural knowledge (Roberts et al 2004: 92). Moreover, Kelly et al (2004: 11) suggested that the assessment of writing and learners' progress in writing was perhaps difficult for large-scale projects to include, even though interviews of adults enrolling for literacy classes suggested that writing was often peoples' main concern. Most significantly however, and following the NRDC reports referred to above, writing continued to be recognised as a priority at the inception of my research project, as Howard's introduction in Grief et al's (2007) report indicates:

"The growing importance of writing in the workplace, and as a social asset, has been underlined in the recent CBI report 'Working on the Three Rs (2006) ... However, very little primary research in the UK to date has looked specifically at writing for adult literacy learners. This study, which investigates the teaching and learning of writing (and which focused largely, but not exclusively, on free writing), is therefore both timely and necessary to develop and improve writing skills and practices."
(Grief et al 2007: 5).

In addition, at the time of this research project classroom writing was planned from the centralised SfL AECC and supporting documents, including EFL textbooks, from which particular criticisms and concerns have arisen and these are discussed more fully in the following sub-sections. Even though the AECC is presented attractively and is illustrated in bright colours with detailed contents that offer aspects of social realism there is much criticism. For example, tasks are strongly genre oriented and as Wallace (2006: 79) points out, particular topics can be side stepped and student differences may rarely be prioritised, with writing skills production taking precedence over meaning making. Indeed, Cooke (2006: 59) suggested that

the pedagogic and linguistic models underlying the AECC are not made explicit although ‘learner centred’ instruction, the meeting of learners’ ‘needs’ and making lessons ‘relevant’ to their daily lives is emphasised. Nevertheless, some ESOL materials seem to include the ‘infantilisation’ of students, along with scenarios of client or subordinate identity roles. This has possibly encouraged teachers to use EFL textbooks in lessons, such as ‘Headway’ and ‘Cutting Edge’ (Wallace 2006: 81). Thereby, also reducing the use of real life examples especially when worksheets are included for writing tasks (Barton et al 2004: 16).

Therefore, a significant point in relation to this research project is the possibilities for pedagogical discourses to favour particular course material and procedures that perhaps mould student learning in particular ways (Baynham and Simpson 2010: 422). Indeed, Wette’s (2009: 360) interpretive case studies of seven experienced teachers in New Zealand showed considerable distance between taken for granted theoretical aspects of ESOL curricula and teachers practical discourses that described their diverse and dynamic classrooms. In England, under the centralised SfL umbrella migrants’ learning in ESOL classes and teachers discourses can be ‘funnelled in particular directions’ which narrow identity options (Baynham and Simpson 2010: 422).

Therefore, recent research has focused on students’ practices inside and outside the classroom and teachers’ pedagogy that has increased our awareness of the impact on migrants’ identity, writing and discourses. In fact Baynham and Simpson’s (2010: 438) study found that ‘learners are literally transformed in the words of their teachers and themselves into Entry 1s, 2s, ... that can in theory lead them upwards and onwards’...’seen from this perspective, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as a strategy produces different learner and teacher identities towards learning trajectories that link to particular real world outcomes: a job, a course, citizenship’. It seems to me that such learning trajectories may relate more to particular institutional goals, as Phillimore (2011: 324) points out, than to the real-life ‘needs’ of migrant students, as will be discussed in the next Section 2.3.

2.2.4 Section summary

Globalization means that “more people are now moving from more places, through more places, to more places” (Vertovec 2010: 86). Migrants therefore often rely on social encounters which demand a flexible approach to getting things done and especially for everyday writing needs. In addition, technology and digital texts such as e-mail and mobile phone text messaging have opened up new forms of written communication and extended worldwide networks. Migrant populations can bring new knowledge and insights as different cultures mingle, but the policy responses for ESOL teaching and learning at times have led to an unsettled context. Thus, the contemporary demographic mix has a direct impact on which kinds of people are

learning to write. This means that migrants multiple needs, in turn, have an impact on the pedagogical strategies available to teachers in classrooms especially as they work with a centralised curriculum and EFL course books. These varying needs are discussed in the research mentioned in the next section.

2.3 Migrants' multiple "needs"

It has sometimes been the case that teaching has assumed that migrants had certain "needs", without much consideration for their true circumstances. In England, the literature on the teaching and learning of ESOL has reacted to this and looked at the multiple real life and work needs of migrants for language development, calling for students' experiences and knowledge to be used in the classroom to promote opportunities that can be explored with the teacher (Ivanič 2009; Roberts and Baynham 2006; Baynham and Prinsloo 2009). It is also recognized that language, and particularly writing, develops over time and adds to complex identity struggles as migrants' learning trajectory and future ambitions are negotiated (Norton 2000). In addition, there are challenges associated with moving across borders, such as a loss of economic, cultural and social capital, or even a declining ability to use the first language or mother tongue (Granger cited in Block 2007). In such rapidly changing political times, people are forced to consider their locations and activities in the light of influential socio-political structures affecting them, and their interactions with other people (Lave 2012: 161). In contemporary life, it seems imperative that migrants should do more than just survive in a new society as they adopt new homes in different countries. Moreover, "people should be able to represent themselves by voicing their many identities, not simply a presumed ethnic one" (Vertovec 2010: 93). However, the stakes may be high:

"In the game of life, 'society' has moved from the role of the caring, albeit exacting, warden/keeper into the position of one of the players... its constantly changing rules are themselves the major stake... the only thing the individual can do is to practice one-upmanship, struggle to outsmart the prankster, try his or her best to stay alert and be ready to change tack when the wind shifts: never to be left behind or caught napping."

(Bauman 2001: 15)

Political influences push people to "look after their own best interests" and to deal with everyday power structures that either advantage or disadvantage them in cultural practices (Cooke and Hunter 1999: 5). Indeed, Wallace (2006: 88) believes that "students in adult ESOL classes, often to a greater degree than so-called 'home' students, are well informed about contemporary social life, both locally within the UK and globally...[sharing] a high degree of knowledge of and interest in current affairs". In this regard, individual life trajectories become a focus as contemporary life forces people to do more than just survive. There is an implied rise

of individual responsibility on the part of migrants to meet their own aspirations. Nevertheless, curriculum design and pedagogy are central facilitators of that process, as Barton (2006: 29) explains, when he says:

“The challenge is to provide curricula that are designs for the future and that combine skills, creativity, critique and participation to help prepare creative, responsive and active citizens ... we then need new pedagogies that address the gap between teaching and learning that harness new technologies in combination with print technologies”.

The first challenge presented by Barton (2006: 29) relates directly to a forward-looking curriculum designed to “combine skills, creativity, critique and participation”. These factors are increasingly significant as the effects of globalization push people to take responsibility for their own lives and to represent themselves through complex identity construction. However, as Wallace (2006: 81) states, the realities of migrants’ lives and their cultural experiences present challenges for ESOL curricula and learning materials. These are often taken for granted aspects of teaching and learning for migrants as they engage with writing in English in England and are attending a college of Further Education which is guided by the AECC. This will be explored in the next sub-section.

2.3.1 Curriculum challenges

The AECC includes detailed units indicating what adults should be taught in terms of reading, writing, speaking and listening at six levels of English proficiency. This thesis is concerned with the writing curriculum at Entry Level 1 and Entry Level 2 (see Appendix 4). The syllabus is a mixture of functions, grammar and literacy “skills” presented in imagined realistic urban English settings. The pedagogic and linguistic models underlying the curriculum can be ambiguous, possibly because of its need to be “all things to all people”, these being the hugely diverse and sometimes disparate population of ESOL learners (Cooke 2006: 59). A specific impact is that:

“Teachers and learners tend to perceive learning to write as a classroom focused activity. Greater emphasis is placed on learners’ diagnosed needs in relation to ‘skills’ as set out in the AECC, and assessed by national qualifications, than on learners’ purposes and roles in relation to writing in their everyday lives.”
(Grief, Meyer, and Burgess 2007: 8)

In addition, while they are working within a set statutory curriculum, ESOL teachers do have additional options for pedagogical resources, which include using worksheets, bringing authentic texts into the classroom and often working with EFL textbooks (Wallace 2006).

Therefore migrants' learning is influenced by curricular content and tools for teaching that shape what teachers do in particular ways. I will now briefly outline three aspects; the writing curriculum, textbooks and learning materials, followed by differentiation.

2.3.1.1 The writing curriculum

Firstly, classroom experiences of migrant learners are bound to procedures in which teachers are left trying to strike a balance between their obligation to comply with institutional demands and the inclusion of creative pedagogy for diverse learners (Simpson 2011). In fact, many ESOL and adult literacy educators share concerns relating to the way in which authenticity can become translated into dreary pseudo real-life scenarios such as shopping or filling in forms (Roberts and Cooke 2009). Therefore, the writing curriculum for people placed in the lower levels of ESOL often appears to concentrate on reproducing ordinarily spoken phrases, sentences and words, for example, writing about your friend: "This is my friend. His name is Ali. He is from Iraq. His favourite food is rice." and so on.

"The initial emphasis on text as the point of departure is couched in terms of a functional approach to text, where texts are evaluated in terms not of what they are about, but of the job they are doing, whether narrating, reporting, explaining or arguing. Thus the very first page of instructions for Reading (Rt/E1- that is Reading: text, Entry Level one) instructs under 'Component skill and knowledge and understanding': adults should learn to: follow a short narrative on a familiar topic or experience. Exemplification is provided by means of a short text which has been produced about the learner by a scribe: 'My name is Amina. I come from Somalia'."

(Wallace 2006: 81)

From this example a migrant may learn to write descriptively about a friend, but how does it assist towards real life needs and the construction of written language that enables communication that is realistic for them within a new environment? Even though teachers may "work hard to create a 'safe' and interactive environment for learning", materials and examples need to be culturally relevant (Roberts et al. 2004: 90). Indeed, the teaching of functional survival situations may uncritically represent 'students' as passive consumers of services which overemphasise problems towards reproducing social inequality (Roberts and Cooke 2009). This is also reflected in textbooks and teaching materials.

2.3.1.2 Textbooks and learning materials

A second challenge is that published EFL textbooks which are produced in the West and are available worldwide may not match migrants' life contexts: "their very remoteness from any recognisable reality may make them what we might call 'safe texts' for both global and local

constituencies” (Wallace 2006: 79). In these scenarios textbook tasks may represent some aspects of reality but through simplification may lose essential negotiable elements of a real encounter, such as power relations and making inferences from interlocutor talk (Roberts and Cooke 2007). In addition, even though “talk is the work” of organized groups and pairs in class, in literacy contexts social engagement is often less evident (Roberts et al 2004: 5). Moreover, even though differentiation is a teaching practice that is encouraged through continuous professional development (CPD), there are particular implications:

“the insistence on ‘differentiation’ in the classroom in the form of worksheets at different levels of ability have created a sometimes overwhelming responsibility on teachers to cater to the individual ‘needs’ of large classes...these systems can actually lessen the chances of learners and teachers to really get to know each other and thus deal creatively together with the real world concerns learners bring with them to the classroom”

(Cooke 2006: 70)

Therefore, migrants learn within a curriculum that is “delivered” in an institutionalized framework that often encourages teachers to focus on culturally neutral production skills. Teaching strategies frequently pay little attention to different styles of learning and communication that might enable classroom cultures to emerge (Roberts 2006a). Moreover, differentiation arises primarily as a result of the Individual Learning Plan (ILP), which is negotiated in tutorials between teachers and students by focusing on what people cannot do, and thereby assesses them from a deficit perspective. Differentiation in the ESOL context is explored further in the next sub-section.

2.3.1.3 Differentiation

Diversity, as Cooke (2006: 59) explains, is supposed to be addressed through differentiation, which acknowledges students’ “spiky profiles”, where an individual might be better at speaking English than writing, for example. Moreover, while the curriculum includes writing units, it appears unclear how pedagogy can afford opportunities for writing when differentiation limits practice by providing individual tasks that focus on students’ weaknesses, as measured against standard language curriculum expectations, which are perceived to extend or support other skills (Nunan 1999; Simpson 2007; Gordon 2008). Perhaps it is unsurprising that teaching and learning in ESOL lessons have been perceived as adopting a slow, methodical pace (Schellekens 2007). This is also a factor that may tie in with the expectation that teachers will follow “the correct procedures”, which can lead to students being set more prescriptive skills performance tasks (Clarke and Ivanič 1997: 82). Indeed, “in response to a steady influx of new immigrants from a variety of backgrounds, many teachers of adult English learners consciously choose the path of least resistance, or the forms of instruction and assessment that will locate the largest number of students, even if temporarily” (Warriner 2008: 320). This

further reduces any recognition that, even where ESOL students have had little or no formal schooling, valuable life experiences are brought into the classroom by them (Wallace 2006).

Even though migrants' early writing does include the need for an understanding of grammar and vocabulary in English, "writing is not only about these things" (Hyland 2003: 6). Some literature indicates that it is essential to harness migrants' variable life contexts to enrich their classroom experiences and to encourage interest in writing in a new language (Clark and Ivanič 1997; Hyland 2003; Baynham 2004). However, further challenges arise when migrants are subject to monitoring and evaluation procedures, such as those to which I will now turn.

2.3.2 ILP: monitoring and inspection

The Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is a controversial yet prominent document in the context of ESOL in colleges of Further Education. An ILP is defined as:

"The output of the initial assessment, setting out what the learner plans to learn, by when, the ways he or she will undertake the learning and the resources required to bring the plan into action."
(Ofsted 2003: 30)

Despite these good intentions, it has been claimed that such documents demonstrate that "what texts enter the classroom and what is done to and with them is a political act" (Kress et al 2005: 141). In principle, the SfL policy encourages teachers to focus on individuals by completing paperwork, such as ILPs (Mellar et al 2004). Moreover, the ILP is considered an essential standard basis for programme evaluation, as stated by Ofsted in 2003, which may be seen at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/surveys-and-good-practice/r/Removing%20barriers%20to%20literacy.pdf> (accessed 6 August 14). A typical trajectory of an ILP from its production, including teachers' CPD, through to its final destination as an element of administrative record and evidence is shown in the flow chart extract from Hamilton (2009: 235) in Appendix 7.

Research has also recognized that ILPs often focus on individual cognitive, rather than social, goals linked to the curriculum which may add to the complexity of migrants' processes for early engagement with writing (Cooke: 2006: 59). Moreover, student experience and aspirations are often aligned with institutional goals that translate into auditable, inspectable outcomes (Hamilton 2009: 236). The ILP forms part of the reporting procedures that directly involve students and teachers, with the stated aim of encouraging:

“best practice [that] involves developing individual learning plans (ILPs) with learners. ILPs should contain SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) targets and these should be reviewed at regular intervals”

(Sunderland and Wilkins 2004: 8, 9)

<http://www.nrdc.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=539andArticleID=462#1>

In tutorials, ILPs are negotiated between students and teachers, theoretically with the aim of identifying people’s real needs. However, the procedure has been criticized in the literature for concentrating on learners’ deficits and leaving teachers to handle possibly conflicting beliefs about including students’ experiences (Cooke 2006; Roberts and Baynham 2006; Baynham et al 2007; Hamilton and Hillier 2007; Hamilton 2009; Coombe, Troudi and Al-Hamly 2012). Moreover, teachers “are especially likely to view ILPs as a waste of time where they see the quality of their work being undermined by a lack of time or resources to engage in the process of dialogue that is supposed to generate the paperwork” (Hamilton 2009: 236). An implication is that institutional systems may challenge teachers’ beliefs about the meaning of good teaching (Tusting 2009). This may be especially evident where teachers are left to help students to articulate and rehearse their aspirations and achievements in written terms when filling in forms that the system can understand (Hamilton 2009: 236). The debate about ILPs continues, but the main interest for this thesis is the effect that these documents have on migrants’ lives, their writing and pedagogy. In the following extract, Cooke (2006) demonstrated the experience of negotiating targets in an ILP interview between a migrant student, “Dasha”, and her teacher “Patrick”:

“Dasha is a Russian asylum seeker who was born in Siberia and was trained as a nurse. Dasha decided to come to England to find a way of making money and to build a new life, and to work as a nurse for which she would have to ‘improve her writing’. To this end her ILP for the term reveals targets to do with spelling common words and basic grammar. However, after two interviews Patrick [Dasha’s teacher] learned from Dasha herself what she aspires to do, and what she needs to do it. Unless Dasha can find a course more geared to her needs as a future nurse, Patrick now has the task of trying to help her develop her academic literacy as far as possible within the constraints of the AECC and the general English course, and the possibly conflicting needs of the other learners in the class.”

(Extract adapted from Cooke 2006: 63)

The above extract shows that an institutional equilibrium might be achieved between students’ desires and teachers’ commitments through ILP completion in tutorials that also include the setting of targets for monitoring and measuring achievements. However, it leaves teachers, as institutional representatives, with little choice but to enact dominant “classroom” discourse in the role of educator and bring to the fore assumed deficiencies of so-called “non-

native speakers” (Holliday 2009: 150). Indeed, teachers may help students to articulate and rehearse their aspirations and achievements to record them in terms that policy can understand, by using word lists or picture prompts, thereby “putting words in their mouths” (Hamilton 2009: 236). Therefore, as I have outlined above, teachers are compelled to comply with procedures where:

“Learners’ identities are shaped through the categories into which their experience is translated. They are arranged into levels of competence, labelled by learning style, positioned as inexpert in the learning process as SMART targets determine what is of value for them to study and what should be disregarded.”

(Hamilton 2009: 239)

The main thrust of these disempowering procedures for migrants is that professional assumptions become translated into peoples’ level of difficulty in English. Hitherto, either consciously or unconsciously “exemplifying the role of the educator” by controlling the learning pace and content to meet “top-down” institutional demands rather than harnessing migrants’ real abilities (Aboshiha 2008: 145). These procedures and targets conceptualize writing as a skill that is desirable and unproblematic, acquired with little regard for meaning-making, identity construction and social practices that are transferred across contexts, notwithstanding the often painful and traumatic experience of learning itself (Clark and Ivanič 1997). Indeed, literature on case studies of ESOL learner needs and provision (Roberts et al 2004: 77-78) found that discussions with ESOL teachers raised “a perception that the emphasis on ILPs was something driven by a basic skills agenda which emphasizes individual student learning at the expense of the group processes [and] ... that differentiation is typically achieved through worksheets at different levels ... [also] non-specialists often fail to appreciate the role of spoken language in differentiating between students and managing a mixed level group”. In diverse classrooms these processes impact on migrants in particular ways.

It is perhaps unsurprising that institutional procedures are reported to limit learner potential and opportunities for language progression (Gardner and Rea-Dickins 1999; Simpson 2007; Baynham et al 2007). What is more, the assumptions that emerge from professional ILP discourse may create mismatches of coherence between what teachers and students say in official interviews and what a manager wants to hear (Roberts and Campbell 2007: 58). Indeed, schooled curriculum writing and assessment is what Street (1995) contends reduces literacy to simple and mechanistic skills when in fact reading and writing in peoples’ lives is more complex. Indeed, Hyland (1993) also contests claims that the processes of knowledge construction should be described in terms of “skills”. In contrast, close attention to migrants’ writing outside the classroom offers increasing possibilities as Blommaert, Creve and Willaert (2006) found in a Sierra Leone school. A ten-year-old boy’s exercise book revealed a written transcription of dictation that was previously unnoticed, yet his teacher had described him as

being illiterate and with problematic performance (Blommaert, Creve and Willaert 2006: 42). In addition, classroom texts are created between teachers and students in moment-by-moment cultural activities that include, but go beyond, the production of printed and written outcomes, as gestural resources and bodily movements that also contribute to the making of meaning (Bourne and Jewitt 2003). This can open up possibilities for more holistic processes for writing. However, when considering the homogenizing effects of agreeing standard targets in the interaction between teachers and students the matter of labels and representation also raises questions. For example, Harklau (2000: 59-60) found that the representation of ESOL students in a community college programme did not reflect migrants' backgrounds and experience, and "because of this mismatch the students often found themselves cast as deficient". As a result, resistance began to surface, but as "these representations are understood at the level of common sense, they are largely implicit and not easily open to examination". This means for writing teachers that:

"when students do share their identities as second language writers, we need to consider what that means to the particular student. We cannot assume that 'ESL' is this monolithic, universal code word that explains everything we need to know about a student ... We need to consider that there are details that are layered within ... their experiences with the institutional label of 'ESL', and within their expectations of us as writing teachers... though, we need to continue to reaffirm the value of diversity and respect a student's right to create an identity that is not based solely on cultural difference."

(Ortmeier-Hooper 2008: 414)

This suggests to me that the outcome of intensive ILP interviews may create superficial perceptions of migrants' needs for writing and at times challenge teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning. My argument is that migrants' real needs for writing emerge naturally over time as part of a collaborative classroom culture, from which learning opportunities are created. What is more, commonly negotiated ILP targets for mechanical, countable spelling and skills production may be counter-productive for learning for some migrants and label people in deficit terms. I now introduce spelling production with a thought provoking extract.

2.3.3 Spelling and skills deficit

"In English-speaking countries, spelling is not just a set of rules for writing down words: it is a cultural preoccupation. This is clear not only from the range of apparatus which is provided to help, or force, writers to 'spell it correctly' – for example, dictionaries and spell-checking software – but also from the way that spelling is so explicitly part of the culture of literacy. Spelling tests are the norm at schools in Britain, the USA and elsewhere."

(Sebba 2009: 243)

Whatever the perception of "standard" language, it is grounded in a particular vision of literacy norms that are associated with writing "correctly" and around writing as a reproduction

of standard writing norms (often related to spelling) that distinguish “correct” writing from “incorrect” writing (Kress 2000: 97). In Cooke’s (2006) example above, Dasha’s negotiated ILP target showed how spelling and basic grammar were set apart from the student’s life aspirations. In fact, spelling is generally taken to represent social acceptability and educational achievement, but also carries disciplinary, normative and discriminatory representations (Clark and Ivanič 1997). These factors perhaps reinforce the perception that writing produces associative attributions of intelligence and general character disposition; a mark of less-than-average intelligence and sloppy writing is often seen as a symptom of a sloppy mind (Blommaert, Creve and Willaert 2006: 38). Therefore, it places teachers in judgement over their students’ prospects to conform, regardless of their mechanical difficulties with the written language (Clark and Ivanič 1997). It is not surprising that spelling becomes a specific challenge for migrants’ writing in terms of skills production because:

“Spelling is the most successfully standardized level of language, and variation in spelling is not normally tolerated. The spelling sope, for example, is considered wrong and the spelling soap right. Yet there is no reason why it should not be the other way round (in the eighteenth century, Dr Samuel Johnson’s dictionary accepted both spellings: similarly, choak and choke). In a standard language culture, however, the choice is not arbitrary: it is believed to be a linguistic fact that one is right and the other wrong.”

(Milroy 2007: 135)

Therefore this indexical position, “writing right”, using correct spelling, is a badge of belonging to a group, but writing “incorrectly” produces abnormality and non-membership of the ideal categories defining the language (Jaffe 2000: 498). Skills such as spelling are easily labelled as “correct” and “incorrect” and readily translate into “gate-keeping” procedures that teachers are unable to neglect (Clark and Ivanič 1997: 187). Conversely, however, “standard” English does allow different populations, who speak a wide range of different varieties of English, or to read or write one single “English” (Blommaert, Creve and Willaert 2006: 38). After all, “if literacy affords access to knowledge, both within the school and beyond, then literacy is not useful if it is not in the language which maximizes that access” (Holme 2004: 90). Moreover, in pedagogical terms, the word “skills” represents prescriptive practice that perpetuates a view of a student with a deficit in need of a desirable commodity (Clark and Ivanič 1997; Fairclough 1992). This is in spite of the fact that migrants’ early engagement with writing raises difficulties in using cognitive skills for planning, organizing and editing and lower level skills for spelling (Clark and Ivanič 1997; Richards and Renandya 2002). Therefore, spelling skills represent aspects of written language which institutions convert into systems of power when the role of language is constituted of, and by, people’s identity (Norton 2000: 5). In addition, spelling warrants specific attention because:

“Although it is now unacceptable to discriminate openly against someone for reasons of ethnic group, social class, religion or gender, it is still acceptable to discriminate openly on linguistic grounds. Unfortunately, people do not usually realize that language stands proxy for these other social categories. As a person who uses non-standard linguistic forms will often be from a minority ethnic group or a lower social class, the effect of language discrimination is to discriminate against ethnic minorities and lower social class groups.”

(Milroy 2007: 135)

The dominant view of literacy assumes that social progress and mental development together provide a set of skills to determine individual economic fitness that is socially neutral (Street 1984; Collins 2000). Teachers are left in the position of having to raise students’ awareness of writing conventions and the consequences of not adhering to them (Clark and Ivanič 1997). However, teachers’ experiences as learners can inform their views about teaching and learning which continue to exert an influence on teachers throughout their career (Borg 2003: 81). In institutions, therefore, orthographic writing becomes a powerful instrument for marking the distinction between normal and abnormal in general (Collins and Blot 2003). Hence, students’ and teachers’ perceptions about writing as social practice and their beliefs about literacy are essential for facilitating identity construction and agency to counteract struggles to meet standard expectations. However, the introduction of digital texts broadens the theoretical lens for redefining concepts of “spelling”, as research has exemplified, this being a point to which I turn next.

2.3.4 Spelling redefined: digital texts

In this regard, digital texts seem to have opened routes for the admixing of improvised script that also blurs the spoken/written dichotomy (Holme 2004: 153). What is more, the collaborative nature of literacy practices in students’ everyday lives can lead to changes that increase people’s engagement with writing and raise confidence (Ivanič 2009: 109). Indeed, another, often taboo, aspect of early writing experience generally, is how improvised and variant spelling becomes acceptable when confined to genres such as e-mail messages, mobile phone text messaging and popular culture (Blommaert, Creve and Willaert 2006; Sebba 2009). The choice of digital writing technology may also affect students’ cognitive work, for example, a word processor may encourage a willingness to revise and redraft (Clark and Ivanič 1997). Taking such hetero-graphic writing into other genre fields, however, is seen as transgression and can lead to negative sanctioning of:

“writing which does not follow the orthographic standards but mobilizes the repertoire of visual symbols in different ways, as e.g. in ‘4 U’ (‘for you’), ‘w8’ (‘wait’) or similar creative re-orderings of the correspondence between visual and spoken signs.”

(Blommaert, Creve and Willaert 2006: 5).

Generally, pedagogy aims for correct spelling as part of writing skills production, as a perceived and necessary precondition for educational practice by students and teachers (Blommaert, Creve and Willaert 2006). However, an experiential study of SMS text messaging to send regular vocabulary to beginner-level Italian students was a positive route to learning a new language, as people used mobile phones in daily life, yet ironically in lessons people are often requested to “switch off!” (Kennedy and Levy 2008: 329). Excluding everyday digital texts seems counter-productive for learning if we consider that “spellings create an identity for a written language as a whole, and for subgroups of its users as well” (Sebba 2009: 256)

Indeed, there seems to be an argument for raising students’ and teachers’ awareness of the meaning of “literacy” for alternative learning, such as SMS text messaging to open increased sociolinguistic possibilities for creativity, peer-group communication and the risks of shrugging off convention in favour of innovation (Holme 2004). This foregrounds the concept that “spelling is not just a tool, but a social practice” (Sebba 2009: 256). I will now summarize the challenges for ESOL teaching and learning.

2.3.5 Challenges for ESOL teaching and learning

The overall indication above is that a statutory curriculum that is supported by textbooks and worksheets often seems reductive and struggles to cope with and support migrants’ life experiences. Thus, students are positioned as individuals who are at times disassociated from, or learning alongside, peers rather than working with them (Byrnes 2006). Moreover, monitoring and inspection procedures such as ILPs and the encouragement of differentiation appear to focus on students, but as Cooke (2006) and Wallace (2006) suggest, also highlight personal “defects”. In truth, the real diversity of migrants’ lives, their backgrounds, aspirations and changing identity can be overlooked in paperwork for setting targets, as shown in Cooke’s (2006) ILP example above. Indeed, the expectation that students should write standard English seems to promote spelling as a learning target, which in turn is countable and denotes institutional achievement, regardless of migrants’ life aspirations. Therefore, it seems that institutions, policy and a rigid qualifications framework may encourage ESOL teachers to describe students in terms of deficiency and focus on easily countable technical targets (Simpson 2011). In fact, the opportunities for experiential English language learning that are offered by SMS text messaging and other technology outside college can promote creative texts and increase opportunities for early writing as social practice. Often, it appears that taken-for-granted institutional conventions may lead to the representation of people, migrants and others, as deficient which challenges positive identity construction through endeavours to meet standard expectations. These challenges are explored further from the NLS social practices perspective, inside and outside the classroom, and across contexts.

2.4 New literacy studies

New Literacy Studies theories moved away from what may be described as the “autonomous” model that views reading and writing as separate skills to be learned individually, towards an assumption that writing is constructed through social practices that vary with context and use (Street 2009a: 21). The term skills, like procedures suggests a set of neutral technologies or techniques that are separable from social contexts and are associated with competence-based models of language and language learning (Fairclough 1992: 39-43). This perspective of literacy has often led to assumptions about:

“Introducing literacy to poor, ‘illiterate’ people, villagers, urban youth etc., will have the effect of enhancing their cognitive skills, improving their economic prospects, making them better citizens, regardless of the social and economic conditions that accounted for their ‘illiteracy’ in the first place ... The autonomous approach is simply imposing Western conceptions of literacy on to other cultures or within a country those of one class or cultural group onto others.”
(Street 2003: 77)

The autonomous model raises further challenges, not least the problems of people being labelled on the basis of a dichotomy of either “literate” or “illiterate”. Indeed, Simpson (2007: 208) asserts that traditional definitions of literacy, as the binary literate/illiterate or as a concept of progression from “illiterate” to “literate”, are challenged by writing in its social contexts. Even though research asserts that writing is the most contemporary skill and is particularly difficult for second language learners to master, until recently it has attracted little attention in the literature (Nunan 1999; Richards and Renandya 2002; Gordon 2008). In addition, “definitions of what it means to be literate are always shifting [yet] it is socially constructed and cannot be seen outside of the interests and powerful forces that seem to fix it in particular ways” (Crowther, Hamilton and Tett 2001:1,2). In fact, research has called for institutions to explore “bottom-up” classroom processes and pedagogy with a view to understanding how to accommodate life experiences of migrants by “bringing the outside in” to inform policy from different perspectives (Simpson 2007; Roberts et al. 2004; Burns and de Silva Joyce, cited in Barton and Pitt 2003).

In the next sub-section I will briefly explain some common pedagogical approaches to writing and the challenges to include opportunities for social practice that may arise in second language classrooms. I then turn to the studies that took a social practice perspective.

2.4.1 Writing: classroom challenges

In order to draw attention to some of the reported theoretical challenges of the autonomous model of literacy, a table in Appendix 5 (adapted from Gordon 2008), shows how different approaches to writing may result in lost opportunities for social practice. The list is not

exhaustive but makes reference to four common writing approaches. These approaches impact show “product-centred” to deal with student weaknesses, “process” can encourage teacher reliance without careful feedback, “genre” assists when supported by a sociable process approach and “functional” learning can encourage ‘cut and paste’ composition without exploring the meaning. However, social practices may help people to make sense of writing by exploring meaning and tackling their own weaknesses and reduce cognitive pressure to perform in written compositions. Therefore, migrants’ early writing classrooms may require pedagogy to incorporate social processes for learning to increase chances for betterment in negotiation of meaning. In the next sub-section I turn to social practice theories of writing and literacy, which may open potential.

2.4.2 Writing: social practice

The social practice view of literacy is termed the “ideological” model and is an approach that has moved away from the dominant cognitive, autonomous model with its emphasis on reading and writing skills, to a broader understanding of literacy practices in their social and cultural contexts (Street 1984, 1993; Baynham 1995; Barton and Hamilton 1998; Barton, Hamilton and Ivanič 2000; Barton 2006). However, as Barton (2001: 96) also reminds us “literacy studies began partly as a reaction to broad generalizations about literacy and claims of a great divide between oral and literate, both socially and cognitively”. Advocates of the ideological model “view literacy practices as inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in society, and recognize the variety of cultural practices associated with reading and writing in different contexts” (Street 1993: 7). However, literacy as social practice is sometimes poorly understood or recognized, perhaps because it stresses the socialization process in the construction of the meaning of literacy for people themselves, and is therefore concerned with the social processes that take place which are not just “educational” (Street 2003: 78). Moreover, the “social turn” in literacy studies led to prolific research that focused on community literacy practices (Barton and Hamilton, 1998; Barton, Hamilton, and Ivanič 2000; Martin-Jones and Jones 2001; Rogers 2003; Block 2003). It was recognized that social practice theory complements adult education that is “experience-centred, related to learners’ real needs, and directed by learners themselves” (Auerbach 1992: 14). In other words, a NLS socio-cultural perspective facilitates the understanding of how members of various cultures acquire and use literacy in relation to structures of power and authority (Kim 2003). NLS-related literature has raised the awareness of the role of literacy in people’s lives, in institutional contexts, in social settings, in everyday activities, or with officials and professionals (Barton and Hamilton 1998; Jones, Martin-Jones and Bhatt 2000; Fawns and Ivanič 2001; Papen 2005). Indeed, the implications of research relating to literacy in formal and non-formal settings, for teaching and learning in schools and in community colleges often challenges dominant literacy policies (Crowther, Hamilton and Tett 2001; Papen 2005; Luke 2005; Jackson 2005; Barton et

al 2007). Moreover, the exploration of literacy in students' everyday social lives has implications for linking adult basic education with people's existing literacy practices and topics that are relevant to their own experiences (Hamilton 1999; Norton 2000; Jones, Martin-Jones and Bhatt 2000; Barton et al 2007). In the light of the above, my view is that these studies have pushed theoretical understanding beyond "autonomous" skills and shown that NLS has promise towards meeting some of the pedagogical challenges mentioned above. However, I also believe that there are challenges for NLS theories, these being discussed in the next sub-section.

2.4.3 Challenges to NLS

In order for research to move beyond the dominant assumptions of adult literacy practice other ways of conceptualizing, democratic visions of pedagogy are needed (Crowther, Hamilton and Tett 2001; Norton and Toohey 2011). This could help institutional systems to assist migrants to develop their own processes for addressing issues of power relations inside and outside classrooms. NLS shows promise in this context. However, there are critical points to note within the NLS theoretical framework that have been raised by some theorists.

One criticism of NLS is that, by concentrating on the local context only, the understanding of global contextual influences on the literacy event may be blurred (Brandt 1995; Reder and Davila 2005). This seems to me to suggest that in studying literacy events consideration of wider structures also needs to be taken account of in literacy practices. Indeed, the study of situated social practice may have led to the under-theorizing of literacy's ability "to travel, integrate and endure" (Brandt and Clinton 2002: 347). I believe that this also points to a need for studies of literacy to take into account people's life trajectories to understand where their beliefs about writing originate, and how they travel and change over time (Holliday 2013). Indeed, it has been posed that a shift is needed from the study of meanings within situated literacy practices towards a focus on how meanings move across contexts (Kell 2011). In this respect, Barton (2001: 96-97) suggests returning to situated learning, with communities of practice, to refine the role of literate activity that would enable generalizations to be made across different contexts of literacy practices. This supports a bringing together of the concepts of NLS and communities of practice to extend our understanding of the processes relating to social practice. Therefore, developing deeper understanding of everyday practices to reveal people's everyday ways of learning that could be important in classroom contexts (Barton 2009: 40). In other words, a challenge for research is to begin with social practices that are based on participation and interaction, then to link those with concepts of learning (Tusting and Barton 2006). In the next section I turn to research that has taken up discourse to connect literacy across contexts.

2.5 Theorizing across contexts: inside, outside and the space in-between classrooms

In this section I turn to NLS research in different contexts, inside the classroom, across contexts and outside the classroom, which informed my thesis. For example, Heath's (1983) seminal study "Ways with Words", researched peoples' everyday lives, and one aspect raised awareness of how student's reading and writing practices in Roadville and Trackton communities helped to sensitize teachers' pedagogy to learner needs. In this regard, Prinsloo (2004) studied out-of-school peer-play of children in South Africa as they engaged in several languages (Xhosa, English, Afrikaans) and multi-modal early literacy practices to create meaning that was in contrast to the school curriculum. Both studies thus showed how the schooled literacy (structural) rituals differed from everyday social practice to highlight gaps in pedagogical knowledge between contexts inside and outside the classroom. A study of the ways that people take literacy practices from one context into another as resources for learning in a new context has been of interest in adult Further Education settings in England (Satchwell and Ivanič 2007). Moreover, the formal and informal adult learning agenda was raised in the work of Barton and Hamilton (1998) and Baynham (2004). In fact, these studies show how "people use and do literacy which rather than be decried as a loss of standards, can be embraced as the achievements of people making meaning for themselves and others in their lives" (Ivanič, Edwards, Satchwell and Smith 2007: 704).

In order to explain this further, I draw on ESOL classroom studies. One relates to the concept of "bringing the outside in", where life contexts emerge in classrooms through student initiated topics (Baynham 2011). A second addresses the notion of a democratic classroom where, with less teacher talk, opportunities for "negotiating communication rights" in classrooms emerge (Wallace 2008). I then turn to a study across contexts in a college of Further Education that explored the way in which writing practices crossed learning contexts inside and outside college (Satchwell and Ivanič 2007). Finally, I turn to a recent study of two migrant domestic workers in London that offered an alternative perception of opportunities for writing in England (North 2013). I begin with the concept of "bringing the outside in".

2.5.1 "Bringing the outside in"

A notion of "bringing the outside in" can relate to literacy events where a student takes agency to interrupt a lesson with their own ideas about writing or what a text means to them, which gives teachers the option to include, delay or exclude the comment raised. For example, migrant students may experience struggles for work, having qualifications assessed, managing bureaucratic processes and so on (Shrubshall and Roberts 2005). These everyday life issues may be raised in literacy events through "talk around text" as part of the process for migrants' engagement with writing (Barton and Hamilton 1998). One of the ways migrants' experiences

arise is through story-telling, which may assist them to explore their own processes for writing if classroom opportunities are opened.

I now present an example that explored the concept of “bringing the outside in” for a student in an ESOL classroom. The extract summarises some key points of relevance to this thesis from Simpson’s (2011) ESOL classroom observation. The episode related to narrative and identity work in a workshop style computer lesson when a student was asked about a worksheet activity set by the teacher. The student, Luisa, talked about personal experiences in a literacy event emerging from written text:

During the lesson students worked at their own pace and sat one person to a computer in a “workshop” layout; a worksheet requested that students “bring in” content originating in their homelands and to “use the internet to look for a folk tale from your country of origin” and then to “tell the story to another person” for speaking examination practice. Luisa, who was from Brazil, found a folk story originating from a tribe in the Amazonian rain forest, but which seemed outside her urban experience (Baynham 2011).

When asked by the researcher, what she was doing, Luisa retold the story on the computer webpage. Luisa was then asked if she had heard lots of stories when she was young. The question created an opportunity for Luisa to talk about her own life story, her parents’ transnational marriage, her childhood moves between Angola and Brazil, her own transnational marriage and her preferences about life in Brazil.

Extract adapted from Simpson (2011: 10-22)

The above extract shows how researcher questions led to Luisa talking about a text and her life experiences in a routine classroom exercise (Baynham 2011: 51-52). Although Luisa’s opportunity in this observation was opened by the teacher it was influenced by “top-down” structures via a worksheet task within the classroom at that time, therefore “bringing the outside in” was in fact a pedagogical strategy (Baynham 2011). Thus, the teacher controlled the opportunity for the researcher to talk to Luisa and the worksheet guided the classroom task towards examination practice later in the lesson. In fact, even though Luisa found a folk story from Brazil, it seemed outside her real-life experiences and excluded her movement between different countries. Furthermore, as shown in Simpson’s (2011) extract above, migrants’ opportunities for literacy practice may be reduced because of prescribed classroom tasks, possibly because:

“as principals, teachers orchestrate classroom events, playing out an institutional role; as animators, they activate prescribed syllabuses and the textbook and their underlying ideology. They are ventriloquating rather than authoring their teaching.”

(Wallace 2008: 6, 7)

It seems that the creation of opportunities for literacy events and practices may arise out of democratic real-life interaction that enables students to reduce the effects of prescriptive teacher-controlled pedagogy (Roberts et al 2004; Cooke and Roberts 2007; Roberts and Cooke 2009) of the sort against which my thesis argues. In reality, the teacher may adjudicate classroom tensions to maintain a classroom community which fosters mutual respect for points of view, and also offers space for challenges (Wallace 2008: 30), which is relevant for some of the suggestions I intend to make later. Furthermore, if migrants' engagement with writing emerges from social practices, then the informal talk in interaction between students and teachers, which Simpson (2011) believes frequently occurs on the periphery of lessons, provides significant insights into peoples' writing needs. Nonetheless, it seems that when student stories or talk about experiences are included as part of ESOL pedagogy and lesson planning, they frequently "don't work" because of "over planning and control" (Wallace 2006: 88-89). Even though allowing informal talk in lessons is difficult for teachers, these opportunities open up possibilities for people to develop strategies to "counter the excesses of inequality that they meet daily" (Simpson 2011: 21). Therefore, it seems to me that migrants' opportunities for informal talk around texts may well enable them to enhance their own processes for negotiating their engagement with writing in social contexts, which is relevant for suggestions that will be made later. Hence, opening up to real-life conditions for interaction which is framed by Derrida (1995: 239-240) as a process of "effective, and thus transforming, questioning" in the analysis of what democracy means to people. This means that outcomes based ideology, such as using interviews between tutors and students to negotiate ILP learning targets, may be countered by reflective, co-constructed and open-ended knowledge in talk rather than producing compartmentalized pre-specified goals (Wallace 2008). In the next sub-section I turn to formal and informal writing within and across different contexts.

2.5.2 Crossing writing contexts: the space in-between

The Literacies for Learning in Further Education (LlLFE) project researched ways that people take literacy practices from one context into another as resources for learning. This was in contrast to a focus on cognitive abilities that define writing in the "autonomous" sense, for individual skills production that is independent of context. Thus, "each literacy practice is situated in its social context, serving different purposes in different contexts and varying from one context to another" (Satchwell and Ivanič 2007: 304). The following research extract drew on an observation of one particular student, Logan, studying a catering and hospitality curriculum. This extract was chosen for its description of writing in different contexts, even though it does not relate to the ESOL curriculum, the LlLFE project found implications for other parts of the education system.

The course required students to complete a log book, “a formal literacy practice as found in an educational context, although the term ‘log book’ attempted to deformatize the concept of a ‘Record of Achievement’”. (Satchwell and Ivanič 2007: 311). In a restaurant students had no problems writing orders or checking computer details, but they felt that they needed help with the technical aspects of writing; spelling “cafetière” and “cutlery” and remembering where to put the full stops and commas.

Logan, despite being disillusioned by his compulsory schooling, confidently engaged in literacy practices that he saw as connected with his work in a golf-club restaurant and that also met his future aspirations. These factors raised Logan’s self-image and enthusiasm to succeed in the college context and revealed his hidden literacy practices.

The research conceptualized how people recognized that different approaches to writing were called for in formal and informal contexts. The context called for lexical awareness, the differentiation between accurate or invented spelling and the negotiation of identity positioning in situated practice. The project found that a major institutional challenge was to identify factors with potential to transform educational literacy practices into practices with which students identified.

Extract adapted from Satchwell and Ivanič (2007: 303-316).

In the above extract, students recognized that in the transfer between contexts some literacy practices remained the same and others were changed (Satchwell and Ivanič 2007). However, the process of re-contextualizing experiences across the curriculum challenged teachers because situated practice differed participant by participant and through teachers’ new or established pedagogical approach, depending on a continuum in their development as professionals (Ivanič et al 2007: 719). Nonetheless, as active participants in the LfLFE project, teachers designed pedagogy from their understanding of literacy as a set of social practices, raised students’ awareness of everyday writing which could act as resources for their own learning, made writing more resonant with students’ everyday practices and made communicative aspects of learning contexts more explicit and visible for people to recognize (TLRP 2008). Moreover, Ivanič et al. (2007) calls for teaching that responds to changes relating to the context in multiple and unpredictable ways that include students’ literacy practices outside college. The next subsection turns to literacy practices and identity construction in informal language learning outside a college context.

2.5.3 Literacy support sessions in London

I include the following extract because North (2013: 595) believes that the experiences recounted run counter to a common stereotypical perception of the process of learning to write and of “illiteracy”. The research was carried out in London, where North (2013: 597) studied two migrant domestic workers, Priya and Sudah, who originated from Nepal. The research followed Priya and Sudah as they participated in an informal literacy learning support group in London where they took advice, and learned English and computer skills, as they met with others, sharing ideas and concerns surrounding learning to read and write in English. The

extract relates to the life trajectories of Priya and Sudha; identity and personal life experiences, writing and literacy learning, text messaging and work:

Personal life experiences

“my life would have been easier if I had learnt to read and write before”

Priya had spent eight years in London and was waiting for a visa so that she could continue to work in London before considering visiting family in Nepal for the first time since her arrival. Despite her lack of education Priya had found work in another country, supported herself and her husband, and learnt to read and write in English. On the other hand, Sudha referred to her literacy learning as something she was doing for herself and practised reading and writing at home, alone. Yet both move between being domestic workers in the UK and as mothers, sisters, daughters, friends and providers to families and communities in Nepal.

Writing and literacy learning

For these two migrants, basic literacy skills in English had small influence over finding better work, over their low gendered status where they lived and worked or their vulnerability to exploitation. However, literacy touched the processes of migration, travel, and local power relations beyond economic terms to change their identity, status and self-esteem. Outside work they could travel, attend classes, manage their transnational relationships, their networks and adopt a literate identity. In truth, they felt confident when sending text messages, reading street names, completing travel documentation, or learning with family.

Text messaging

On a regular basis Sudha used her mobile phone for text messaging and was conversant with the different sorts of phones and contracts for sale. In the support group she often wanted help with reading text messages and could soon read them, and reply herself. Typical literacy events mixed English and Hindi. Text message exchanges between two Nepali sisters were written in Egypt and read in London. Sudha contacted people by phone, but sending and receiving messages was important to her.

Work

Sudha and Priya used literacy in their working lives more than they perceived. In fact, domestic workers in Pakistan frequently write phone messages but the practices are often not recognized by the writers themselves. However, limited literacy in English left them vulnerable to exploitation by relying on employers' help for reading an immigration status letter, for example. In addition, domestic work was an option for those with little literacy or education.

Extract adapted from North (2013: 595-603)

The stories of Priya and Sudha showed how they communicated between networks which included the wealthy, international (and literate) households within which they worked in London; their own immediate families; their home communities and villages in Nepal; their extended family and friends in the UK and abroad; the English and literacy classes they attended, which included other migrants and teachers; and official spaces associated with immigration. In each context there were opportunities and constraints as these migrants' creatively negotiated meaning and identity positions of power and vulnerability in relation to others. It appeared that for Priya and Sudha engagement with literacy and learning contributed to their identity construction considerably and challenged a common stereotype of the “illiterate, disempowered third world woman” (North 2013: 600). This suggested how “categories”,

“labels” and “types” can emerge as distinctive “socio cultural” features of research that shows the way in which individuals are viewed as “differentially positioned” (Toohey and Norton 2003: 65) within contexts of learning and may be influenced by the discourses of societal structures. Nonetheless, Priya’s and Sudha’s use of literacy can be embraced as the achievements of people making meaning for themselves and others in their lives rather than loss of standards (Ivanič et al 2007: 704). In reality, research such as the work by North (2013) and Ivanič et al. (2007) for me reflects a goal of identity and language learning “to develop understandings of learners as both socially constructed and constrained but also as embodied, semiotic and emotional persons who identify themselves, resist identifications, and act on their social worlds” (Norton and Toohey 2002: 123).

2.5.4 Section summary

This sub-section has shown how people use and do literacy in creative and meaningful ways and how migrants’ processes for engagement with writing can represent personal achievements. Talk around text truly seemed to enable people to include their life experiences, from which to make meaning through story-telling. In fact, the process of re-contextualizing experiences across the curriculum may challenge teachers because of different student practices and pedagogical approaches depending on CPD experiences. The differences migrant students bring to the writing classroom may emerge from familiar cultural processes and relate to experiences of opportunities or constraints. Migrants also seemed open to the possibilities of assumed categorization by others, which could lead to stereotypical representation. With increased knowledge of the meaning of social practices teachers might assist migrant students to recognize and manage their own opportunities for writing and identity construction in social networks, and to challenge how they are represented.

2.6 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how research has highlighted the effects of globalization on migrants as they move from one country to another and are affected by different political contexts. In contemporary times, people are being forced to rely on their own resources and migrants develop flexible processes to negotiate getting everyday writing done. In addition, technology and digital texts, such as e-mail and mobile phone text messaging, have opened up new creative forms of written communication and extended worldwide networks. Therefore, migrants’ multiple needs for engagement with writing, in turn, impact on the pedagogical strategies for teachers to take up in classrooms for learning.

However, flexibility as a result of globalization in migrants’ lives seems to open challenges for a statutory curriculum to respond to the changing pace of people’s lives. The need for

flexibility suggests that there could be less time for migrants to learn from skills-like procedures, to master a set of techniques, when their social contexts demand more immediate processes for engagement with writing, to address their everyday activities. Additional challenges may arise from assumptions that are made about people who are categorized by labels, such as those implying that people are either “literate” or “illiterate”. These categories may stem from narrow perceptions of writing, upon which judgements are based, immediately discounting basic literacy that was acquired previously outside the classroom. This invites institutions to exploit what migrants can do, rather than focus on what they are unable to do, which often highlights deficiencies. However, it seems that migrants’ resources may become lost in the flurry of curricula, tools and the need to follow procedures. Finally, I have shown how people develop processes to negotiate meaning for managing wider structures that enable or reduce their opportunities. The next chapter turns to informal learning, everyday writing practices and identity construction.

Chapter 3: Identity, Writing and Social Practice

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I presented some of the challenges for migrants and their writing practices in the twenty-first century that have been discussed in literature. I discussed research showing how migrants' writing practices have changed and now include digital texts, while a wider socio-cultural perspective has added meanings, values and issues of power which overlap with socio-political discourses (Ivanič 2004).

Therefore, in Chapter 3, I extend the theoretical underpinning to my thesis. I discuss literature relating to the conceptualisation of identity in relation to migrants' writing and learning to write in a new language in everyday life, and in classroom social practices. I begin, following this brief chapter introduction, with Section 3.2 where I discuss conceptualisations of identity, and in so doing define the terms that appear within my thesis. These terms are 'identity construction', 'identity positioning', 'identity conflicts', 'identity challenges' and 'identity negotiation'. Then, in Section 3.3, I discuss migrants' everyday practices for learning and writing. In Section 3.4, I highlight classroom experiences that are influenced by identity negotiation. Then, in Section 3.5, I discuss aspects of social and political structure that impact on migrants' processes of negotiation for engagement with writing in the classroom, before turning to alternative pedagogical approaches in Section 3.6. Finally, I outline the conclusions of this chapter in Section 3.7.

I will now turn to identity conceptualisations and define the terms used within this thesis.

3.2 Identity conceptualisations

Over the last two decades interest in researching identity and language learning has increased and is central to social science and applied linguistics (Menard-Warwick 2005; De Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg 2006; Norton and Toohey 2011). Nonetheless, the word 'identity' seems variously conceptualised and there appears to be no single definition. I have therefore turned to prominent theorists, such as Norton (1995, 2000), Block (2006, 2007, 2013), Wenger (1998) and others to enable me to explain more recent conceptualisations of identity and the terms that I use within this thesis.

Moreover, I found that the desire for a deeper understanding of 'identity', in relation to my thesis and in the wider research community, is echoed by Block's (2007: 91) view that:

‘it is in the adult migrant experience that identity and one’s sense of self are most put on the line, not least because most of all previous support systems in terms of history, culture and language have been removed and must rapidly be replaced by new ones’.

Indeed, there are different conceptualisations of identity. In Norton’s (1995; 2000) study of migrant women she drew on Weedon’s (1997) argument for subject and subjectivity that moved away from humanist concepts of the individual that have dominated Western philosophy. That is where each person is perceived as having an essential, unique, fixed and coherent core self which suggests little opportunity for changing identities. This is clear when Holliday (2013: 72-73) points out that essentialist perspectives of people ‘relate to Westernization and implies that types of behaviour are limited to particular cultures which cannot accommodate change and dialogue within their structures’. Whereas, poststructuralists depict individual subjects as diverse, contradictory, dynamic and changing over historical time and social space (Weedon 1997; Norton 2000; Block 2007; De Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg 2006). This dynamism enables contestation of one identity position for negotiation of alternative identities depending on the contingencies open to people in any particular context. At the same time, peoples’ future hopes, aspirations and imagined communities also enable or constrain identity construction (Norton and Toohey 2011; Wenger 1998). Indeed, imagination may be more prominent when immersion in the dominant language community is reduced or is hard to access (Block 2007; Norton 2000). Most significantly, Pennycook (2001:147) believes that a poststructural perspective challenges ‘reductionist tendencies in applied linguistics’.

However, different conceptualizations of identity lead to different literacy research (Zhang 2010: 248). For Norton (2000), the need to understand her participants’ opportunities to speak in English with dominant language users, led her to draw on poststructuralist theories and Bourdieu’s (1977: 648) conception of ‘the right to speech’. However, my thesis considers that social relationships are crucial to show how participants’ engagement with writing as social practice impacts on their opportunities for identity construction. With this in mind, Block (2007: 16) notes that Gee (1996), Blommaert (2005) and Weedon (1987) draw on the notion of ‘discursive fields’ (Foucault 1981, 1986, 1988 cited in Block 2007: 19). Indeed, Weedon (1997: 34) relates to this as the ‘competing ways of giving meaning to the world and of organising social institutions and processes’. Thus, in my thesis, by conceptualising migrants’ engagement with writing as social practice, in the light of NLS (see Sub-Section 2.4.2), it is feasible for me to draw on notions of communities of practice (Barton and Hamilton 2005; Wenger 1998; Holliday 2013). The relationship between NLS and communities of practice in relation to my thesis is explained in the following Section 3.5. Therefore, like Weedon (1997) and Foucault (1982) the central argument is that subjectivity is discursively constructed, and is always

socially and historically embedded in individual experience. These theories have helped me to explain my participant migrants' identity construction in different contexts.

My thesis frames identity as a social process, as opposed to a determined and fixed product, which according to Block (2006: 41) is an under-theorised perspective. What is more, this conceptualisation of identity fits with social constructivism that characterizes identity as a process embodied in social practice, not as given or product (Lee and Anderson 2009; De Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg 2006). Indeed, in relation to my thesis, an 'identity card metaphor' (Holliday, Hyde and Kullman 2010: 18) symbolises the process in that 'although we are not fully in control of the resources that make up our identity, and we cannot choose our ethnicity, sex, and so on, we can decide how to play the hand of cards that we have been dealt'. Moreover, by taking a sociocultural perspective I perceive that learning occurs as part of identity construction as participants take up particular positions or have positions ascribed to them by others, in particular social, historical and cultural contexts (Block 2007, 2013; Duff 2002; Norton and Toohy 2011). Therefore, in order to describe and interpret my research material I use four terms to explain identity as it is constructed, alters by positioning, accommodates conflicts in the light of contextual challenges, and as it is negotiated, because 'identity is subject to contestation' (Norton 2000: 127). In the next sub-sections I provide definitions of the five terms used within my thesis and as referred to in the introduction above. I will begin with a definition of 'identity construction'.

3.2.1 Identity construction

Research has shown that identity construction is multifaceted as it occurs in the company of others, either face to face or in digital texts and relates to beliefs, investment, values, activities, practices and semiotic artefacts (Block 2007; De Fina and Perrino 2013; Bartlett 2007a; Norton 2000; Wenger 1998; Holliday, Hyde and Kullman 2010). Moreover, according to Block (2013: 144), Stuart Hall inspired a notion of identity as a 'production' emergent in ongoing activity. Indeed, identity is constructed through the complex and recurrent interactions between the individual and the social (Gu 2010: 148). It is a dual process, and according to Weedon (1997: 108) identity construction "occurs through the identification by the individual with particular subject positions and with discourses". Moreover, the changing characteristics of identity construction are defined by Norton (2000: 4) in terms of 'how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future...[and] the role of language as constitutive of and constituted by a language learner's identity'. Therefore, it seems that new and changed identities may be constructed as part of adapting to new life circumstances (Block 2007: 29). An example of my processes for identity construction in Japan is shown in the introduction (Sub-

Section 1.3.2.) where a bank clerk and I constructed a dynamic context at that time through talk, bodily gestures and artefacts to enable us to make sense of my form completion in written Japanese. In the process we both, no doubt, drew on our past experiences as also shown in my research participant extracts to follow. Thus, identity reflects an individual's relationship with the external environment and it is through language that social and political encounters are organised, defined and contested, "yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed" (Weedon 1997: 21). Indeed, Block (2007: 1-3) offers a more precise definition of identity construction as being about individuals, 'their pasts, present and futures; their trials and tribulations and their aspirations; and in short, "who they are"'. What is more, identity construction is relational because people compare ideological perceptions that may be in conflict, where feelings of a stable self are upset and lead to a struggle (positive or negative), which pushes migrants to find a meaningful balance as I did in Japan (Block 2007: 24). Indeed, identity construction is also based on 'identity positioning', a term to which I now turn.

3.2.2 Identity positioning

As I indicated previously, the terms explained in this section overlap and identity positions, as Weedon (2004: 4) claims, are about 'negotiating difference [that] includes issues of conflicting cultures and values and their effects on identity' which 'has come to the fore in Western Europe with the establishment and growth' of minority communities'. According to Davies and Harré, (1990: 47) positioning is defined as "the discursive production of a diversity of selves". It is from diverse positions that language learners participate in social life, and write, as they construct identity positions which provide or constrain opportunities for them to build identities with others (Norton and Toohey 2011: 414). Indeed, positions are negotiated in 'discursive practices [that] constitute the speakers and hearers in certain ways and yet at the same time are a resource through which speakers and hearers can negotiate new positions' (Davies and Harré 1990: 61). Therefore, social practice also presents the possibilities for human agency to influence ascribed positions (Norton Pierce 1995: 15; Norton and Toohey 2011: 414). What is more, Harré et al (2009: 9) claim that "positions" are features of the local "moral landscape". These are practices in which people are assigned, acquire or seize positions in various implicit and explicit ways that are based on real or imagined individual characteristics. For example, in Section 1.4 above, as a student of early Japanese writing, on the one hand I was placed in a deficit identity position when my Japanese teacher indicated that I would struggle to write in comparison to my peers. This identity position was negative for me, partly because of my knowledge of the stigma surrounding 'illiteracy' that I understood from a Western, and 'imaginary' perspective. On the other hand, my identity positioning was positive when I engaged in social practices with classmates on the fringes of the Japanese lesson (see Sub-

Section 1.4.3). Thus, it seems feasible to me, that by noticing difference and by comparing against others, identities are relational as people negotiate new subject positions that are shaped by their socio-histories, possibly throughout life (Block 2007; Holliday 2013; Norton and Toohey 2011; Weedon 1997). It is thus unsurprising that identity conflicts may arise and be contested in the process of dealing with others (Norton 2000: 127), as I shall discuss in the next sub-section.

3.2.3 Identity conflicts

It is through the multiplicity of identities, according to Weedon (1987: 33), that people are placed in continuous sites of conflicting forms of subjectivity. In the case of migrants:

“It is without a doubt that dealing with two cultures simultaneously is a difficult and demanding task, as the ‘old’ culture (represented by the parents and family) and the ‘new’ culture (represented by the wider society) are both exerting pressure to conform. This gives migrating individuals conflicting and mixed messages, which often lead to changes in a person’s sense of self and identity.”

(Lin 2008: 130)

Indeed, literature has referred to identity conflicts as arising from ambivalent feelings that a person experiences by being in a new context, especially in the case of early writers who might want to give readers an impression of themselves, as ‘posh’ or as ‘educated’, to meet local cultural perspectives rather than who they are (Block 2007; Clark and Ivanič 1997). In turn, people may often be ‘forced by their individual life trajectories to make choices where choices are not easy to make’ (Block 2007: 26), and often relate to a person’s imagined identities. Therefore, I found the following definition relevant to my thesis:

“In an identity conflict (“legitimation crisis”), the person has several commitments which prescribe conflicting behavioral imperatives in some situations, such that at least one commitment may have to be betrayed.”

(Baumeister, Shapiro and Tice 1985: 407)

It is perhaps unsurprising that relationships between conflicting cultures and values have effects on a person’s identity (Weedon 1997; Holliday 2013). However, in a handout received from and discussed with Adrian Holliday, he cautions against perceiving that when migrants learn a new language, such as English, they are learning a new ‘foreign’ culture, when in fact people are frequently faced with new cultures, even when moving between different families. Nevertheless, differences may be turned into learning opportunities (see Sub-Section 1.2.3 above) as shown when I purchased a car in Japan; the negative reaction to my request for a manual car from the garage owner arose because it was usual for people locally (in Japan) to drive automatic cars but that was not necessarily the case in England. With this additional

knowledge, the ‘conflict’ made sense to me, and it was thereby a learning opportunity. I discuss this more fully in relation to my research participants in the forthcoming data chapters.

The example given above demonstrates that identity conflicts may appear in local moment-by-moment practice (micro-level) and may be shaped by global (macro-level) forces which relate to peoples’ ‘socio-historical baggage’ (Block 2007: 242). What is more, people can express strong feelings, about written texts and literacy practices just as strongly as they do in face-to-face interaction; disapproval, triumph, control or mastery, stigma or fear (Besnier 1993; Barton and Hamilton 1998; Clark and Ivanič 1997; Blommaert 2013). Nonetheless, identity conflicts may be productive for identity construction, especially in consideration of Block’s (2007: 26) call for deeper understanding of the extent to which identity is ‘a self-conscious reflexive project of individual agency, created and maintained by individuals’. In addition to conflicts, contexts also create identity challenges, to which I now turn.

3.2.4 Identity challenges

In respect of my thesis, and as Barton and Hamilton (1998: 6) state, “the notion of literacy practices offers a powerful way of conceptualising the link between the activities of...writing and the social structures in which they are embedded” and this is where I perceive that identity challenges arise. That is, identity challenges emerge from social situations where the structural influences (an awareness of the norms and rules of entry or action in social or institutional contexts) expose people to experience opportunities or constraints for writing in any language, but that particularly affect second language learning (Norton and Toohey 2011: 415). Indeed, structural influences play out in life experiences as people draw on their past identity performances in different contexts. The past, in a sense provides ‘a rehearsal ground’ for new situations from which migrants reconfigure their identities, especially when under pressure to perform in a new language (Blommaert 2013: 620). In fact, for most applied linguists, structure is central to power relations in institutional and social contexts in studies of identity (Norton 2000, Block 2006). The following interpretation of structure supports my definition of identity challenges:

“Theories of social structure give primacy mostly to institutions, norms, and rules. They emphasise cultural systems, discourses and history. They seek underlying explanatory structures that account for social patterns and tend to view action as a mere realization of these structures in specific circumstances. The most extreme of them deny agency or knowledgeability to individual actors. “
(Wenger 1998: 12)

I therefore perceive that identity challenges are evident and arise in different contexts and in discourses, and indeed, Norton Peirce (1995:12) called for theories of ‘social identity that integrates the language learner and the language learning context’. Conversely, as social

structure is ever present and enduring it has a shaping effect on human agency (Gu 2010: 141). Therefore, identity challenges are the circumstances that arise in different contexts because of the impact of social and institutional structures that are, in turn, imposed on migrants' engagement with writing as people take action and make decisions about who they are. However, these circumstances may be changed through identity negotiation as discussed in the next sub-section.

3.2.5 Identity negotiation

In the process of identity negotiation people to some extent confront power (structures), as it is distributed in formal and informal contexts for language learning. What is more, identity negotiation enables people to influence or create opportunities for access to dominant language or other communities for writing (Norton 2000; Norton and Toohey 2011: 414). Indeed, as people are located in conversations they negotiate meaning and jointly produce storylines that are observably and subjectively created (Davies and Harré 1999: 37). This is perhaps because identity is regarded as something to be fought over, protected or celebrated in identity negotiation in different contexts, verbally and nonverbally (Lee and Anderson 2009; Swann, Johnson and Bosson 2009; Goodwin 2000: 1517). Moreover, as indicated in relation to identity positions above, Weedon (2004: 4) draws attention to the prominence of 'negotiating difference' and its effects on identity in recent times. Indeed, I draw on the following definition in respect of this thesis:

“Negotiation is viewed as a transactional interaction process, in which individuals attempt to evoke, assert, define, modify, challenge and/or support their own and others' desired self-images, in particular ethnic identity”

(Ting-Toomey (1999) cited in Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 4)

Indeed, my experience of buying a car in Japan (see Sub-Section 1.2.3) encompassed the social processes for engagement with writing with a group of people as we negotiated personal perceptions (from past experiences and imagined futures). We engaged in moment by moment practices that involved material resources (documentation) as we 'negotiated literacies' for making sense of each other and to enable a purchase in a new country and in a new language (Barton and Hamilton 1998; Wenger 1998; Blommaert 2013). What is more, theorists such as Hull and Nelson (2009: 200) claim that “being prepared, in both sense of being able and willing, to communicate and understand across differences in language and other modes and media for communication in ideology, in culture, and in geography is at the heart of what it means to be literate now”. In Chapter 6, I provide similar examples of social practices that are discussed in relation to my research participant experiences which show how identity negotiation is at the heart of identity construction.

3.2.6 Section summary

The foregoing conceptualisations of identity provide definitions to explain my perception of writing within a NLS socio-cultural framework. These theories provide ways of explaining migrants' engagement with writing and identity construction as they negotiate difference, conflicts, challenges and positions in social contexts. In fact, these definitions show that identities are not merely expressions of social practices, but are related to social values with attached cultural effects (Street in a number of works, Clark and Ivanič 1997; Baynham 2004; Holme 2004; Block 2007), and are also integral to writing systems to which literature in the following section relates. I begin Section 3.3 with an extract that demonstrates a traveller's possible response to a spontaneous opportunity for new learning.

3.3 Everyday practices: learning and writing

“... imagine a traveller, who arrives at a large railway station in a foreign land where there are several ways to ensure that they arrive at their final destination safely and efficiently. Three obvious strategies are that they can either ask someone who might know for some assistance, they could catch a taxi and anticipate that the driver would know or be able to find out, or they could obtain a map and use it to find their way on their own. All three strategies are about seeking and obtaining forms of guidance. Similarly, as part of learning to learn, it is the learner's role to develop and find ways of guiding their learning as required.”

(Golding, Brown and Foley 2009: 43)

This extract demonstrates how casual exposure to a real life need quickly activates creative social processes for problem solving, which may be seen as an informal “learning by doing” process, and this can extend to literacy learning (Heath and Street 2008: 121). For me, this extract shows how life for some people, by choice or imposition, is and continues to be, successful without consciously learning. This would also apply to the learning of reading or writing, so some people may consider themselves as “illiterate” when in fact they are exposed to “writing” unconsciously in “informal” activities (Rogers 2008: 133). In fact, the possibilities opened up here on the surface meet Livingstone's (2001: 4) definition of informal learning to include “all forms of intentional or tacit learning in which we engage either individually or collectively without direct reliance on a teacher or externally organized curriculum”, which he claims has been underestimated.

3.3.1 Learning from everyday experiences

This section is intended to look at the ways in which learning goes beyond formal educational contexts and can arise from everyday experiences. The reader may have wondered why this part of the chapter opened with the anecdote quoted. The fact is that for me it connects with my introduction to Japan (see chapter one). I arrived at the airport clutching a copy of an

email message (an artefact) that I received in England and which was written in English which was my guide towards “reading” Japanese systems, to complete immigration forms for instance. These practices show modern life experiences on the go:

“We are participating in broad cultural shifts in the nature of knowledge and the nature of communication. Writing is crucial to these and its role is changing. We live in a textually mediated world where writing is central to society, its cultural practices and institutions. Writing also plays a major part in people’s everyday activities, be it at home or at work. Writing is an appropriate topic for anthropological scrutiny...’

(Barton and Papen 2010: 4)

The role of writing, as described by Barton and Papen (2010) is tied to our everyday activities and learning that is influenced by globalization through cultural practices and society’s structures. It is perhaps not surprising that the perceptions of “formal” and “informal” learning in respect of writing may be blurred (Tusting 2003: 11). It seems that for migrants unintentional, informal learning often occurs as a by-product of other social activities; it is a lifelong process that is unorganized and often unsystematic (Golding, Brown and Foley 2009: 43). In other words, learning generally, and exposure to writing specifically, goes on all of the time in different contexts, with or without other people, and may be part of conscious or of unintentional activities. In addition, learning in general changes from one context to another and depends on the social circumstances and technology involved, and this is also true in the specific case of writing.

In relation to this thesis I believe that learning “fundamentally refers to the process whereby individuals acquire knowledge and skills (and much more besides) from different sources, either intentionally or not ... sources may be institutions ... other people [and] every situation in life” (Jarvis 2014: 52). Nonetheless, whatever terms are used, it is clear that “people read and write to communicate, to organise their domestic life, to pass the time of day, to fulfil mechanical tasks at work, to keep records: functions of literacy that do not, except indirectly, involve learning” (Satchwell and Ivanič 2007:4). Moreover, adult migrants are used to enlisting other people for guidance as part of their existing processes for engagement with writing. I now turn to the role of the intermediaries that migrants enlist for engagement with writing.

3.3.2 The role of intermediaries for writing

In order to describe the people that migrants engage with for writing as social practices I have used the noun “intermediary”. One dictionary definition is:

“an intermediate agent or agency; a go-between or mediator.”

(<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/intermediary?s=t>: accessed 01.04.14).

Much of the writing that people do involves others, who may be friends, acquaintances, members of the family or of professions and organizations. Researchers have described these “intermediaries” and their roles in various ways. Hamilton (2006: 131) summarizes categories as literacy scribes, brokers, mediators and advocates, these varying by context and participation within social practice in a “role that is not one of ‘scaffolding’, in the Vygotskian sense, because roles of expert and novice are fluid”. Adult migrants’ relationships with intermediaries may be changeable and collaborative, and relate to specific needs for writing at a particular time. People who are intermediaries provide expertise in writing that links everyday informal writing and writing for institutional purposes, this often being part of reciprocal relationships or networks of association (Barton and Hamilton 1998; Gee 2013; Hamilton 2006) and others. However, because of life changes, migrants may have varying degrees of access to intermediaries for language learning and people to support their practices – they may fear being singled out or mocked, or they may be ambivalent about their circumstances and so likely to draw on previous identities for support (Duff 2002). This means that relationships with intermediaries may not always be stable, successful or available; people have disagreements, move away or are indisposed when needed and thereby sometimes constrain writing processes (Barton and Hamilton 1998). One implication is that, because of migration, people may feel competent in one community, but later deficient in different languages and literacy learning situations, or they may be affected by interrupted education (Duff 2002). Thus, a particular perception of writing and literacy may influence peoples’ processes for engagement and identity construction.

3.3.3 Identity and writing: socio-cultural influences

In this section I consider the social perspective through which identity construction is enabled and how opportunities for writing in a new language are facilitated or reduced in the process of learning (Norton and Toohey 2011). Language, and with it writing, is closely linked to identity. Furthermore, it brings competing historical and socio-political values - when, why and how people write is determined by socio-culturally accepted conventions of handwriting, spelling, public and private behaviour or what to “put in writing” and what not (Clark and Ivanič 1997: 67). Moreover, complexities arise from cultural effects that differ from country to country, so that different perceptions about writing may emerge, as the following two extracts from literature about Japan and Afghanistan show:

“In Japan, despite the development of two syllabaries and the much later importation of the Roman alphabet, Kanji, the character script imported from China, survives to this day. The learning burden it imposes on Japanese school children is such that they continue studying it in secondary school. Kanji survives because writing is not just an efficient delivery system. Writing systems are repositories of social values and are perhaps, value systems in themselves.”

(Holme 2004: 146)

I believe that this extract exemplifies one of the characteristics that underpin writing systems generally, with English being no exception. That is, that written composition subtly imposes the values attached to writing in a given culture, and a personal obligation to get it right, thereby raising identity conflicts. For example, when learning English writing, many migrants may struggle to achieve standard expectations when they omit articles, such as “a” and “an”, yet these omissions affect communication marginally and often go unnoticed (Ringbom 2007: 69). On the other hand, there are societies that value oral communication over writing. This was described by Stewart (2005) when he encountered a particular perception about literacy as he walked across Afghanistan in 2002, at a time when the country was “caught between hostile nations, warring factions and competing ideologies ...”:

“... class did not necessarily effect education and experience. My current host, Seyyed Ilmar, was a wealthy man from a respected family of landowning clergy, but he could not read or write and had never been abroad. Abdul Haq, who was from a much humbler background, was literate and had travelled ... what mattered was power and that in turn depended on your allies.”
(Stewart 2005: 157)

This extract from Afghanistan gives an indication of how the value of written text is created by people and is passed on culturally; it has symbolic value and material aspects, and it is crucial to interaction between people and central to knowledge creation (Barton and Pape 2010: 4). These two extracts, for me, exemplify the values attached to opposing ideologies about writing and literacy, thus showing the ways in which cultures differ in what they consider to be their significant “texts” (Ferdman 1990: 199). Therefore, identities arise from different cultural contexts and people might be labelled as “illiterate” (unable to access or produce texts) in one, but “literate” in another, with varying perceptions of what “being literate” is amongst different groups of people (Ferdman 1990: 198). Indeed, identities change:

“Identities are about negotiating new subject positions at the crossroads of the past, present and future. Individuals are shaped by their socio-histories but they also shape their socio-histories as life goes on. The entire process is conflictive as opposed to harmonious and individuals often feel ambivalent. There are unequal power relations to deal with, around the different capitals – economic, cultural and social – that both facilitate and constrain interactions with others in the different communities of practice with which individuals engage in their lifetimes. Finally, identities are related to different traditionally demographic categories such as ethnicity, race, nationality, migration, gender, social class and language.”
(Block 2007: 27)

As shown by Block (2007) here, even though people may struggle with identity construction, as it is shaped through their life pathways, their processes of negotiation may enable them to manage conflicting values. Indeed, De Castell and Luke (1983: 373) argue that “being literate” constitutes having mastery over the processes by means of which culturally

significant information is coded. In other words, a major challenge for migrants' early engagement with writing seems to be the learning processes. In classrooms, the learning process is tied to institutional conventions that can often construe people as having cultural disadvantage (Shan and Guo 2013).

Nevertheless, socio-cultural attitudes can change and so can writing and their impacts on individual identity. In addition, writing systems can be seen to change as they become technological tools for problem solving and can often respond to socio-economic demands, where social practices and technologies intertwine (Holme 2004: 145). This was evident in Clark and Ivanič's (1997) claim that "language" is a semiotic system and "literacy" represents the ways and ability of using "written language".

3.3.4 Section summary

The foregoing suggest that learning goes on all of the time and that writing (and learning) is influenced by migrants' socio-historical experiences. These experiences are peppered with perceptions from everyday life, technological changes and institutional socio-political contexts, which at times may compete. Intermediaries are helpful to enable migrants' early engagement with writing or for "reading" a new cultural context, but they are also infused with their own perceptions and values of difference, or might not be available to help. The point is that, whilst institutional conventions play a role in practices, they do so alongside other interactions that students bring into the classroom from multiple social spaces for identity construction, to which I now turn.

3.4 Identity negotiation: classroom experiences

In defining language use as practice, emphasis is placed on communication as people negotiate their diversity and explore others in different contexts. However, the processes of identity construction define what matters to a person, but do not determine the ability to negotiate meanings (Wenger 1998: 197). Therefore, as migrants manage their processes of negotiation for learning to write, "it is not what we know, so much as the versatility with which we do things with English that defines proficiency" (Canagaraja and Said 2010: 162). The processes for migrants' negotiation of engagement with writing are entwined with identity and the cultural context in which they occur, in socio-cultural interaction which defines a person's group membership and position (Wenger 1998: 197). In other words, what happens in migrants' lives outside the classroom, their life experiences, affects what happens inside and can impact on their opportunities for identity construction. In this way, the classroom context blends the dichotomy of inside/outside experience and history with implications for social relations and identities (Moje and Luke 2009; Nesper 2004).

“If students do not feel they can express controversial opinions, theorise or think aloud about previously unexamined beliefs, assumptions, or attitudes, they cannot come to new understandings that better explain the social facts of ethnic experience and interaction as they have known them.”

(Yandell 2009: 163)

In reality, the classroom presents transformative and reproductive opportunities as students share social circumstances and evaluate their experiences against others in on-going identity construction (Block 2007; Morgan 1997). In this way, interaction makes visible the multiple dimensions of identity that unfold and are reformed in on-going social practices and verbal performance (Moje and Luke 2009). Hence, what people talk about may be important to them in a continuing “discourse” which Holliday (2013: 171) defines as “a way of using language which represents ideas about how things are”. However, a challenge for pedagogy may be the variations in written processes and products which arise from migrants’ engagement with different communities of practice (Angouri and Harwood 2008: 38). Therefore, a dual focus, both on social practices and on the processes in which people exercise their agency in forming and reforming their identities in particular contexts has been identified as necessary for understanding language learning, because of the way that both factors influence it (Norton and Toohey 2011).

However, migrants’ engagement with writing may be facilitated by the negotiation of meaning with intermediaries, but if a person’s contribution is regarded as irrelevant, then an identity of non-participation may arise, and ultimately lead to marginalization (Wenger 1998: 203). As classrooms include students’ and teachers’ everyday relations of power and their life problems on the one hand, and teachers’ professional ingenuity in navigating college conventions and local policy on the other, these processes may be either enabling or disabling for learning to write (Luke 2012: 8). In classrooms, the experiences of students and teachers intertwine in the interpretation of the curriculum, which involves teachers’ understandings of students’ multi-layered life history and communities, as well as teaching texts, materials and college conventions (Cochran-Smith 2006). Moreover, it is acknowledged that by adhering to strict academic writing contexts for making meaning, with restricted use of past life experiences, the discourse repertoire for people may be limited and may affect the choices available when building authorial identity (Hyland 2010: 161). When people are attending ESOL classes, their identity may be a temporary bridge to other identities which are yet to be realized in their life goals (Burgess and Ivanič 2010).

A challenge for teachers is to recognize the conscious and unconscious classroom talk and relationships that define desirable engagement with writing for learning (Morgan 1997). In addition, peer relations also highlight exclusion or sub-structures within the classroom, for

example, jocular interaction around a text may re-affirm the ethnic and national boundaries among students and thereby entrench prejudices (Gee 2013; Poveda 2011). Deeper insights into such contradictions might in fact foreground a clash between teachers' beliefs and institutional procedures, or draw attention to miscommunications as students and teachers construct the classroom culture (Gee 2013; Holliday 2013; Cochran-Smith 2006). In turn, social practices show how academic classification, cultural background and classroom relations overlap in ways that redefine events, but can also show who may be "inside" certain interactional spaces or who may be "outside" them, where social forces limit the possibilities of learning from others (Gee 2013: 58). Furthermore, an appreciation of writing differences can reduce cross-cultural misunderstandings by showing that writing difficulties are not problems inherent in the students themselves (Hyland 2003: 50). These factors raise the significance of a deeper understanding of the classroom culture for migrants' early engagement with writing and their learning experience generally, specifically as it is affected by the views and actions of their fellow-students and their teachers.

3.4.1 Representation: from categories to cultural processes

The increased diversity of migrant students in classrooms as a result of globalization has aroused much academic interest. This has led to calls for conceptual and theoretical perspectives to question definitions and categories that become reified in education research and practice (Warriner 2008). This is because when addressing issues of identities for learning we combine specific practices and the existence of social representations (Duveen 2001). In fact, paying attention to social representation becomes of particular importance for influencing people with poor experiences of learning at school, for whom engagement in learning and the task of overcoming negativity should not be underestimated (Crowther, Maclachlan and Tett 2010: 655). Thus, representation was found to impact on identity and learning in Norton's (2000) study, in which for some people categories of identity, such as gender, race and social class, challenged their access to opportunities for second language learning. Indeed, Menard-Warwick (2005: 266) argued that identity conflicts can often involve exhilarating or painful processes towards the construction of a new identity. In addition, in terms of learning to write, symbolic and material artefacts and representations come into play because:

"Literacy ... involves facility in manipulating the symbols that codify and represent the values, beliefs, and norms of the culture – the same symbols that incorporate the culture's representations of reality"
(Ferdman 1990: 187)

Therefore, writing involves more than overcoming access to literacy practices. There are terms surrounding migrants that often differentiate objects for labels. Anthias (2006: 19) recognized how categories such as "global" or "transnational", which relate to transnationalism

and the processes of crossing nation-state borders, might refer to: an ethnic group (e.g. diasporic groups), a category (e.g. sex workers), a person (e.g. a person who commutes across borders, or a person with homes in more than one country), and so on:

“In the context of globalisation and the consolidation of hierarchical relations worldwide, new forms of migration, exclusion and racialisation, and ... boundary making, it is no longer possible to clearly differentiate ... phenomena relating to groups which are to be regarded as ‘ethnic’ or ‘racial’.”

(Anthias 2006: 18)

Here, categorization is rendered problematic, and if “practice”, as Wortham (2005: 34) claims, is to help us to explain what constitutes social identification, that includes aspects of micro- and macro-, it must be understood more as a set of processes, drawing on components from various timescales over a person’s life”. Thereby, conceptualizing learning as “a process of becoming” (Vagan 2011: 44). This means that identity is fostered as a resource for engagement with learning that increases identity capital for attaining life goals (Morgan-Klein and Osborne 2007: 16). As such, Jonker (2005: 123) sensitively argues that at the individual level schooling can offer the confidence of becoming an educated, knowledgeable person or invoke feelings of failure as part of a complex process of shaping and reshaping the self.

This suggests a need to move beyond individual categories of representation relating to borders, security and social cohesion, race, ethnicity, gender, social class and so on, so that the notion of belonging becomes central to people’s lives and includes political practice (Yuval-Davis et al. 2005: 530). However, institutions such as my fieldwork college setting, tend to be infused with disciplinary power through conventions which codify what is acceptable and unacceptable in hierarchical relationships. College conventions judge and position learners as high or low achievers, intelligent or ignorant, and so on (Worthman 2008: 448). These representations (of deficit) emerge from images of identity archetypes or stereotypes with which people label and are labelled (Harklau 2000: 37). Moreover, Bartlett (2007a: 64) found in a study of adults with emergent literacy proficiency that people draw upon labels or interpretations of self during literacy events to assert themselves as literate. Debates about the reification of labels and their impact on identity certainly continue. ESOL students in England are no exception, as the following extract shows, in responding to a call for teachers’ perceptions, for the author (Powell 2014: 69) begins “I have used the term ‘lower level ESOL learners’ deliberately in the title of this article ... [for] debate related to what exactly we call this level ...” and continues:

“... The most common term used in England is ‘pre-entry’, however, many contributors were anxious to avoid this term, as the pre-entry curriculum framework (PECF) is intended to support the basic skills needs of people with difficulties in learning who were not yet ready to access the AECC ... In Scotland the term used is

‘ESOL literacies’. This highlights ... develop[ing] their literacy skills to the ... first point in the relevant curriculum framework (one contributor suggested ‘pre-literate’). This approach was supported ... if a learner is already literate (able to read and write Roman script), they can access the lowest level of the ESOL curriculum ... one respondent proposed ‘Beginners 1 (non-literate in own language or literate with a different script)’ and ‘Beginners 2 (literate in first language and using same or similar alphabet)’ ... one respondent ... pointing out ... ‘I don’t think we can categorise learners into pigeon holes – all our classes are so mixed in terms of educational background, literacy skills in first language etc. – that’s the challenge of ESOL!’.”

(Powell 2014: 69-70)

In this contemporary ESOL context, the author in question indicates that there seem to be internal institutional debates about diversity and categories in relation to the writing curriculum. This suggests that existing processes give rise to labelling largely out of unconscious awareness and that the tendency is to accept representations, such as that of “ESOL student”, as relatively unchanging and self-evident even though they are locally shaped and continually recreated (Harklau 2000: 36). Indeed, students who do not conform to particular behavioural expectations are probably open to being labelled as “disabled” in some way, that is, suffering from one deficit or another, such as being “non-literate” (Ladson-Billings 1995: 483). These processes may impact on identity construction because of the complex interplay of power and control that emerges from migrants’ past and current experiences of formal and informal writing opportunities.

In the following extract, Simpson and Cooke (2010) show how institutional and practitioner discourses led to a student believing in the deficit position to which he was assigned and began to question learning in his home country.

In a study of a Nigerian student named Tobi, Simpson and Cooke (2010) contrasted Tobi’s aspirations with the influence of other structures such as migration, the devaluing of his linguistic repertoire and his positioning as deficit. Tobi was working towards improving written academic English for entry tests to further his education. Teachers’ written feedback drew Tobi’s attention to poor English tenses, spelling and punctuation and the need for him to learn standard academic English. In turn, Tobi also focused on skills, he acknowledged that he made mistakes which he was previously unaware of, and adopted his teachers’ approach to study skills. Tobi also perceived, whether it was the case or not, that the concern of teachers in his home country, Nigeria, was for meaning-making, in contrast to his college in England where more attention was given to surface accuracy.

Extract adapted from Simpson and Cooke (2010: 57-73)

This extract shows “not only how structural conditions and social practices place individuals, but also how individuals struggle to situate themselves in the contexts in which they find themselves” (Norton and Toohey 2011: 427). It may thus be that moving beyond

categories opens possibilities for foregrounding everyday socio-cultural processes for identity construction where:

“being critically aware in intercultural encounters it is important to reveal ‘here’s how my culture colours my vision of another culture ‘... [and] lead students to reconsider the situated and constructed quality of their own cultural values as well as that of the texts they produce.’”

(Menezes de Souza 2007: 13)

While many forms of diversity are often perceived from deficit perspectives, categories may perhaps persist, or “seem to morph and shift”, although institutional responses to these changes may struggle to keep pace with peoples’ lives (Enright 2011: 89). Therefore, it seems that in institutional settings texts often focus on what people do not know, rather than using prior knowledge and experience as a bridge for learning (Auerbach and Burgess 1985). Perspectives of writing, literacy practices and texts, with their dependence on social context, are ideologically shaped by the wider socio-cultural environment in which they happen (Street 1984; Clark and Ivanič 1997: 58). Moreover, the effects of globalization have increased the need for people to focus on the processes and strategies involved in dealing with structural influences, particularly as they are directly on the receiving end (Anthias 2006).

The wider implications are significant: as people have different ways of looking at the world, they focus on one level of structure or another that is relevant for their own purpose (Wenger 1998). This means that becoming a learner is the product of the complex interplay between the “social and economic structures that shape people’s lives, the educational institutions which determine the processes of engagement with learning, and the learners themselves” (Crossan et al 2003: 58).

It seems that by focusing on the cultural processes that include structural representations there is also room for social transformation, because “structures are the result of the messy interaction of social actors struggling, negotiating and at times guessing in order to further their interests” (Bakewell 2010: 1696). In turn, these insights foreground not only identity and social practices, but also the processes involved in terms of personal experiences and reification for making sense of engagement with writing. In the next sub-section I discuss reification.

3.4.2 Complexity: social and political strands

This section addresses the question of certain factors that may affect the building of identity, primarily in a classroom context. Research has established that linguistic and cultural identities are local, situated, and on-going processes, but what counts as identity and which identities come into play in shifting contexts of communication are yet to be fully explored (Lee and Anderson 2009; Norton 2000). Some of the work discussed in Chapter 2 welcomed the

concept of bringing outside experiences into the classroom (Baynham 2004), as a powerful way of opening the door to a new set of complex discursive relations (Poveda 2011). Other opportunities arise where less teacher control enables students' to re-articulate prescribed texts and position themselves as expert interpreters (Wallace 2006). These studies seem to indicate that a major aspect of identity construction can thus be the process that migrants engage with to take agency for including life experiences in on-going classroom talk (Simpson 2011). In fact, recognising individual creativity is part of what it means to teach writing for meeting students political and cultural needs beyond the classroom (Hyland 2007: 162).

Therefore students' interaction in the classroom could lead to opportunities for the teacher to open up, but the process may be influenced, or reduced by institutional conventions. Hence, classroom experiences can lead to the loss or gaining of cultural and social capital, through the knowledge and values that are brought in and (re)negotiated (Burns and Roberts 2010: 414). Thus, classrooms explore discourses that are relevant to the people involved in on-going interaction and include their common understandings of a particular culture.

As Weedon (1987) shows, classroom interaction has a major effect on the social culture, teaching and learning experiences, and the discourses that influence migrants engagement with writing in English. For example, stories told by a teacher in the classroom may position students and their personal experiences as complicit with Western-centric ideology and migrants' attempts to resist or explore their ideologies can be treated as invisible or driven underground (Griswold 2010: 492). In Chapter 2, Wallace (2008) and Simpson (2008) were also quoted to show how teachers' control over lesson topics enabled them to choose to include or exclude students' perceptions in classroom discussions. In addition, Norton's (2000) study showed how individual actions facilitate or limit opportunities for people to learn English over time. It is essential for teachers to encourage students to explore ideological perspectives of classroom topics through discussion with others. In other words, they must provide opportunities for political and historical events to be discussed and for stories of students' own experiences to be included in lessons (Griswold 2010: 511). This will raise migrants' awareness of identity construction and the negotiation processes for engagement with writing in English, as shown in North's (2013) study. There has been prolific literature foregrounding the plight of migrants, but as the social worlds of students continue to change there are further calls for research to continue to understand the needs, relevant contexts and social worlds of students (Lee and Anderson 2009). Classrooms are clearly affected by this.

Classroom norms arise from group interaction, with the teacher or between peers. Therefore, opportunities for engagement with writing may occur in class from migrants' own initiatives, through teaching strategies or in social negotiation. However, migrants' processes

for negotiation at a particular moment are influenced by their life experiences and values, by the amount of control they have to take action and by the influences of the institution and dominant discourses. Thus, when the movement of people between different contexts is considered, the boundaries must be seen as not limited, so movement from one context to another may open discourses for discussion (Hull and Schultz 2001).

Discourses, as Barton and colleagues have emphasized, foreground the interplay of structure and agency, to focus on insiders' perspectives on what constitutes as local practices and the ways in which people's practices reflect and shape social structures (Barton, Hamilton, and Ivanič 2000). This means that migrants' "literacy practices" reveal ways of acting and behaving that reflect power positions and structures (Hull and Schultz 2001). It is noteworthy that Holliday (2013: 101) states that discourse is a way of using language as a means to represent spoken or written ideas and forms of behaviour.

In other words, the negotiation of migrants' identity and the processes for engagement with writing are influenced not only by their own agency to take action, but also by wider political and social structures. Institutional structures definitely affect adults who are studying Entry Level ESOL within the SfL and Basic Literacy contexts (see Sub-Section 2.2.3 above), this stems partly from professional discourse and impacts on people's positive identity construction, or forms subtle barriers to success (Roberts and Campbell 2007: 67). Hence, the social structures influencing migrants' engagement with writing in the classroom and beyond seem two-fold. The "relationship between the structures of society and culture on the one hand and the nature of human action on the other" (Ortner 1989: 11). A central focus of research therefore, becomes the identification of ways we as individuals use the cues available to us in our communicative encounters in the (re)construction of our social identities and those of others" (Hall 2012: 45). Thus, migrants' everyday contexts for communication reveal layered, local and evolving practices in the process of negotiation 'transactions... as messages are conveyed verbally or non-verbally' as people draw on different information, experiences, aspirations, privilege, power or stigma (Swann, Johnson and Bosson 2009: 97).

This means that the structural influences upon migrants' lives can be recognized in the negotiation of identity construction in socio-cultural encounters and in the roles that partners occupy in interactions (De Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg 2006: 10). In fact, social interaction supports writing by making links to macro-contextual factors, or structures, and gives clues about people's identity positioning (Clark and Ivanič 1997). Indeed, everyday social practices inside and outside classrooms show how identities come into play across contexts, and can be changed and developed in subtle interactions (Georgakopoulou 2006: 125). This is perhaps unsurprising because in England, or indeed in any country, the need to write (in the local

language) is virtually essential to gain access to, and engage with, the wider social and institutional structures which assist people to become who they want to be in a new country. Adult education may, in fact, be a large part of that journey (Crowther 2003).

This suggests that the socio-cultural relationships found in classrooms may be more influential than formal institutional or statutory mechanisms for people to build an identity in their new environment (whatever the individual may perceive that to be). In addition, involvement in a collection of groups, or “small cultures” at different times or on a moment-by-moment basis may lead to an individual’s identity construction as part of “a process of making and remaking” culture (Holliday 1999: 247). Research has identified that for people studying ESOL, society provides a base on which to build new language and socio-cultural knowledge which impacts on self and on identity when building meaning in a new language (Block 2007; Roberts and Baynham 2006; Norton 2000; Pennycook 2007). Hence, the research which was undertaken for this thesis and which is detailed in later chapters addressed the noticeable gap in understanding of learners’ and teachers’ perspectives with a view to fostering belonging and identity in curricula that will tend towards engagement with writing (Norton 1997, Cuban 2009, Ushioda 2006, Dörnyei 2001, Norton and Toohey 2001, Norton 2006).

3.4.3 Section summary

To sum up, the processual nature of identity construction and its links to concrete communication events underscore a social constructivist perspective. The construction of identities includes processes linked to people’s past experiences and decisions that were made by choice or imposition, and from which future pathways are forged (Block 2007). This seems to leave open the question of how these processes emerge in discourse and what role different contexts play in interpretations. Factors such as life history, positioning, cultural representation and reflective practices contribute to identity construction. However, it seems that social practice opens opportunities for people to take some agency to act upon the structures that are talked about in discourse through the process of negotiation. In the next section I turn to this discussion.

3.5 Reification: agency and structure

The focus of this section is the processes of identity construction, with a particular view to exploring what people do as they take agency to negotiate structural influences for engagement with writing. What is important to them becomes reified towards transforming their lives. According to Vågan (2011: 46), positioning theory has shown how people place themselves and

are placed socially in interaction, but deeper insights into the devices and cues for accomplishing their social position in discourse are needed. This is because:

“any given construction of identity may be in part deliberate and intentional, in part habitual and hence often less than fully conscious, in part an outcome of others’ perceptions and representations, and in part an effect of larger ideological processes and material structures that may become relevant to interaction. It is therefore constantly shifting both as interaction unfolds and across discourse contexts.”

(Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 606)

Even though there are many aspects to identity construction, as Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) extract indicates, interaction, and thus the process of negotiation seems central for meaning making. It shows that “identification is not merely a subjective experience; it is socially organised” (Wenger 1998: 192). It is through interaction that there are possibilities for people to make a difference in their lives and raise the agentive qualities of interaction. The definition of agency in relation to this thesis is that:

“To be an agent means to be capable of exerting some degree of control over the social relations in which one is enmeshed, which in turn implies the ability to transform those social relations to some degree.”

(Sewell 1992: 20)

It seems that Sewell’s (1992) definition of agency offers people some capacity to make changes in their lives through social practices. Perhaps this contributes to Block’s (2013) belief that agency appears to be granted more attention than is afforded to social structures when considering how participants make sense of their social worlds. When referring to the notion of social structure, Sewell (1992: 2) believes that they cannot be pinned down by formal definition. However, for the purpose of this thesis I have drawn on Bakewell’s (2010) citation in relation to structure, which sees it as concerned with “any recurring pattern of social behaviour; or, more specifically, to the ordered interrelationships between the different elements of a social system or society” (Scott and Marshall 2009: “structure” cited in Bakewell 2010: 1695). Nevertheless, structuration theory seems to offer little guidance to show how the balance between structure and agency is achieved in any particular context (Wenger 1998; Bakewell 2010; Block 2013). A more in-depth discussion of the theory of structuration can be found in Giddens (1984). In brief, for the purpose of this thesis I am adopting the following general perspective:

“Theories of social structure give primacy, mostly to institutions, norms, and rules. They emphasise cultural systems, discourses, and history. They seek underlying explanatory structures that account for social patterns and tend to view action as a mere realisation of these structures in specific circumstances. The most extreme of them deny agency or knowledgeability to individual actors.”

(Wenger 1998: 12)

Needless to say, as Giddens (1984: 25) argued, the processes involved in identification are likely to reveal the dual nature of structures as both the “medium and the outcome of the social practices they recursively organize”. In addition, Block (2013: 132) noted when referring to the edited collection entitled *Discourse and Identity* (De Fina, Schiffrin, and Bamberg 2006) that the volume clearly defined the social constructivist approach to drive the contributions which frame identity, but when identity emerges in interaction and narrative then structure will always be seen more as an effect, rather than a shaper, of activity (Block 2013). In this respect, Menard-Warwick (2005: 266) drew attention to Norton’s (2000) central concern with how the agency of five migrant women led to changes in their language-learning identity. Nonetheless, Siegal (1996) noted how Norton’s conception of identities as being “multiple, a site of struggle, and open to change” meant a focus more on struggle rather than openness to change. This raises the point that structure may not define who one is, but because structure is talked about as part of the meaning-making process; “rumours about other cultures and imagined cultural lives become constructed which might be true or exaggerated and become embedded in Self and Other” (Holliday 2013; 61). I see this as rendering the process of identity construction problematic and more complex, so I have taken into consideration migrants’ creativity when they engage with writing.

According to Hornberger (2007: 330), research has recently turned its attention to adult migrants’ agentive and creative responses to the multiple levels of obstacles they encounter as part of the processes of constructing and transforming their identities and social practices. In addition, Bartlett (2007b: 229) stated that contemporary understandings of identity as relational and fluid have also increased interest in the symbolic and material artefacts in everyday literacy events. Therefore, symbolic and material textual artefacts, which become reified and represent wider social structures, may also influence migrants’ decisions and the way that they construct an identity. This occurs in their negotiation of everyday cultural processes, to which I now turn.

3.5.1 Social practice and identification

As discussed earlier, when learning is conceptualized as participation in social practice it can be extended through identity construction. According to Wenger (1998: 145) the focus on identity extends the social practice accounts in two ways, firstly, “it narrows the focus onto the person, but from a social perspective” and secondly, “it expands the focus beyond communities of practice, calling attention to broader processes of identification and social structure”. In turn, people make sense of their own multiple and changing circumstances from particular perspectives which are meaningful to them (Worthman 2008). Therefore, assumptions arise which may reduce or open opportunities for negotiation with others, as the following extract demonstrates.

In a study of an ESOL college course in the United States, Harklau (2000) found that in curricula teachers often positioned students as outsiders by presuming a mutually exclusive “United States” and “your country”. This was evident when students were asked to write about topics such as “my hometown”, “a holiday in your culture” or “my country a great place to visit”. On the surface these assumptions seemed unproblematic, especially for recently arrived migrants who were pleased to talk about their countries. However, long-term migrants felt differently because their life contexts and cultural experiences were rooted in the local immigrant community and in their “home” countries. The classes seemed unprepared for the complexity of these dual representations of culture, indeed, Harklau (2000: 64) stated that “we are never entirely immune from nor entirely subject to the societal positioning of ourselves or our students ... things we do in classrooms serve to teach language but also serve to shape our students’ attitudes toward schooling and their very sense of self”.

Extract adapted from Harklau’s (2000: 44-64) study.

In the above extract, newcomers to a particular community were both absorbing and being absorbed into, the “culture of practice”, moving towards changes in engagement because of “the inherently socially negotiated character of meaning ... in, with, and arising from, the socially and culturally structured world” (Lave and Wenger 1991: 51). On the other hand, for long-term residents the cultural processes showed how “we know who we are by what is familiar, understandable, usable, negotiable; we know who we are not by what is foreign, opaque, unwieldy, unproductive” (Wenger 1998: 153). Therefore, because migrants’ everyday engagement with writing and literacy practices are social interactions in contemporary society, and are textually mediated, people may thereby shape or constrain structures (Barton and Hamilton 2005; Wenger 1998). Moreover, as indicated above, learning is not just the acquisition of memories, habits, and skills, but also the formation of an identity through participating in a new practice or community (Menard-Warwick 2005: 267). In fact, texts draw upon and relate to other contexts:

“writing is an activity embedded in and dependent on not only the immediate social circumstances and people participating in it but also on the social and cultural values, beliefs and patterns of privileging surrounding it. This is what makes writing a political act, in its broadest sense.”

(Clark and Ivanič 1997: 58)

According to Barton and Hamilton (2005: 27), both communities of practice and literacy as social practice have contributions to make to theoretical understandings of how people act in groups and how learning and change take place. Indeed, studies such as Barton and Hamilton (1998) and Barton, Hamilton and Ivanič (2000), and my study, encountered practices with unclear membership rights, channels of communication, or negotiated meaning, with often ambivalent engagement (as seen in classrooms and other communities) and with frequently incomplete outcomes that leave many assumptions open to interpretation (Barton and Hamilton

2005: 25). Moreover, Barton and Hamilton (2005: 25) actually noted that communities of practice started from a well-defined task, which might not transfer across networks, making it difficult to define issues of power and conflict where groups do not share common goals.

Therefore, in this thesis engagement with writing is seen as enabling certain experiences of participation and it is what a person pays most attention to, by 'reifying' a personal experience as an artefact (as music or art display meaning) that is important to them, that shows a person as a participant (Wenger 1998). Barton and Hamilton (2005: 15) stated that the concept of reification in communities of practice, although not made explicit by Wenger (1998), was the key link with NLS literacy practices in everyday life (Barton and Hamilton 1998; Barton, Hamilton and Ivanič 2000). In these contexts, contemporary interactions and social processes are often shaped, structured and constrained by textual objects (Barton and Hamilton 2005). The next sub-section explores the role of reification in identity construction.

3.5.2 Negotiating social structures

In terms of studying the perspective of migrants' engagement with writing, reification links literacy studies and communities of practice. In turn, reification focuses on a person's concept of "self" and "other". In other words, reification shows migrants' perceptions from the bottom-up, from their perspective, in tandem with instrumental educational purposes, but it is also linked by the commonalities between literacy studies on the one hand (Street 1984; Barton and Hamilton 1998) and "communities of practice" on the other (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). Similar theories have used terms such as "figured worlds" (Holland et al. 1998: 52 cited in Bartlett 2007a: 65) or "small cultures" (Holliday 1999, 2011, 2013). However, for deeper interpretation, Holliday's (2013) "Grammar of Culture" provided a theoretical construct for talking about how reification occurred, spanned the life trajectories of the migrants, including those in this study, and provided links to wider structures.

Thus, reification makes sense of the processes surrounding social encounters from the individual's perspective and which connect to, and may be influenced by, wider social and national structures. Structures lead to representation (and prejudice) which is inevitable and is an artefact for making sense of the discursive processes through which teachers and students can reshape their notions of identity and the effects of social positioning (Harklau 2000; Holliday 2013; Barton and Hamilton 2005). In other words, writing, literacy and culture influence each other at the level of the individual (Ferdman 1990: 181). In fact, Holliday (2013: 52) believes that "the process of reification can be one of constructing illusions – ideas about ourselves and others which are not true at all, but which are important for cultural identity and cohesion – the

glue that holds people together”. The concept of reification helps to explain the links between agency and structure:

“When working with the concept of structure: First, there is a tendency to reification in which social structures – such as states or cultural norms – come to be seen as rigid and beyond the reach of human agency. At the same time as having this existence apart from social actors, they are seen as shaping their interactions. Second, the metaphor of structure usually carries with it connotations of stability. Structure describes patterns of human interaction but often has little to say about how those patterns change over time.”

(Bakewell 2010: 1695)

In order to move beyond the problems of rigidity and documenting how patterns change over time, Holliday’s (2013) conceptualization of reification and small culture formation is helpful. Block (2013: 128) went so far as to state that Holliday’s explicit social constructivist approach to social reality foregrounds individual agency with space for social structure in the lives of individuals. What is more, as Block (2013) noted, Holliday (2011: 130) writes about “structures particular to cultural locations, which may be nation, but also other macro-forces such as religion and ideology ... [which] are also particular to global position and politics”.

However, Block (2013: 128) goes on to state that “despite such clear acknowledgements of the presence (and reality) of social structures and their role in shaping (though not determining) individuals’ lives, there is still little overt or detailed consideration of exactly what one might mean when the structure agency relationship is invoked”. I believe that that deeper understanding of the social processes involved may show how structure and agency influence each other at the level of the individual. This is where Holliday’s (2013) ‘Grammar of Culture’ offers ways of observing people who are in a continual process of learning about culture in everyday life, when crossing boundaries or moving from place to place, and how through “reification” links to varying levels of structure may be located, as he explained:

“The processes of routinisation lead to reification (making unreal things appear real) where the development of rituals are important in establishing behavioural norms in small culture formation. They are implicit, consciously or unconsciously, in everyday processes from community building and making sense of events, to instilling conformity ... Small culture formation takes place all the time as we negotiate our relationship with events during the course of everyday life. This involves continuous learning of culture which transcends boundaries and is carried from place to place.”

(Holliday 2013: 59)

In classrooms, students are socialized into practices with print text and multiple literacies through social interaction (Enright 2011: 86). In Toohey’s (1998: 77) research it was found that classroom practices both exhibit and generate social structures that are “so commonplace ... as to be almost invisible”. This means that the taken-for-granted rituals of classroom practices

may unconsciously recreate societal assumptions about learner identity. For example, conventional classroom seating arrangements can reinforce learning as an individual responsibility (Toohey 1998: 77). Therefore, taking up reification, in the sense that Holliday (2013) explains within his 'Grammar of Culture', also offered a way of showing how "labels" or "objects" revealed prejudices that link to a person's life trajectory, broader structures and stereotyping. The process is shown in the following extract which was taken from a story that was written about an African American, and was recited to a community in the United States:

"he had been advised not to come on this trip because people in our area drove pickup trucks. He told them that he feared pickup trucks because of the stereotype of racism and violence. A black man in the South had recently been dragged to death behind a pickup. Finally, tears gave way to laughter when the young man said he had ridden in nothing but pickup trucks for the past three days and his experience in our area had enabled him to overcome some of his own fears and prejudice."

(Gruwell 2009: 38)

The teacher encouraged writing about real life stories for students to "guest lecture" peers, thereby becoming teachers themselves, so as to create practical lessons with academic merit (Gruwell 2009: xx). In the above story, "pickup trucks" were reified as a symbol of racism and violence, which was a real or imagined stereotypical image, but this was changed through experience and reflection with others. Indeed, Barton and Hamilton (2005) argued that:

"reifications orchestrate and synchronise people's activities by stabilising meanings. They allow practices to travel across space and time. Different kinds of reifications have particular affordances and literacy-related ones are particularly powerful because of the semiotic resources they offer. The concept of reification adds to our understanding of the social construction of knowledge, the co-ordination of human activity and the role of institutions and cultural artefacts in these processes."

(Barton and Hamilton 2005: 14)

The process of dealing with these representations involves migrants' past personal histories that travel into the writing classroom, and the concept of "being literate" involves activities drawn from past contexts or stored knowledge that is taken up when a situation calls for them (Purves 1991: 35-36). Therefore, opportunities for reflexion arise and in the classroom may lead to more critical insights about cultural values and the texts produced where:

"the interaction between teachers, students and literary texts may function as an important step towards providing both teachers and students with the means to develop a critical attitude of their own towards the world in general."

(Festino 2007: 99)

It seems that "although some discourses clearly exert more power than others by constructing and maintaining structures that benefit some groups more than others, the concept

of ‘power’ can be viewed as a force that is distributed and available to all, albeit in different ways and with varying consequences” (Dutro 2009: 90).

3.5.3 Section summary

In this section, the discussion has shown how learning is part of a process where migrants acquire knowledge and skills by drawing on a variety of sources as part of their life experience. However, people rely on intermediaries in reciprocal relationships for writing where they may have competence in one and deficiency in another. These experiences demand the ability of migrants to take agency, on the one hand, but also to recognize and to manage structure, on the other. In the next section I now present examples of reflective practices for writing and considerations for contemporary (re)negotiation.

3.6 Reflective practices: identity negotiation in writing pedagogy

Having stated problems in adult migrants’ and teachers’ perceptions of early engagement with writing in English, I now wish to consider the possibilities for conceptualizing that:

“in learning communities where power and meaning are mutually negotiated learners do begin to recognise their personal worth and power and its impact in the wider world”

(Tett and Maclachlan 2008: 659)

The development of the self and the ability to critically reflect on that development – that is, processes of self-work – are a key part of negotiating the self’s relation to others (Hull and Stornaiuolo 2010: 89). This means that when students talk about their life experiences and stories, which raise vulnerabilities, the community is challenged to engage in non-judgmental listening and reflections (Wiseman and Wissman 2012: 129). Teachers often find this difficult, because, rather than taking up student comments, they side-line topics and refocus the lesson on the prescribed task in hand to meet curricula and timetables (Wallace 2008). However, I would like to present examples of reflective practices relating to a poetry workshop and digital texts, to which I now turn.

3.6.1 Reflectiveness and teaching

In this section, I demonstrate how the degree of reflection in classrooms stems from teaching practice and relates to reification. An example of reification that relates directly to language and culture, as explained earlier in respect of Japan and Afghanistan, could be considered as “standard language ideology” when some structures are stronger than others:

“Certain languages, including widely used ones such as English, French and Spanish, are believed by their speakers to exist in standardized form, and this kind of belief affects the way in which speakers think about their own language and about ‘language’ in general.”

(Milroy 2001: 530)

Indeed, as shown by Simpson and Cooke (2010) above (Sub-Section 3.4.1), while Tobi took up his teachers’ dominant approach to study skills, he also drew possibly negative comparisons with his mother country, perhaps because the opportunity to explore cultural learning differences was lost. Moreover, a recent study found that ESOL practitioners and students “have an acute awareness of language standardisation conventions but not generally a critical awareness ... [with] little evidence that the power relations that underlie language activities are discussed in practical ESOL contexts” (Collins 2014: 19). This means that teachers’ beliefs about teaching and learning play out in particular ways in the classroom and Atkinson (2003: 51) emphasized the position when he stated:

“The English teacher can cooperate in her own marginalization by seeing herself as a ‘language teacher’ [and, I would add, specifically, as a ‘writing teacher’ – author’s note] with no connection to ... social and political issues. Or she can ... accept her role as one who socializes students into a world view that, given its power [in the U.S.] and abroad, must be viewed critically, comparatively, and with a constant sense of the possibilities for change. Like it or not, the English teacher stands at the very heart of the most crucial education, cultural and political issues of our time.”

(Gee 1990: 67-68 cited in Atkinson 2003: 51)

The interpretation of discourses and power structures may therefore differ depending on the teachers, which Worthman (2008) demonstrated in two adult education and ESOL classrooms. The following extracts about two teachers’ practices reveals how student experiences for Amy represented a scale of “outsider-ness” or “insider-ness”, whereas for Miriam reflections on life were encouraged to negotiate a critical stance for emerging identities:

Amy’s classroom

Amy used learner experience and chose topics she believed were of value to students, such as everyday vocabulary of weather, or public transportation, and of schooling. She enlisted learners’ experiences to do this by evaluating those experiences as representation of “outsider-ness” or “insider-ness”. Amy’s work was to empower people to move from one side of the binary to the other by appropriating existing discourses and positioning themselves within those discourses as insiders. Students demonstrated their English language learning by producing speech and writing, and semantic and syntactic features that they were taught in class.

In lessons, Amy did most of the talking and students mainly responded to her questions in an IRF fashion as a prompt for students to provide specific prescribed details; replies were short and rarely included evaluative comments. Amy expressed frustration, in an interview, that students offered little detail and she attributed these typical interactions in her lessons to limited English language ability. She believed that students need to speak English more outside class and in

an interview also said: “they are not required to function in an English-only environment on a regular basis. My personal opinion is that language development is best accomplished in a submersion environment, which is, unfortunately, not realistic for the majority of these students”.

Miriam’s classroom

On the other hand, Miriam engaged with existing power structures by positioning students to critique the discourses they encountered for taking a critical stance of the world. Therefore, for Miriam, the meaning of experience was negotiated through interaction that enabled identities to evolve.

Miriam engaged students in critical thinking, which in an interview she defined as students “reflecting on what the content means to them and what they can do with the content”. Miriam’s conceptualization of students “was represented by the type of writing and topics or prompts she presented to them in new weekly topics ... the majority of the writing was student reflections on current news items drawn from the internet or newspapers ... which led to extended discussion” and the work continued over more than one lesson.

In an interview Miriam said that if students are “coming to class; not dropping out – I could get to know them better, offer more continuity in my teaching, and generally meet their needs better. Also if my students did not suffer the consequences of racism in their daily lives and in the world of employment, they would be able to dedicate more time and energy to learning and would generally be more confident/capable people. Most of my suggestions for improvement are clearly at the social level ...”.

Extract adapted from Worthman (2008: 452-460)

The foregoing extract indicates that the differences in Amy’s and Miriam’s practices were traced to how each conceptualised learner experience – how they defined and valued students’ experiences as a resource for learning English and improving learners’ lives (Worthman 2008: 443).

In Amy’s case, she was preparing students to “act appropriately”, as defined by established power structures. Students were, in effect, using language and literacy to check their own behaviours and attitudes against power structures to enable them to modify their practices. Students were positioned as outsiders seeking access to the dominant discourses and ideologies of mainstream society. This meant that identity represented a binary of outsider/insider which was defined by prescribed ways of using language and acting (Moje and Luke 2009; Nesper 2004; Worthman 2008). Indeed, as Avis (1995: 174) suggested, and as Worthman (2008) states, opportunities for students to explore their own experiences against dominant perceptions by making meaning in interaction was reduced. Thus showing how the central role was given to the curriculum and the teacher, rather than the students’ life-worlds, communities, aspirations, and experiences (Wojecki 2007: 170). Thus, experience had less value and was used merely as a useful tool where “practice may create a context in which the student uncovers correct answers” (Avis 1995: 174).

On the other hand, Miriam’s process was more as described by Inglis (1997: 10), who referred to “pulling power out from agreement, love and affection ... showing people how to

read their lives and the family, groups, organisations and society in which they are involved”, in terms of struggle and power. Pedagogically, in Miriam’s classroom students’ experiences were “a practice of making sense, both symbolically and narratively” (Avis 1995: 182). Miriam seemed to take a different role in classroom interaction, enabling her involvement in the lesson by way of “reading” her own and students’ lives as dynamic and evolving rather than as a static, predefined positioning in terms of being inside or outside (dominant structures).

In other words, the teachers’ interpretation of these students’ experiences had implications in respect of how those people were represented:

“positioned as either insiders or outsiders to the discourse, with Amy desiring to help them become insiders – that is, to empower them. Miriam ... was apprenticing them into a discourse that validates particular ways of experiencing the world through interaction – one premised on critical dialogue around experience ... learners were positioned as communicatively competent”
(Worthman 2009: 460)

Therefore, as argued by Tett and Maclachlan (2008: 659), “critical, radical adult learning extends beyond the parameters of individual change”. However, social practice perspectives for migrants’ engagement with writing, as discussed above, are based on identity and community culture, whereby performance and competence facilitate each other in complicated ways (Canagarajah 2006). Nonetheless, changes in teachers’ perceptions and practice may affect their CPD by learning different processes for teaching in a:

“move away from a ‘being told’ transfer approach, which is expert-directed, subordinating, replicating, dependent, and rational, towards an exploratory ‘finding out’ or transformative approach, which includes the following characteristics: it builds on existing knowledge, allows for different learning styles, provides opportunities for problem solving, encourages autonomy, and is reflective”
(Tusting and Barton 2003: 36)

For teachers and students “it is a collective process whereby people who begin to see themselves differently as individuals also question together the asymmetrical power relationships that have marginalised them and their practices, and act to change them” (Tett and Maclachlan 2008: 659). This suggests going beyond practices which exoticize diverse students as “other” towards a “culturally relevant pedagogy” (Ladson-Billings 1995: 483), in other words developing a “sociological imagination” (Holliday 1996: 234). This would require teachers to reflect on their own prior background in relation to how they think and behave in the present (Cross 2010: 440). In short, this means challenging teachers’ perceptions about their possible beliefs that external forces impact on their thinking and that what they do is something “beyond their control” (Borg 2006: 40). This means questioning pedagogy, to encourage teachers to query their relationship with students, the writing curriculum, schooling, and society (Ladson-

Billings 1995; Holliday 1996; Atkinson 2003). In this way, even though teachers may struggle to define their work, they can question factors that define it for them, rather than passively consuming professional development or a curriculum (Sharkey 2004: 279-299). It is now recognized that “curriculum change cannot involve the top-down imposition of expertise from outside the community, but should be a ground-up construction taking into account indigenous resources and knowledge, with a sense of partnership between local and outside experts” (Canagarajah 2006: 27). This suggests moving to a “we” perspective that is more inclusive (Holliday, 2005: 1). The contemporary vision of the literature for a future teaching landscape would compel institutions to include CPD that focuses on reflective practices with migrants for early engagement with writing. In the next sub-section I turn to reflective practices for teaching and learning in a poetry writing workshop.

3.6.2 Poetry writing workshop

A study by Wiseman and Wissman (2012) reported the benefits of a weekly poetry workshop that was taught by an artist and poet named Theo, who was invited into an eighth-grade classroom and to a local coffeehouse. Theo’s presence and teaching was considered as “culturally relevant pedagogy” (Ladson-Billings 1995: 466). This was instead of what can often happen, steering conversations to “safer ground” (Dutro 2011: 208). In the classroom:

“by positioning everyone as a poet and by considering every story as valuable and welcome, poetry was not reduced to ‘exercises’ to be completed or lessons to be delivered. The atmosphere created in these contexts was unique in that they each allowed for differently situated adults, including community poets, parents, grandparents, and researchers to work with and listen to young people.”

(Wiseman and Wissman 2012: 121)

Poetry writing and performance opened opportunities for experiences to be reflected upon, moving towards transformative understandings which were emotionally and personally powerful to those involved (Wiseman and Wissman 2012: 129). In England, research has indicated the benefits of teachers investing time in developing trusting relationships with people and teaching methods used as integral to practice (Barton et al 2004: 42). In the United States, The Freedom Writers Diary was full of stories and poetry that drew attention to alternative pathways for writing (Gruwell 1999). There has also been significant interest in the learning power of digital texts for migrants’ early engagement with writing.

3.6.3 Digital texts for adults’ early engagement with writing

Digital texts, especially the use of mobile phone SMS text messaging, are now well established, offering opportunities for reflective practices that push the learning context further. This means a “move from the notion of context as static to the notion of contextualizing as an

interactive and creative problem-solving endeavour that affects decision making” (Sharkey 2004: 297). A study of mobile learning systems and learning materials for hard-to-reach students in diverse situations in three European countries, called the “m-learning project” concluded that:

“Mobile devices can help improve literacy and numeracy skills; encourage independent and collaborative learning experiences; identify areas where learners need assistance and support; mitigate resistance to using ICTs; engage reluctant learners; enable learners to remain more focused for longer periods and promote self-esteem and self-confidence”

(Attewell 2005: 13–15)

The benefits of text-making practices in Lee’s (2007) study also referred to the ways in which people chose to transform resources for representing meanings in the form of text for different purposes, in real time. The benefits indicated in the above extract may suggest that, for teachers, a deeper understanding of text-making practices may be appropriate for reflecting on informal styles of working with people and their ‘networks’ (Barton 2011: 59). In addition, Lee (2007:285) argued that learning to produce texts was a different process from that of formal language learning in the classroom. What is more, the actual language use in students’ private lives relative to practices in the formal classroom context represents a gap in our understanding:

“if we keep on comparing the text-making practices in CMC with those in formal classroom writing, we can never explain the reason why young people communicate so effectively in IM because they have never formally learned to employ text-making strategies such as Cantonese spellings in their writing.”

(Lee 2007: 298)

The participants in Lee’s (2007: 298) study chose to use different languages according to their needs in different situations, or created new practices to make their communication closer to spoken conversations, which included Cantonese spellings and English. The participants were aware that they could write more casually and ignore accuracy and grammar – “expressiveness and communicativeness override accuracy online”, this also revealing tensions between standard language and on-line language use (ibid: 298).

Lee (2007: 298) called for theories of learning that can address this dynamism and shift our focus from the acquisition of standards to understanding ever-changing practices. Pappen (2005: 139 – cited by Lee 2007: 299) called for conceptualization of “expanding one’s own literacy repertoire” and “discovering new ways of writing”. This suggests that exemplary practice exists in classrooms and communities, which too many of us are ready to dismiss as incapable of producing excellence (Ladson-Billings 1995). In fact, text-making practices are often based on existing knowledge of everyday languages and cultural contexts. However, prior

knowledge of English sounds and how spelling works may need assistance (ibid 2007). In the next section I consider the possibilities for writing workshops to support migrants' early engagement with writing.

3.6.4 Writing workshops for alternative practice

I present a possibility for (re)envisioning the (re)negotiation process for adult migrants' early writing in a new language, which calls for the positioning of migrants as creative facilitators and the reconceptualization of the student-teacher reflective relationship, and more flexible practice.

The vision and realities of implementing writing workshops with ESOL early elementary grades up to high school in the United States were researched by Peyton et al (2004: 469) during a year-long course called 'The Books Project'. In the school context in regular and predictable blocks of time, teachers began lessons with a mini-lesson, followed by periods of drafting, conferencing and sharing, revising, redrafting, editing, publishing and celebrating. Teachers and students worked together co-operatively and developed as writers.

Implementing the writing workshop 'The Books Project'

Teachers had to manage the process, but those who pushed through the barriers and developed a successful writing workshop came to terms with a phenomenon of learning itself, that they must own in practice what they learned in the abstract. Teachers reported on their own practices, rather than being observed by others. Teachers adopted different strategies. For example, one developed a tightly structured writing workshop, whereas another encouraged students to engage in a wide range of chosen activities and complete writing on their own time schedules.

Challenges

The Books Project teachers indicated frustration at attending a once-off workshop on a new educational approach, then to be asked to jump on the bandwagon, but to be left to cope by themselves with few resources. Obstacles teachers faced were the hard work of implementation, soul searching, and trial and error that went into refining the classroom practice. The disparity between the envisaged model and classroom experience was heightened by the absence of conditions necessary for teacher autonomy in the process, control over time schedules, arrangement of physical space and resources, support from administrators and other teachers. Struggles included the sharing of teacher and student values regarding commitment to literacy. Constraints related to the school context, students' English language and literacy proficiency, and cultural backgrounds, which presented challenges that teachers addressed in innovative ways. However, teachers needed time, support and resources to understand underlying theories and processes and to develop their own teaching practice. Teachers also needed support and opportunities to work intensively over time with other teachers who were doing the same thing.

Pedagogy

In addition, students were reported by teachers to engage with the workshop initially either with reluctance or with great enthusiasm. Moreover, teachers

demonstrated that a “one size fits all” approach was challenging, while teachers needed to see themselves as competent professionals and as skilled readers and writers, able to take the ideas presented by others and make them their own; “try them, mull them over, alter them to fit their own teaching situation, and generate their own ways of teaching” (Samway 1992 ‘I’ cited in Peyton et al).

Reflective practices

Reflection was made possible as teachers took time digest theory and practice; work on their own writing; discuss with, observe, and get feedback from other teachers; learn about and have the time and resources to buy new books and other instructional materials; and to attend and make presentations at conferences and workshops.

Extract adapted from Peyton et al (2004: 469-487)

This extract showed how implementing a writing workshop offered possibilities for alternative curricula in-between or within timetabled lessons. However, teachers needed support and the freedom to investigate practices and to collaborate with other practitioners as part of their own development. Students’ responses varied along with the writing practices they engaged with, which depended on the teachers’ interpretation of workshop implementation.

However, in the next example, a writing workshop in Japan took a much more flexible approach. In this final extract, Jacobson (2009: 161-170) investigated how migrant students and teachers were positioned as learners in a multi-site case study of adult basic education in Japan. The main implications are summarized below:

The nature of the student-teacher relationships in the study entailed learning from one another’s experiences to create open, respectful and trusting classroom contexts with all participants considering themselves as “co-learners”. This moved beyond teacher-directed and delivered lessons with planned activities. Priority was given to creating opportunities for students and teachers to make and share the kind of human relationships that lead to learning from each other.

The workshops had no fixed curricula and much time was spent in reflecting on the writing process to help students to deal with their experiences and negative emotions that led to poor self-efficacy. Many of the Japanese teachers decided that to focus on the technical aspects of teaching would reduce their goal of creating relationships and a sense of community with their students.

The Japanese teachers’ standards of practice demonstrated personal qualities such as empathy. At the same time, these teachers rejected any outside standard that would measure their success in helping students to meet their goals. The teachers were wary of a system of accountability that would limit the ways that students’ growth could be measured. In particular, they did not want strict academic evaluation to overshadow the affective aspects of being “fully human”.

The implications of these workshops may raise debates about what constitutes appropriate and ethical provision of education as it was being carried on by ordinary teachers and their students. This may present a challenge to adult basic educators in other settings where students, teachers and administrators would need to engage together.

Overall, a sense of community among students and teachers might not have been fully achieved within the case study institutions, but it remained the key instructional goal.

Extract adapted from Jacobson (2009: 161-170)

For these migrants to Japan, human relations and expressions of empathy were prioritized above academic development for community building, which was in contrast to Japanese educational discourses that privileged hierarchies and competition for learning (Jacobson 2009: 161). In fact, one significant outcome of all participants being perceived as “co-learners” was how it opened the possibility for teachers to engage students in discussions about the nature of assessment, which removed them from solely focusing on technical issues of literacy instruction. Moreover, Jacobson’s (2009) research also seemed to juxtapose the perceptions of monitoring progress either from a “top-down” or a “bottom-up” perspective, distinguishing:

“... a top-down certification process where the requirements for accreditation are determined by a governing body, a panel of experts or stakeholders who may or may not work in the field ... [or a bottom-up] practice-based approach to on-going evaluation and development where professionals in a field work together to develop standards of practice and achieve them.”

(Mollins cited in Jacobson 2009: 168)

I conclude with the perspective that workshops offer teachers and students opportunities to renegotiate their positions. The research also opens possibilities for insights into collaborative writing practices.

3.7 Chapter Conclusion

It is unsurprising that classrooms are challenged by social processes that are a complex combination of life history, positioning, cultural representation and reflective practices, and more, as they contribute to identity construction. The complexity of migrants’ engagement with writing, seems to challenge prescribed classroom learning because a large part of their learning process happens outside educational institutions, with other people or with digital technology. The notion of reification draws attention to artefacts that show what is important to people, such as in ‘statements about culture’ (Holliday 2013: 20) or through institutional policy documents. However, through the negotiation of meaning migrants’ and teachers’ influence their sense of self and others’ perceptions of them. Thus, migrants’ and teachers’ increased awareness of cultural negotiation that stem from their ability to ‘read culture’ and reification that influence opportunities for writing in the classroom seems essential. However, reflective classroom practices depend on teachers’ pedagogical interpretation of the curriculum and their perceptions about how migrants’ processes include life experiences for writing. This suggests valuing students’ experiences in the classroom to foster incidental learning processes that reduce teacher control and the need for planning detailed writing content (Tusting 2003: 9). In these respects, writing workshops may enable negotiation of meaning in learning communities as part of a reflexive process that acknowledges migrants’ positive and sometimes painful experiences.

The next chapter turns to methodology, research tools, data collection, data analysis and an introduction to data Chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 4: Discussion of Methodology: Rationale, Research Design, Participants and Research Procedures

4.1 An introduction to the research methodology

In Chapter 4, I introduce the rationale for my research design. However, the research design was not straightforward. Access to the ESOL setting was hampered by delays and was threatened by several challenges. I therefore begin this chapter by explaining my conceptualization of the research design. I believe that this is essential, because I was forced to reflect deeply on challenges encountered in the setting. My reflections involved collaboration with teachers and teacher managers and facilitated the foundations of a research design.

Hence, Section 4.1 explains my conceptualization of the research design. In it, I outline the problems encountered, this college setting, gate keeper approval and access, and the periods of data collection, which determined the research design.

In Section 4.2, I explain why a qualitative paradigm and NLS framework was suitable for this research project. I then turn to the prominence of my role as a participant researcher, writing the study and the language of data collection. Section 4.3 covers participants, explaining preparation for recruitment and recruitment workshops. I next present the four research case-study participants' profiles and introduce the five teachers and three teacher managers who were called on for secondary data collection.

Data collection methods are explained in Section 4.4. The data collection methods were a holistic collection of case studies, observations and field-notes, qualitative interviews and audio-recordings, focus groups, digital texts and artefacts. I turn to practical and ethical concerns in Section 4.5, where I explain ethical issues, reflexion (sometimes termed "reflexivity" in the literature, particularly when it includes an awareness that research tends to be shaped by its circumstances) and subjectivity. In Section 4.6, I explain the treatment of the research material and data analysis before Section 4.7 finally turns to the structuring of the data chapters.

I begin by explaining how the research design was conceptualized from my initial encounters within the setting.

4.1.1 Conceptualizing the research design

My conceptualization of the research design was not straightforward and I believe that this section is necessary to explain the structural influences encountered in the setting when I began this study. I set out to explore adult migrants' engagement with writing inside and outside the classroom and teachers' perceptions of migrant students' writing pedagogy. While there may be specific aspects relating to the teaching and learning of second language writing that apply to any classroom or experience globally, there are specific elements relating to working with ESOL in England. This is because the research design and agreement for access to a college of further education coincided with significant policy changes that were anticipated or being implemented by the British coalition Government at that time (2009/10). Indeed, the political structure in the setting from the project outset presented unpredictable circumstances for the recruitment of migrant case-study participants, teachers and teacher manager informants for data collection. I next outline to the problems encountered.

4.1.2 Problems encountered

At the beginning of the research project, in this college of further education there were uncertainties surrounding migrant students, relating to welfare benefit policy changes that could render them ineligible for free ESOL enrolment at that time, and college funding cuts. This college management were preparing for a possibly reduced and different kind of provision – many long-term migrants living in the city would be legally required to learn English if they were receiving Job Seekers' Allowance. The uncertainties fuelled media headlines, such as the following, taken from The Guardian newspaper in April 2011:

“Anger over English lesson funding cuts - Teachers say government rules mean fewer immigrants will be able to afford ESOL classes they have been told to take”

(Shepherd 2011)

It was clear to me that the migrants and teachers who were willing to participate in this study would do so in the face of an unsettled environment and their interest in my research project could be low. Indeed, the political macro-context over the past few years has influenced migrants' opportunities for writing and added to the difficulties of researching minority populations in England (Blackledge 2005; Simpson 2007; Baynham et al 2007). Moreover, in the second academic year of the research project additional problems arose because of a sudden decision by the British Government to change policy once again, which influenced college

structures. This was again reflected in headlines from The Guardian of September 2011, which reported that:

“U-turn on ESOL funding causes enrolment mayhem for colleges - The government has done a U-turn over the funding of English classes for immigrants. But the bad news is that the timing leaves colleges in chaos.”
(Murray 2011)

Nevertheless, in spite of the structural influences, I recruited four self-selected migrant case-study participants for data collection in the first academic year of the project. However, in the second academic year of the study only two case-study participants were eligible to enrol on an ESOL course, and thereby continue their formal studies. Although two case-study participants became ineligible to enrol on a college course at that time, they agreed to continue involvement in my research project interviews, when SMS text messaging also became a method for data collection. In addition, there were also uncertainties in college for teachers and teacher managers relating to frequent official OFSTED, British Council and peer classroom observations, threats of a reduced provision, and the pending curriculum change to functional skills.

In an attempt to circumvent the reduced access to participants for the purpose of data collection an initial date for access to the setting was agreed in February 2011. However, the college advised me that due to a short notice OFSTED inspection, an alternative date in March would have to be agreed. The reality for my research project was significant in that:

“the time, place and occasion at which data are being gathered have an effect on the data: they are what they are because they occurred in that shape in that context.”
(Blommaert 2001a: 26)

Even though I had set out to research people learning to write from a “bottom-up” perspective, I was immediately confronted by a changing context due to “top-down” structures and policy changes.

Fortunately, because of my previous employment history with the college, and continuing visiting tutor status, my relationships with this college strengthened. Nevertheless, my immediate attention was drawn to how different agendas add to the challenges of gaining access. In this setting, people had pressing concerns of their own, and this meant that my request for access was probably troublesome or even unwelcome at times (Creswell 2007; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). The setting was familiar to me and became accessible because of my friendly association with management, teachers and students.

In fact, the further education context is a location where many migrants attend ESOL classes and was a usual place for me to mingle with people from local ethnic minority populations and migrants generally. The choice of college for this research could therefore be described as a sampling strategy of convenience and intensity (Miles and Huberman 1994:28 cited in Creswell 2007). In reality, I was well placed to “focus on different aspects of the language learning and teaching enterprise including social and institutional opportunities and constraints” (Kramsch 2000: 322). Moreover, my connections with this college added credibility to the research project and enabled trust to be gained quickly in the setting.

4.1.3 The college setting and the language annex

The setting was part of a large college of further education based in England with campuses in a modern high-rise city centre building where evening ESOL classes were held, and in a language annex in a community area. The language annex was located in a city suburb, where the research was carried out. In brief, the area was a busy, multi-ethnic location, with a manufacturing presence, and far from privileged, this college language annex was perhaps a calmer and friendlier space within it.

The language annex was where the daytime provision was based and it became the main site of data collection. There is provision for full-time and part-time courses. Approximately 820 adults study ESOL, and nearly two-thirds are from minority ethnic backgrounds, from disadvantaged areas and about 56% of learners have a minority ethnic heritage.

I found that the college management were interested in my research study and I will now explain gatekeeper approval.

4.1.4 Gatekeeper approval and access

In preparation for the research to begin in 2011, in a pre-arranged meeting in October 2010 I presented the study to a senior manager and a teacher manager. At that time this college anticipated policy changes, although their full impact was not realized until 2011, as described in 4.1.2 above. Nonetheless, in the light of college preparation for change, I explained my proposed research questions, participant roles, methodological tools and ethical requirements. I also explained that I had a four hour train journey from my place of study and would therefore anticipate engagement with fieldwork on two consecutive days in any week. The senior manager confirmed that my existing Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure certificate remained current, which enabled me also to teach some classes when regular teachers were

indisposed during the data collection period, so that I was in this way able to gain experience as a participant researcher.

College management approved the research project. A teacher manager quickly sent an e-mail entitled “help for a fellow teacher” to enlist support from other teachers. However, teachers’ slow response led to my personal e-mail request explaining that I envisaged a friendly and relaxed approach to data collection for reflection on students’ writing and pedagogy. My e-mail cemented a change in direction towards informal and collaborative relationships, from which data collection evolved. Moreover, teachers invited me into their classrooms for observations and encouraged migrant students’ participation in the research. Thus, several periods of data collection were established, as noted below.

4.1.5 Periods of data collection

The contextual factors described above and my commuting distance to this college meant agreeing to short but frequent visits. The following table shows three stages of data collection: a pre-fieldwork investigation, followed by primary data collection in Academic Year One and Academic Year Two, and finally a tailing-off period for leaving the setting:

Stage	Dates
Pre-fieldwork Investigation	March to April 2011
Academic Year One: Primary Data Collection	May to July 2011
Academic Year Two: Primary Data Collection	September to December 2011
Tailing off	January 2012 to April 2013

Data collection periods

The periods available to me for my fieldwork investigation enabled data collection over a longer period of time, being thirteen months over two academic years. Therefore, the study could evolve as relationships were constructed. I decided that these foundations were appropriate for a qualitative methodology for the purpose of data collection (appendices 1-3). In the next section I will explain the details of this emerging design, why the interpretive study is appropriate, and why NLS provided a framework for studying migrants’ engagement with writing.

4.2 An emerging research design

As I described above, I was overwhelmed by the political events surrounding second language learning in England. In the beginning, I had considered a detailed research

programme. However, when I came to this college in March 2011 for a pre-fieldwork investigation the very messy and unpredictable setting was revealed, which did not match my preconceived plan. Indeed, upon entering the college I was greeted by a senior manager who explained that a British Council inspection was taking place that very day. I was also introduced to a senior college official, who indicated that my presence at that college and the research would “impress the inspector”. This introduction suggested optimism and caution for the research agenda.

On the one hand, I was reassured that my presence and the project presented a favourable image, but on the other hand, I recognized that a researcher’s role management was stressful or exciting, offering a range of advantages, disadvantages and dangers (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 75). I was aware of the gatekeeper’s power for granting permission, to generate positive impressions of the research and encourage participants, but also that structural influences could raise suspicions, or even lead to the withholding of permission at a later date (Richards 2003; Spradley 1980). This truly seems to be “an aspect of contemporary fieldwork” but I reflected deeply upon a methodology that would take account of the setting, whilst focusing data collection on migrant participants and the perceptions of teachers and teacher managers (Hammersley 2006: 5). In effect, the unpredictable circumstances described above, relating to the macro context, swept up the research agenda, overtaking my prior detailed plan, and the ensuing collaborative nature of my investigation “took on a life of its own” (Holliday 2007: 66).

Therefore, as I have explained here, the political influences surrounding the setting, and the implications for the people involved played a major role in shaping the research design. The need for flexibility, so that participants would be at the heart of the work, was offered by the qualitative research paradigm that could be supported by a NLS framework to focus on writing. In the next section, I shall explain the benefits of a qualitative paradigm and the advantages of including NLS for this thesis.

4.2.1 Why a qualitative paradigm?

Working within the qualitative research paradigm implies adopting certain established historical methodological assumptions. Participants are central and as a researcher I was involved at all levels of the process as the world was interpreted and reality was socially constructed from interactions with everyone in the setting (Gregg 2000). This meant that from this perspective, all participants were situated as authors or narrators, and my challenge was to explain the positions in which these “authors” located themselves (Tierney 2003: 381). Thus, “there can be a multiplicity of realities, none of which has any more legitimate claim than any other to being viewed as the reality” (Gregg 2000: 384). Moreover, because the construction of

reality is a social process, it follows naturally to stress the discursive nature of reality (Gregg 2000: 385). In working from a social constructionist perspective, “identity is constructed, contested, re-scripted and generally interpreted through research interaction as opposed to essentialist studies where identity is ascribed in practice or discovered through research” (Lee and Anderson 2009: 188).

In addition, in the light of my own experiences as a language learner and as a teacher, I realized that “insights can emerge from personal introspection which then form the basis of a more generalized understanding and interpretations ... to provide data regarding the social/emotional world of participants” (Finlay 2002: 214). Moreover, it is natural for people to look within themselves to assess how they feel about particular experiences, and through my increased introspection I learned to use myself as a research instrument (Spradley 1980: 57). Therefore, my exploration of migrants’ engagement with writing and teachers’ perspectives developed from my motivations and empirical perspectives with people in the setting to build my thesis from micro-level literacy events and writing practices from the bottom upwards, to make links to the wider structures (Creswell 2007). It is true that introspection may not seem particularly “objective”, but it is a tool that everyone uses to understand new situations and to gain skill at following cultural rules (Spradley 1980: 57). Therefore, introspection, reflexion and ethics became prominent from the beginning and were threads which ran through the study.

Reflexion effectively forced me to acknowledge the impact that my presence had on this college culture and my role as the designer of data collection (Holliday 2007: 19). I believe that a close definition for my qualitative research is offered in the following extract, in that it:

“..begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem and it extends the literature or signals a call for action.”

(Creswell 2007:37)

Working within the qualitative paradigm opened the pre-fieldwork investigation up into collaborative negotiation with all participants for access and agreement about more fluid data collection methods and procedures in a “flexible design” (Anastas 2004; Robson 2002). The naturally occurring context presented opportunities for me to collect unstructured data which meant that methodology could be “refined and amplified alongside reflections on the data”, following Barton and Hamilton (1998: 4). It is true that data collection methods were not pre-

defined, but I was able to negotiate research tools with participants as they evolved from my research questions, and my writing became rooted in the process of describing and interpreting occurrences (Holliday 2007: 20). These occurrences capture the way in which people make sense of writing in their historically situated social world by adding a collaborative approach (Miller and Satchwell 2006; Lincoln and Denzin 2003). Therefore, my role as a participant researcher became central to the project. This in turn presented ways for me to describe the particular phenomena and the people involved through “an inductive process” to make meaning of the data (Anastas 2004: 58). In the next sub-section I turn to NLS and the benefit of an interpretive perspective.

4.2.2 Why New Literacy Studies?

The support of NLS was essential, because the theoretical framework of literacy events and practices provides a basis from which to identify episodes of writing as “talk around texts”. NLS also provides a basis on which “to challenge myths about literacy” and foundations for critique (Street 2009a: 51). A number of significant interpretive studies have provided models for investigating migrants’ literacy practices, such as Heller (1999), Jones, Martin-Jones and Jones (2001) and Norton (2000), and studies within the NLS traditions have taken an interpretive approach (Heath 1983; Barton and Hamilton 1998; Ivanič 2009), and typically:

“insist on the importance of coming to understand the perspectives of the people being studied if we are to explain, or even to describe accurately, the activities they engage in and the courses of action they adopt. At the same time, there is usually an equal emphasis on developing an analytic understanding of perspectives, activities and actions, one that is likely to be different from, perhaps even in conflict with, how the people themselves see the world.”
(Hammersley 2006: 4)

A NLS perspective explores writing and cultural practices rather than studying the whole of people’s lives (Barton and Hamilton 1998: 5). Indeed, the focus is “on what happens in a particular work locale or social institution when it is in operation, so that in this sense their participant observation is part-time” (Hammersley 2006: 4). Therefore, I relied on building close relationships, which led to the negotiation of multiple methods for data collection. These multiple methods enabled me to observe how interactions were socially organized in behaviour as it naturally occurred, to reveal deeper cultural values lying below the surface (Blommaert and Jie 2010; Holliday 2007; Watson-Gegeo 1988). An interpretive paradigm helped me to draw on my experiences as a teacher, as a migrant, and as a student of Japanese, to establish credibility for investigating other migrants’ life journeys and engagement with writing in a new language in a college setting and beyond. As Barton (2006: 23) points out, “literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; these can be inferred from events mediated by written text”. Ultimately, as Street (2009b: 138) points out, detailed studies are capable of drawing out the

complexities people reveal about their lives, which may challenge policy. This was significant because:

“A first step in reconceptualising literacy is to accept the multiple functions literacy may serve in a given activity, where it can replace spoken language, make communication possible, solve a practical problem or act as a memory aid – in some cases, all at the same time. It is also possible to explore the further work which literacy can do in an activity, and the social meanings it takes on.”

(Barton and Hamilton 1998: 11)

Thus, the NLS framework was well placed to support the qualitative paradigm in a “bottom-up” study of migrants’ lives and of learning to write through events and practices that unfolded over time, along with teachers’ perceptions (Watson-Gegeo 1988). Moreover, NLS offers methodology for including a variety of methods to illuminate people’s own perceptions: observations, field notes, interviews, conversations and collections of documents and artefacts (Barton and Hamilton 1998; Lincoln and Denzin 2003). The multiple methods for data collection led to the kind of interpretive analysis that combined insights from which comparison against other research can be made, rather than aiming to test theories (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). This holistic approach demanded what Lincoln and Denzin (2003: 4-5) consider as the transformative qualities of the researcher’s situated activity, which makes the world visible through naturalistic, interpretive and material practices. Therefore, I now turn to my role in the research project as a participant researcher.

4.2.3 Being a participant researcher

I found that the serendipity of people’s lives and the setting gradually revealed surprising insights, therefore “rather than controlling variables”, the choice not to set fixed limits allowed unforeseen discoveries to emerge (Holliday 2007:5). Thus, the study veered towards holistic and ecological approaches to methodology and tools, which led to a significant change in my role, the development of collaborative relationships and ethical responsibilities (Hobbs and Kubanyiova 2008; Kubanyiova 2008; Richards 2003; Van Leir 1997). This meant taking the “notion of reflexivity to incorporate reflective work with research participants, not just about them” (Gildersleeve 2010: 408). Most significantly qualitative inquiries have enabled the voices of possibly “marginalized” people to be recorded (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: x).

However, the sharing and telling that collaborative relationships thrive on, also raise ethical dilemmas (Heath and Street 2008). My roles from the beginning were as a participant researcher, a teacher, a student and a traveller (I too had lived in another country as a migrant where I was leaning to write), yet sometimes the separation of the roles became conflicting and was challenging to deal with (Heath 1993; Norton 2000; Kubanyiova 2008; Watson-Geggo

1988). Nevertheless, these positions allowed me to observe literacy events and early writing practices from an insider's (emic) view, moving towards an outsider's (etic) perspective (Heath and Street 2008: 44). In interviews, I listened and empathized as people recounted experiences of struggles or success. Then I wrote about my experiences with participants, and as a researcher I was:

“... right in there in the fishbowl of multiple and conflicting roles and values ... ultimately, ... [observing] the powerlessness ... as an individual facing the state and macroeconomic forces.”

(Heath 1993: 261)

As explained, my entry to the field was based on reflexion, politics and ethics but behind and within each phase I stood as a biographically situated researcher (Lincoln and Denzin 2003: 30). This meant, as Vagle, Hughes and Durbin (2009: 347) argue that “being our own best critic is a process by which we first commit to interrogating what we know (or think we know) as we design a study”. In addition, the participants and I were influenced by our cultural backgrounds and therefore to understand what participants themselves knew, how they defined their actions and their engagement with writing and literacy needed specific tools (Spradley 1980: 16). It became evident that for investigating the phenomena of migrant lives, within this particular setting an interpretive approach would be particularly suitable (Holliday 2007: 6). Moreover, an integral aspect of the interpretive paradigm and NLS is the researchers' ability to translate the experiences of participation and the research material into an interpretive written account, to which I now turn.

4.2.4 Writing the study

Working within an interpretive paradigm enabled me to “tell the story” through participant narratives, and this includes my own journey to writing, from different perspectives by combining creativity and systematically representing participants' lives as well as my own (Merrill and West 2009: 160). In this sense, as Holliday (2007:124) points out, the research argument is driven by the researcher's own experience, which is extended by the conceptual framework and data collected towards greater understanding of the phenomena. Opening up marginalized spaces and revealing hidden voices cannot be easily replicated so conventional research audiences may need to be convinced of its merit (Howatson-Jones 2011: 39). The challenge arises because “the qualitative researcher produces experiences that embody cultural meanings and cultural understandings that operate in the ‘real’ world” (Denzin 1997:32-33). In writing this thesis, my interpretations about the cultural meanings of migrants' early engagement with writing were based on my reflective observations of literacy practices and events:

“the notion of literacy practices offers a powerful way of conceptualising the link between the activities of reading and writing and the social structures in which they are embedded and which they help shape. When we talk about practices, then, this is not just the superficial choice of a word but the possibilities that this perspective offers for new theoretical understandings about literacy.”

(Barton and Hamilton 1998: 6)

In a sense, in writing this thesis I am carrying news about literacy practices from one world to another, this being based on three types of discourse: ordinary talk and speech, inscriptions of that speech in the form of transcriptions, and written interpretations based on talk and its inscriptions (Denzin 1997: 33). Indeed, these cultural and social interpretations of practices revolve around literacy events that are observable and situated activities which are evident as people talk around written text(s) that always exist within a social context (Barton and Hamilton 1998: 7). In addition, from people’s participation in writing events and practices the notion of reification is construed as a product, such as symbols, or stories, and are also part of the negotiation of the process of making meaning (Wenger 1998: 59). Hence, my writing is partly creative but raises questions about “how to represent lives in their complex and interconnected personal, social, psychological, as well as historic, dimensions” (Merrill and West 2009: 147).

In writing this thesis, I am concerned with exploring literacy events, in order to gain insights about writing practices that touch the lives of the participants in this study (Barton and Hamilton 1998: 8). Furthermore, in my writing I have attempted to be sensitive to the academic and practitioner readers of the thesis (Merrill and West 2009). I anticipate that the reality that I experienced with case-study participants helped me to describe and interpret data in ways that might be in harmony with the reader’s own experience and thus provided a “natural” basis for generalization (Adelman et al 1980 cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011: 292).

My writing experience involved reflecting on and struggling with the research material to translate it into “a text of social science argument and to demonstrate relationships between data, concepts and theory” (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 193). Therefore as a researcher, I have built on the effects of my participation experience and through reflexion attempted to minimize the effects of subjectivity. This will be discussed in Section 4.5 below. I now turn to the language of data collection, which is central to the processes of collaboration and interaction in this study.

4.2.5 The language of data collection

As explained in the previous sub-sections, interaction and collaboration were central to this research project and for the agreement of data collection methods with participants. This meant that participants’ language and narrative stories were central to data collection and were

constructed through my attentive listening and the creation of trust for people's social lives to be talked about (Connelly and Clandinin 1990). Firth (1996: 242) actually claims that "the crucial point, though, is that the talk is made 'normal' and 'ordinary' by the participants themselves, in their local discursive practices". It should, however, be recognized, as Roberts et al (2004) found, that there were some limitations concerning what participants could express when discussing their language needs and lives because of their language abilities. It was for this reason that migrant students were invited to attend interviews for data collection with a friend, peer or relative who could speak fluent English, although none took up that option. The participants who volunteered to be involved in the research project expressed a desire to speak English and said that they wanted to improve their English language writing abilities. However, as Firth (1996: 256) observed, in situ people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds show remarkable flexibility and reveal the strength of natural language for making sense of events as part of the local demands of talking to one another. Moreover, in this college setting it was usual for migrants to engage with teachers in the ESOL context in English. Thus, English was the language of participation in the research project and for data collection. In addition, English was migrant students' natural way of communicating with teachers and teacher managers in the setting, therefore I was engaging with participants in a language that was usual in their college context.

Thus, I believe that by participating in this study on their own terms, these migrants found clear and strong voices as part of a mutual process of discovery during interviews to encourage greater agency and identity construction (Lincoln 1995). Furthermore, the methodology seemed to reduce the concerns raised by Heller (1999: 14-15), that even though linguistic minorities are well accustomed to globalization, with so many people crossing borders and having multiple identities, they may be "faced with the problem of their own legitimacy". As participants are at the heart of this study, in the next section I explain the holistic nature of preparation for data collection and participant recruitment workshops.

4.3 Participants

In this section, I will explain participant recruitment and preparation for data collection. I introduce the four case-study participant profiles, these being the subjects who provided primary data collection. I then introduce the teachers and teacher managers, who provided secondary data.

4.3.1 Preparation for participant recruitment

Participants for the study were identified during pre-fieldwork access to the college. In my initial e-mail to teachers and teacher managers, I explained the study and invited them to collaborate with me for data collection. I also asked teachers and teacher managers to support me in migrant participant recruitment workshops. The recruitment workshops aimed to attract migrant participants for case studies and informed all the students who were attending the six classes that would be involved in observations. Thus, from the outset, the research objectives were presented for people to ask questions or to raise objections. Participant recruitment workshops were held in classrooms at the end of an ordinary lesson.

These participant recruitment workshops were based on “research consent forms” (see Appendix 8) that created a natural platform for a “literacy event”. This literacy event opened an exploration of the project aims, researcher’s and participants’ roles and responsibilities, and the anticipated research journey. The classroom teacher and I collaborated together to help prospective participants to read the content of consent forms and encouraged people to ask questions and to talk to peers about their interpretation of what it meant to be involved in this research project.

This collaborative approach to participant recruitment immediately encouraged two-way interaction and raised awareness of ethical issues from the beginning. The wider ethical considerations will be discussed in Section 4.5. In order to reduce the number of features that might be unexpected, the student consent forms included examples of specific questions that I would ask later during one-to-one interviews. For example, participants would be asked to talk about their educational life history, learning to write, and their needs for writing in England, inside and outside college. Participant recruitment workshops set the scene for data collection.

4.3.2 Recruitment workshops

The recruitment workshops were four-fold.

Firstly, my involvement with teachers and teacher managers led to deeper collaboration about how to present the research project and was the basis for later reflective practitioner interviews. Workshops were arranged during the pre-fieldwork period and within the first two weeks of access, and they took place at the end of the first observed lesson, in negotiation with teachers, for each of the six classrooms involved.

Secondly, I introduced my interest in the project by giving a brief account of my life and the basis for the research questions. This openness immediately invited prospective participants to ask questions and to engage in interaction with me, as I gave narrative accounts relating to my life. I introduced the study by sitting with students around a table and explaining my experiences of being a migrant, learning to write in Japanese (from which the thesis partly emerged), my role as a participant researcher, and the anticipated outcome of the project. My openness in telling stories about my life and writing challenges invited questions from students, which on reflexion opened up space for their stories (Merrill and West 2009: 182). In the event, asking questions demonstrated how narrative talk about writing emerged as literacy practices that were culturally co-constructed events, and people's stories "like all cultural phenomena, they have their roots in the past" (Barton and Hamilton 1998: 12). Thus, prospective participants also told stories to me, to their teachers and to peers about their experiences of being a migrant and learning to write in a new language.

Thirdly, ethical issues were open for discussion and prospective participants were invited to involve friends or relatives to explain or translate the consent forms for deeper understanding about what was involved. In addition, my autobiographical experiences created interest in life similarities and differences, which generated questions about people's involvement in the research or concerns about participation. This is where my telling of personal life stories and listening to students openly showed how research participation was to be based on trust and was "not about challenging people's defences" (Merrill and West 2009: 183). I revealed my vulnerabilities about writing in a second language at the earliest opportunity, so that everyone was encouraged to learn from and with each other.

Finally, these workshops led to the negotiation of prospective participants' preferences for data collection methods. Of course, there are practical issues, in any context, to consider when choosing methods for understanding students' perspectives, but this is a particular concern when collecting data in a multilingual setting (Roberts 2006b). For example, people showed no interest in taking photographs to generate conversation in interviews, but audio-recordings of one-to-one interviews and some classroom observations proved agreeable, in preference to video-recordings. I also asked prospective participants for artefacts, such as examples of their own writing which were of importance to them. The research methods will be discussed fully in Section 4.6.

In addition, it was essential to establish that participants willingly volunteered by giving "informed consent" in the knowledge that they were aware of their rights as participants (Merrill and West 2009: 171). Hence, by the end of these workshops, research participation roles, responsibilities, rights, questions of confidentiality and the anticipated use of the final thesis, as

it was presented in consent forms, had been discussed. In addition, students were encouraged to explore the contents in detail with other people, or to ask teachers or teacher managers for more help or to answer further questions. When prospective participants decided to be involved in the study they were asked to sign the consent forms in my presence or with their teacher. Prospective participants were also assured that even if they signed the consent forms, they could withdraw from project participation at any time without question or future consequence. In the next sub-section I provide profiles of the four migrants who volunteered to become case-study participants.

4.3.3 Case study participants: primary data

During the pre-fieldwork exercise and the recruitment workshops, four self-selected volunteers for case studies agreed to participate in the project. I will refer to them as S1, S2, S3 and S4, and their four profiles are detailed in the next sub-sections.

S1 profile

S1 arrived in England as a single man in 2004 from West Africa, where his country was at war, and he describes himself as African. The wars in parts of the region have been recorded as “violent power transitions which were the only way to change the regimes in which no opposition was possible” (Duyvesteyn 2000: 111). As a consequence of warfare, his mother and father had been killed, and he said he would not want to go back, but he had a brother with whom he was out of contact. His first language is ‘Fulla’, as he carefully spelt it out, in which he speaks and writes. However, the literature about the language in that geographical area refers to ‘Fula’, which is one of the two most widely used minority Atlantic Group languages found in countries lying along the Atlantic coast of West Africa (Segerer 2004, cited in Childs 2008). Fula-speaking people have traditionally used an Arabic-based writing system, although recently many have come to prefer a Latin-based orthography (Lüpke 2011). S1 explained during an interview that his Fula writing was in Arabic script, as he mimed how he writes from right to left.

When he first arrived in England, he lived in a large city with three friends who spoke Fula. He had no job and could not apply for a job, because he had no official papers, but later he was granted Asylum Seeker status and he said that his life got better. He said that he initially spent much time indoors, but slowly he began to go outside and started to pick up English, and he said that bit by bit he then began to speak. At first, he explained, it was just speaking, because he had no money to study reading and writing. In fact, he said, his support was cut, so he was unable to start college, until in 2009 he made a fresh claim and was given “indefinite leave to

stay” (in England). At that time, he was granted accommodation in the city in England where he lived when I met him.

S2 profile

As a young boy aged six, S2 was taken by his family to Kurdistan from a bordering country, when they became political migrants. Stansfield (2003: xii) describes Kurdistan as a politically and geographically fascinating, yet distinct, landlocked province, being surrounded by potentially hostile states, and it was in one of these regions where S2 was born. He said he had one sister and three brothers. He had a disrupted school life, and in his new country he talked about going to school with his sister, who helped him, but by the age of seven he did not want to go to school anymore because of negative learning experiences. Later, it was not possible for him to go to college and he did not learn to read and write, but speaks, Kurdish. Until he was about 24 years old, he worked in a shop and was single when he decided, just after the Millennium, to travel to Europe. He joined two other people, who he said were not friends, on a journey to England which took him by lorry to Calais and then by ferry to Dover. At that time, he had no passport and applied for Asylum, and he was later located in the city where he lived when I met him. He said that his English life began with a need to live on “vouchers”, sometimes sharing a house and sometimes living in a Home Office section house, where there was access to nursing support to help with various medical conditions. He had been in England for nine years before attending English classes, and at the time of joining the study in academic year one, he was enrolled on an ESOL entry one course, now being in his thirties. However, in academic year two S2 was initially unable to enrol on an ESOL course, although he agreed to continue his involvement in the study through face-to-face and telephone interviews or observations outside this college setting. There was also some SMS text messaging communication.

S3 profile

S3 is a mature man in his forties who was born in a war-torn country of South Asia where he said that he lived a family life. He said that he attended school for approximately 9 years, and as an adult in his daily life and work used telecommunications equipment and computers. He talked about having a house, a car, and a successful working life in a full-time communications job which was part of a specialist team located at a major airport. However, during the war in his home country, his work was identified as being of specific interest to the Taliban, an Islamic fundamentalist militant movement (Lutz 2002), who took him prisoner until he was able to escape difficult conditions six months later, in the late 1990s. He explained that having risked his own and his family’s lives, he did not return home but through relatives

arranged for his wife, children and parents to meet him and they fled to a border country. He said that he left everything behind except some money he had saved and funds from whatever relatives could sell on his behalf. He explained that he and his family lived in hiding until, with no choice but to take further challenging risks, he spent all of his money on accommodation and arrangements for the family's passage to Europe. In his European country of asylum, in the early 2000s, he said that he studied Dutch, gained European citizenship, worked as a driver, and lived a family life again for more than a decade. However, he explained that following redundancy and decreasing work prospects he decided to migrate and to look for new opportunities in England, where he had been living for four years when I met him. His languages, he said in order of proficiency, are Afghan, Pashtu, Dutch and English, in which he is able to speak, read and write with varying degrees of competence. At the time of being recruited to the study he was attending an ESOL Entry Level 1 course and later enrolled for an ESOL Entry Level 2 course. However, S3 left the study in November 2011, because he decided to relocate to another city. Even so, before he left the study he had made a significant and rich contribution to the research material.

S4 profile

S4 is a single man and was almost 20 years old when I met him. He was born and grew up in a north-eastern area of the Indian sub-continent. It is an area where historical political events led to restricted border crossings, as well as creating demographic shifts and mobility. Recently, it has been stated there is a need for "dialogue with radical elements to bring peace and stability in this conflict-ridden region" (Haokip 2010: 5).

He said that his schooling lasted for 5 to 6 years, when his parents told him at the age of 13 that it was time for him to leave. The school language, he said, was Urdu but he learnt basic English, such as parts of the body and some a, b, c, d. He described his main languages as Urdu and Pashto for speaking and writing, followed by Arabic, Punjabi and English to varying degrees of spoken and written language proficiency. In his native country S4 said that he had worked in his father's mechanical parts distribution company which was overseen by an uncle. Previously, before coming to England and in connection with the family business, he explained that he had also lived in a Middle Eastern country for some four years. At that time, he said, he taught himself to speak Arabic and did some writing because it was similar to his own language.

S4 said that he came to England with his mother and brothers to join his father who had been living there for approximately ten years and had a British passport. S4 said that since arriving he had worked in a clothes shop as a sales assistant and later took a part-time security job. When I met him he was enrolled on an ESOL Entry Level 1 course which was

approximately a year after migrating to England. However, in the second academic year S4 was ineligible to enrol for an ESOL course, but he agreed to continue his involvement in the study by meeting outside the college setting for audio-recorded interviews, and we also kept in regular SMS text messaging contact.

4.3.4 Teachers and teacher manager informants: secondary data

This section presents the teachers and teacher manager informants. These were employed by this college of further education on a full-time or hourly-paid visiting tutor basis. These practitioners had taught at this college for at least three years and each had between five and twenty years' experience of teaching English as a second (or other) language, as shown in the table below, 'Teacher and teacher manager profile summary'. In this table I have merged together the details of teachers and teacher managers because of the small number involved and for the purpose of anonymity I have used averages to present timescales. For example, their length of employment at this college of further education is shown as '7.5 plus years', and their total TESOL experience shows an average of '9.75 plus years'. I have also listed teachers' and teacher managers' self-reported qualifications and language experience separately. This is to emphasize professional qualifications on the one hand, and second language abilities on the other. I believe that presenting teacher and teacher manager details in this way gives a clearer picture of their exposure to second language teaching and learning. The table summarizes the details of all eight informants:

Teacher and teacher manager informants, self-reported qualifications/languages	
Informants: Teachers	5
Teaching managers	3
Years employed at this college	7.5+ years average service
Qualifications: ESOL and/or linguistics related	MA BA Postgraduate certificate (ESOL) City and Guilds (ESOL 7407 I and II/other) Trinity certificate (TESOL)
Informants' languages: first or bi-lingual languages	Bulgarian, English, Greek, Punjabi/English, Turkish/German
Other languages: Spoken/written by proficiency (other than first language)	English (fluent) French (basic and intermediate) German (basic) Italian (basic and intermediate) Mandarin (some) Polish (basic) Russian (advanced) Spanish (basic and fluent) Welsh (fluent)
Total TESOL experience	9.75+ years average (between 3 and 20 years)
Age range	30 to 50+

'Teacher and teacher manager profile summary'

In total there were eight volunteers, being five teachers and three teacher manager informants, involved in the research project that spanned over two academic years of study in this college. Their self-reported details appear in the above table. These informants volunteered for involvement in my project from a selection of possible informants that were initially suggested by college management. The suggested informants were put forward because they were managing and/or teaching ESOL Entry Level 1 and ESOL Entry Level 2 writing.

Initially, a teacher manager, referred to as Tm, contacted all of the teachers in this college's designated category by email, but they were slow to reply. I then sent a follow-up email, with Tm's approval, to teachers' which took a personal and friendly tone. I wrote to them as a colleague to explain the project and to informally enlist their support for assistance with my research, and for enlisting volunteer migrant case studies. My personal email generated a positive response and several teachers agreed to meet me individually for informal meetings. Alongside my meetings with teachers, Tm also participated with me by holding informal meetings to discuss my project.

These meetings with teachers and teacher managers were conversations that enabled me to explain the research project and my methodology. Taking such an informal approach to meetings also enabled teachers' and teacher managers' to discuss their individual preferences for participation in the project. Then, at the end of the research period I asked all volunteer teachers and teacher manager informants to participate in an exit interview.

This approach led to five teachers and three teacher manager informants agreeing to collaborate in my research for collection of secondary data, over academic year one and academic year two. These eight teacher and teacher manager informants were mature ESOL practitioners with between three and twenty years' experience and English was their first or second, fluent language. Furthermore, these informants were indeed overall fluent in six different languages and two teachers were bi-lingual. What is more, they had some level of knowledge and ability in twelve languages, which suggested rich pedagogical classroom resources for them, and my study, to draw on in terms of their own experiences of learning and writing in different languages. These teachers and teacher managers seemed especially well placed to engage with the recent "social turn" in ESOL language teaching and learning as our collaborative relationships suggested. The "social turn" draws attention to how meaning making goes beyond cognition and also emphasizes the importance of "bringing the outside in" to assist the teaching and learning of migrants who are learning English in England (Roberts and Baynham 2006; Block 2003). The perceptions of college teachers and managers were therefore essential to my understanding of the pedagogical implications of participant migrants' early

classroom experiences of writing in English, or indeed the first writing experiences in any language for one participant.

There were, however, several differences in teacher and teaching manager participation during the research project between academic year one and academic year two, which I believe are worth noting and I summarise their involvement below.

Academic year one

In the first academic year of the study T1, T2, T3 and a teaching manager, Tm, collaborated with me and agreed to participate in interviews and invited me into their classrooms for lesson observations. Another teacher, T5, agreed to be interviewed. Most importantly, it was my relationship with these teachers and teacher managers' and their acceptance of me that formed the foundation of this research project.

Therefore, in academic year one, four teachers, T1, T2, T3, T5, and one teacher manager were informants and they signed consent forms (see Appendix 8). These informants' participation included our collaboration in recruitment workshops to recruit migrant student case studies. They also agreed to some lessons being audio-recorded, with their students' consent. In addition, T1, T2, T3 and Tm were willing to participate in audio-recorded informal one-to-one interviews with me, during or after classroom observations. Another teacher, T5, also agreed to participate in an audio-recorded interview without a classroom observation. I now turn to academic year two.

Academic year two

In the second academic year T3 and Tm left the research study. However, another teacher, T4, became involved because a case study participant, S1, had moved into his class. This class was for students who were required by the Job Centre to attend Job Centre Plus (JCP) English classes. The JCP class taught general English, but the focus became more work-related and the curriculum came under the "Community ESOL" programme. Because of this, I also had contact with a different teaching manager, Tmb, who was prepared to talk to me about his experience of teaching and learning with refugees and other migrant writers. At the same time, a designated temporary teaching manager, Tma, had been appointed to take over Tm's role, and was a teacher that I already knew.

However, in academic year two data collection was initially spasmodic. This was because of college enrolment and planning issues that were affected by the immediate impact of

Government policy and funding changes which frequently took teaching staff away from pedagogy to procedural duties. At that time, Tma played a key role in planning the second phase of the research by providing essential logistical details about students' and teachers' movements, explaining administrative changes and agreeing dates for observations and college visits, whilst also answering my follow-up questions. This also meant that in academic year two, the teaching managers were respondents, but I did not observe their lessons. Nevertheless, in addition to their managerial and teaching duties, teaching managers organized and delivered regular training courses for pedagogical updates and policy requirements to teachers within the department which I was invited to attend.

In view of the foregoing factors, at the beginning of academic year two, I invited T4, Tma and Tmb to individual informal meetings so that I could explain the research project and the progress that had been made. I also explained the four migrant case studies involvement in my research. Following these informal individual meetings T4, Tma and Tmb signed consent forms (Appendix 8). This means that in academic year two, three teachers were informants. These were T1, T2 and T4, and they agreed to participate in classroom observations and audio-recorded interviews. In addition, Tma and Tmb participated in interviews but I did not observe their lessons.

I will now briefly explain these informants collaboration in this research project.

Collaborative relationships

Throughout the study, my collaboration with these teachers and teacher managers was possible because of the quality of the relationships that we built together during informal interview conversations. This support was strengthened as we built a rapport through discussion and reflection on the ongoing project in relation to their students' writing and pedagogy. These discussions appeared to raise teachers' and teacher managers' interest in the research and led to their supportive involvement in the recruitment of case study participants and the inclusion of recruitment workshops, as explained in Sub-Section 4.3.2.. Indeed, these relationships were also instrumental in establishing the most appropriate methods for data collection in the light of the problems encountered in the setting (see Sub-Section 4.1.2 above).

Accordingly, my informal reflections with these teachers and teacher managers were the basis on which interviews and observations entwined and provided the foundation for 'the research observation cycle with holistic inductive analysis' (as detailed below in Sub-Section 4.4.2 (a)). Indeed, the observation cycle procedures enabled my reflexive approach to describing and interpreting the research material as I wrote about the college, pedagogy and student life as

it emerged. My cyclic procedures also enabled deeper comparison and contrasts to be made across data sets and between participant accounts of students, teachers and teacher managers.

In addition, I taught seven lessons and was an examination invigilator during the time that I spent in the setting (see Appendix 2). On these eight occasions I collected data by writing field notes about my role and experiences as a participant observer. There was also opportunistic data collected from conversations with other teachers in the setting. Data was also collected as a result of conversations with various senior college managers who oversaw the department and were the link to other college services, such as the top management team and outside bodies. In the next section I turn to data collection methods.

4.4 Data collection methods

I begin this section by explaining the data collection methods that were acceptable to participants and enabled me to answer the research questions. The suitable methods that emerged through collaborative relationships were case studies, observations and field-notes, interviews, focus groups, digital texts and artefacts. These multiple data sources enabled me to observe, collect and elicit research material that was (potentially) significant for building a detailed picture of contexts talked about, people and the setting from different perspectives through sustained engagement (Lillis 2008: 367). The interpretations and descriptions that developed from multiple methods for data collection are termed “thick description”, a phrase which was coined by Geertz (Richards 2003: 23). Thick description relates to accounting for events and practices not by grasping easy answers, but making the familiar strange to gain wider connections in a “cultural belief that there are details in the complexity of things to be understood” (Holliday 2013: 35). The research project being reported here worked towards achieving this through enriching my interpretive practice by including a ‘thick description’ of professional practice, in Geertz’s sense, which is built on ‘thick participation’ through involvement in the research setting and the maintenance of relationships with participants (Sarangi 2005: 165). Data collected through talk around texts provided deeper understanding of teachers’ and migrants’ perspectives of the processes of engagement with writing over an extended period of time inside and outside college. I observed literacy events and practices that enabled the “dynamic and complex situated meanings and practices” to emerge (Lillis 2008: 367). The interpretation of the phenomena from various perspectives, using multiple methods of data collection, led to deep theorizing of writing as an “object in its own right” (Blommaert 2004: 645). In the next sub-sections, I will discuss the methods of data collection.

4.4.1 Case studies: focus on the particular

Case studies are commonly included as a methodology within interpretive studies so as to focus on a particular unit of analysis, which in this study was migrants' engagement with writing and identity construction identified in literacy events and practices (Merriam 2002; Barton and Hamilton 1998). A major strength of case studies is the possibility for them to speak for themselves, being easily understood by a wide audience as they are written in everyday, non-professional language. They catch unique features that may otherwise be lost in large scale data and may hold the key to understanding a specific situation (Adelman et al 1980 cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011: 292).

As explained in Sub-Section 4.3.2 above, recruitment workshops were designed to encourage volunteer case-study migrants who were in the early process of engagement with writing in English. This study aimed to focus on participants from a bottom-up perspective. Working with case studies also provided insights beyond the setting, which is not a naturally occurring phenomenon in itself, but involved people in the processes of negotiation for engagement with writing and identity construction (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 32). Moreover, Casanave (2003: 97) believes that case studies are capable of foregrounding second-language writing and how it can be associated with "the power-infused relationships and interactions among people, documents, and institutions". Hence, case studies provided an appropriate method for the context of this research and the process of reviewing the case material and drawing analytical points from it ran simultaneously alongside further data collection as analysis developed (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 160). Thus, in-depth study of cases helped to illuminate the situated nature of learning to write, and the complexity of the processes that these migrants engaged with when writing as part of literacy practices (Lam 2000).

The relationships that I developed with these four case-study participants enabled me to engage with their perceptions at a micro-level for insights into how their experiences were influenced by macro-level institutional and outside forces. Therefore, within the culture of the setting, the inclusion of case studies enabled in-depth study of the writing practices and life experiences of the four participants from which qualitative interpretations were formed (Merriam 2002: 7). In this sense, by focusing on migrants' engagement with writing as social practice I observed the threads that linked to different contexts of their life experiences to reveal their deeper needs, such as work, housing, health care, intermediaries and the effects of technology (Holliday 2013; Street 2009a; Casanave 2003). I studied each migrant student's individual perspectives from one particular angle but also gained insights beyond the setting, through collecting details of the case study participants' life history experiences (Hammersley

and Atkinson 2007: 32). It was also possible for me to observe the processes of identity construction through interaction, as it was given form by a combination of social narratives and social structures which in turn may be shaped by what matters to the individual (Lee and Anderson 2009: 190).

New opportunities for data collection were systematically included when a new line of thinking or a unique perspective arose, such as the late inclusion of SMS text messages. Overall, the in-depth study of cases helped to illuminate the situated nature of learning to write and the complexity of the processes that these migrants engaged with for writing as part of literacy practices and identity construction (Lam 2000). The explorative nature of the study meant that it might be considered open ended (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 32). However, it is not intended that these case studies should be all things to all people. In fact, from the different perspectives of the descriptions offered, readers may find themselves in agreement or disagreement with the interpretations:

“Readers are not pointed down any one theoretical path or given the impression that truth might lie at the end of such a path. Readers will have to discover their own path and truth inside the case.”
(Flyvbjerg 2006: 238)

As a case-study researcher, as I was immersed in the context for an extended period of time, I was also engaged in reflexion that enabled me to identify and reduce the inclusion of researcher bias wherever possible (Van Wynsberghe and Andruske 2007: 370). For instance, reflexion was considered in on-going analysis, as I interpreted the stories people told as part of making sense of their lives and the role of writing, which changed over time as new events reshaped their life trajectories and the communities around them (Bell 2002: 208). Whilst observation and participant observation are pre-eminent in case studies, they are by no means the only source of data, and (Cohen et al 2011) foregrounded other specific sources of evidence as being interviews, documents and archives. In the next sub-section I turn to observations and field-notes.

4.4.2 Observations and field-notes

Participant observation is “more properly conceived of as a research strategy than a unitary research method in that it is always made up of a variety of methods” (Davies 1999: 67). For Spradley (1980: 3) participant observation is concerned with the “work of describing a culture”. Therefore, in this research project, participant observation enabled a more effective understanding of each participant account and its context – the presuppositions on which it relies, how it was produced, by whom, for whom and why – from which I was better able to anticipate biases (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 98). My observation notes were at times

more personal “confessional tales”, as I described decisions and dilemmas of the fieldwork experience (Finlay 2002: 210). This was because I entered the culture in a college of further education with trepidation. I wondered how welcoming the teachers would be about my request to observe their lessons, in view of an unsettled context and frequent official classroom observations. However, I was pleasantly surprised to find that teachers wanted to talk about their personal, official classroom observation experiences, as well as reflecting on my research project (Spradley 1980). In effect, a socio-cultural perspective on language and culture considers classrooms as socio-cultural communities in their own right, which shape the processes and outcomes of language and cultural learning (Hall 2012: 88).

There were also personal anxieties and the pressures surrounding fieldwork that at times presented practical fieldwork challenges. These arose from my long-term involvement in the fieldwork culture, which led to experiences ranging from emotional exaltation to feelings of inadequacy or self-doubt, and it was essential to have contact with colleagues outside the setting, at my home university, to discuss problems and to take advice (Davies 1999: 83-84). I also found that in the setting these stresses were reduced because of my involvement with teachers and teacher managers as we collaborated in reflective interviews where I raised points for discussion about the research which were of interest or of concern to me. I also welcomed being in contact with my home university colleagues and the reflective nature of the research project helped to minimize:

‘the fact that the researcher may have to assume one or more roles is unique to observational studies. There are, however, some similarities to other research methods such as the need to plan the overall project, review the literature, and determine who will be studied and when and where (in what locations) the observations will take place. Finally, the use of one’s senses, as well as other data collection techniques, make observation a more holistic type of research that allows the researcher to gain a better understanding of insiders from their own perspective.’

(Baker 2006: 187)

As literature has shown in Sub-Section 3.5.1, teachers and students create communities and through their interactions identities are constructed and underlie the learning itself, which also shapes migrants’ second language development (Hall 2012: 88). I was indeed part of this college community as I went about my usual research activities, but there were several aspects that fed into my observations. Firstly, my observations were informed by interviews with the four case-study participants. I was aware from the audio-recorded transcriptions about these migrants’ life histories, which helped me to appreciate how literate practice emerged from their biographies and the histories of their local and global communities (Johnson and Cowles 2009: 410). Secondly, because of my collaborative relationships with teachers and teacher managers, I was invited into their classrooms to observe what happened for insights into the routine activities of college life (Hall 2012: 179). Therefore, the material and historical conditions for

learning and practicing literacy could be observed, in a college context (Johnson and Cowles 2009: 411). Thirdly, over time my conceptual organization of observations helped me to reduce data further as literate practice and events became clearer (Rubinstein-Avila 2007).

There were however, times during classroom observations when I was invited by the classroom teacher to participate, or when I participated by teaching lessons when the regular teacher was indisposed, thereupon becoming a participant-observer (Hall 2012: 179). These relationships were supported by the flexible nature of the research, which meant I could move in and out of classrooms for observations without specific appointments. This appeared to work well for the teachers, and I could make time for spontaneous or planned student interviews as they arose. Thus, the observation plan was flexible only within the limits of the research visits, which were agreed with this college and coincided with timetabled writing classes.

The NLS framework focused my observations of literacy practices that were found in the educational context among migrants' and teachers' social and professional groups, and indeed in communities outside the institution or across geographical contexts (Hall 2012: 23). The term "practices" is central to Literacy Studies and is concerned with the observable and culturally recognizable patterns relating to the composition of texts and talk about and around them. I was also aware of the distinction between practice as a human activity and practice as undertaken by institutions, in other words the influences of agency and structure upon what practice means in a given context (Baynham and Prinsloo 2009:6). An advantage of being a participant-observer was that full participation aroused interest and questions among other participants yielding rich insights, but a disadvantage was the need to remember details to write about later, or to fit in times to write field notes (Hall 2012: 179). Sometimes, I wanted to retreat to the "outside" to make field notes but my attention was tugged almost helplessly to the next student to hear more about writing.

Sometimes I was an "interested observer", which meant that everyone in the context was aware of my presence, but I was not expected to be fully involved in all activities (Hall 2012: 179). For example, in one classroom observation, the students were writing a short story. When I asked a student what the class were doing, an informal interview began. The student was keen to tell me about her writing and where her idea originated. At the same time, other students were beckoning me to talk to them. However, I also wanted to listen to the teacher's feedback, to observe the literacy event and to record field notes about writing practices. This was a rich classroom observation, but also created tensions for me as a participant researcher, since I had conflicting roles, being torn between insider and outsider status, and also between informal interviews and observation. Nevertheless, thanks to the adoption of a clear procedure

for observations and the recording of my experiences, the process proved manageable and I will now explain my approach in more detail.

a) The observation cycle

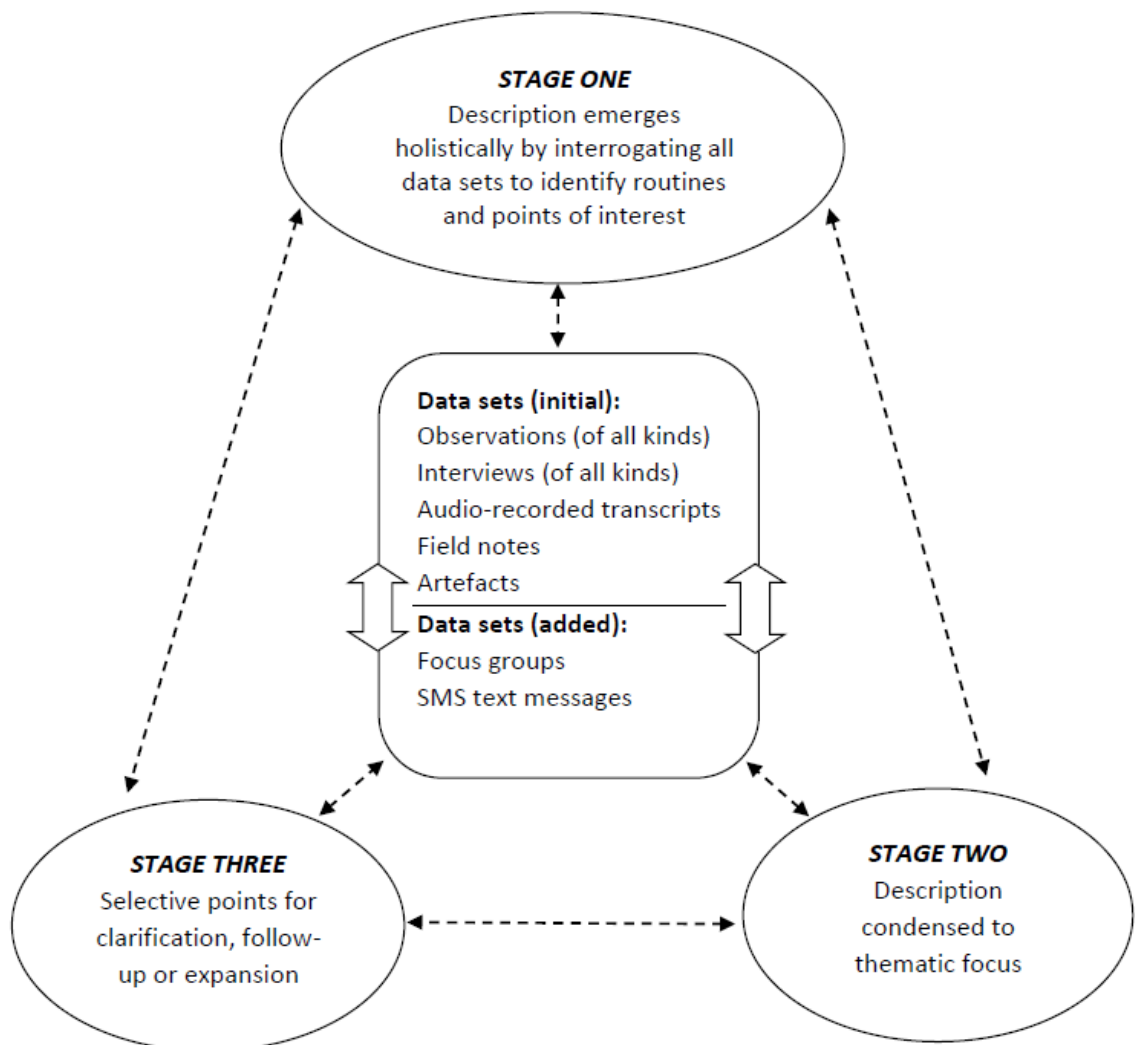
I found that participant observation and informal interviews often overlapped from the beginning and ran parallel in building and maintaining rapport (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995:141). In fact, Richards (2003: 35) suggests working on both at the same time so as to reduce distorted data collection, but bearing in mind my influence on the situation and how my interest arises. Thus, the observation cycle underwent three stages of narrowing analysis which condensed from description, to focused observation, to selective observations that led to a large amount of primary data (Spradley 1980: 34). This is referred to by Adler and Adler (1994: 381) with the analogy of a “funnel” to describe this process wherein the stages of observation become progressively narrower and direct the researcher’s “attention deeper into the elements of the setting that have emerged as theoretically and/or empirically essential”. Unique opportunities for rich data collection emerged, but it was impossible to describe everything in full detail. I had no choice but to make lists or memos to make sense of events or jog my memory for typing field notes later (Spradley 1980; Roberts 2006b).

Therefore, the research observation cycle was a strategy that began from the moment that I entered the setting. Each weekly visit (as shown in Appendix 2) lasted between one and three days. The research material that I collected on each occasion underwent three stages of narrowing and re-focusing, or holistic inductive analysis. In the following paragraphs I will explain the procedures that led to ‘the research observation cycle with holistic inductive analysis diagram’ presented below, then explain the three stages involved and how they relate to two data extract examples.

As indicated, my procedures developed from data collection activities. These initially involved highlighting emerging themes and routine occurrences in my field notebook by writing in the margin and by colour coding, or by circling, or by underlining particular words and phrases. In the beginning, the research material included observations, interviews, audio-recording transcriptions, field notes and artefacts. Then, over time, migrant student focus groups were also included as a method to extend and reaffirm these migrants’ emerging conceptualisations of writing and literacy. In addition, from June 2011, SMS text messages were another additional method. This was because as the four case studies exchanged text messages with me, their processes for identity construction and writing were revealed and became valuable sources of data for interpretation. Therefore, the cycle of procedures that I

adopted helped me to make connections across the different strands of the research material and essentially enabled me to interpret the links between observation and interview data.

The diagram below demonstrates how the three stages of my observation cycle and inductive analysis worked during and after my on-going data collection activities. Briefly, the balloons represent three stages of activity and the dotted lines with arrows represent my two-way theoretical process for cross-checking, comparing and double-checking against and between all of the data sets that arise from the methods in the central ‘data sets’ box:



‘Research observation cycle with holistic inductive analysis diagram’.

I will now explain the three stages of the observation cycle and inductive analysis diagram in more detail.

Stage One

Stage one began the cycle of reading and highlighting (with colour coding and annotations as shown in Sub-Section 4.6.3) routines or interesting episodes identified in interview and observation data, from hand-written field notes and audio-transcripts. This procedure enabled an overall descriptive impression of data collected. My impression was then cross-checked against all other data sets, as the dotted lines indicate, to provide initial interpretive description to write-up.

Stage Two

Stage two began by taking the highlighted points of interest from stage one and cross-checking them against all data sets, for a second time, so that emerging themes could be noted. In the beginning the emerging themes were wide-spread but over time the themes became narrower towards my final writing-up of the thesis.

Stage Three

In stage three, taking into account the description and thematic focus arising from stages one and two, I noted unclear points for clarification or follow-up in the setting, and identified possibilities for deeper investigation during the next college visit. This third stage procedure prepared me for the beginning of the next research observation cycle.

These three stages of procedures, provided the cyclical process and on-going inductive analysis (also see Section 4.6). The cycle was indeed a developing research strategy, where as a researcher I holistically observed everything in the beginning and refined my strategies over time. An initial broad focus narrowed as my relationships with participants in the setting became sources of 'reflexive data' from which I wrote descriptions (Holliday 2007: 56). This was evident because through my developing relationships with case participants I was enlisted as an intermediary and became involved in their personal writing interests. This meant that in case study interviews I had first-hand observations of writing events and the processes that participants were themselves creating on a moment by moment basis with me for cross-checking against other research material.

In addition, as explained above, I believe that this cycle was facilitated by my weekly periods in the setting rather than intensive visits spanning continuously over many months. Indeed, these regular intervals not only allowed for my deep interrogation and cross-checking over data sets but also seemed to encourage more forthcoming interview accounts from case studies, practitioners and other participants. This was because previous conversations appeared to be elaborated on or new perspectives were offered for deeper consideration and these made links to observation data over time. It also became apparent that teacher managers and teachers

responded positively to my less intensive and friendly approach to data collection. I perceived this because of practitioners' forthcoming reflective interviews, their willingness to clarify points raised or to provide follow-up details, and their on-going personal invitations for me to observe their lessons. This collaborative approach also assisted my cross-checking between observation and interview data.

I now give two data extract examples in order to assist the reader to conceptualise my three stages of procedures for narrowing down raw data and making links between observations and interviews. The first example relates to a point that arose from teacher and teacher manager observations and interview data sets. Firstly, the interview transcriptions showed that these teachers' and teacher managers' sometimes perceived migrant students' struggles to write as a possible 'need' for 'one to one' teacher/student support (see Sub-Section 5.4.1). Secondly, by cross-checking over data sets and through follow-up classroom observations, it appeared that this perspective seemed to arise where it was anticipated by teachers that students would work independently on writing tasks (rather than with other people). Thirdly, through further cross-checking of interviews, observation field notes and artefacts it also appeared that college conventions seemed often to encourage students to work individually on spelling and technical writing skills production. The supporting artefacts in this case were the 'student ESOL handbook' and the recorded 'smart, measurable, attainable, realistic, targets' (SMART) that were agreed between individual students and teachers in tutorials that appeared in college documents such as Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), (see Sub-Section 5.5.2). My research procedures later identified that migrant students' 'needs' for support could be perceived by teachers and teacher managers as sometimes related to student's 'literacy issues' (Sub-Section 5.3.3). In turn, data showed that 'literacy issues' were perceived by teachers and teacher managers as migrant student struggles with spelling or technical skills and, sometimes led to the possibility of practitioners placing people in a deficit/needy identity position for engagement with writing.

However, upon closer interrogation of case study participant interview data an alternative perspective about these migrants' engagement with writing and identity construction emerged as shown in the second example. Data from interviews, observations and artefacts relating to a case participant, S3, showed how his own processes for early engagement with writing in English were orchestrated. The research material revealed S3's processes for negotiating meaning when he enlisted me as an intermediary for him to translate a poem into English, that he had previously written in Dutch, (see Sub-Section 6.3.3). These data showed the way in which S3 managed his own processes for engagement with writing. This related to S3's identity construction which was based on three factors. Firstly on his management of the interview procedure. Secondly, on the poem topic that related directly to his recounted experience in

different contexts. Thirdly, on how his translation from Dutch to English pushed him to check my understanding of particular words whilst also appearing to be making sense of his engagement with writing in English.

Therefore, from these data, I perceived an interpretation that S3 drew on his life trajectory that appeared to offer him familiar and readily accessible contexts from which to negotiate meaning. In addition, it appeared to me that by his orchestration of my participation with him and the negotiation of meaning, he seemed to enable his own positive identity construction. Data showed him as referring to various strands of his life trajectory (such as his homeland or life and work in Europe) as he made connections between writing in Dutch and English languages. In turn, his possible identity conflicts (in relation to his roles, status and social differences, or ‘who am I?’) were explored in discussion with me, another person, as an intermediary, in that moment. In other words, by following the three stages of cyclical procedures described in the diagram, from a co-constructed writing event in an interview, I observed, made cross-checks against other data, and later wrote descriptions about this case study participant’s processes for writing and identity construction.

Accordingly, these procedures meant that each strand of data collection informed, and was informed by others, in a holistic cyclical procedure. These procedures enabled selective observations that narrowed my focus onto these migrants’ identities in terms of construction, positioning, conflicts, challenges and negotiation, as explained in Chapter 3. In turn, my observation cycle and inductive analysis enabled me to interpret the research material, to draw conclusions and finally to write the thesis.

In the next sub-section I turn to field notes.

b) Field notes

Written accounts of observations are called “field notes” and these were kept in a note book that I carried with me at all times. The schedule for data collection during college visits was busy and exhausting. I made notes or lists of daily observations and additional, personal memos, clarified details and underlined interesting phenomena to follow up during the next visit. As soon as possible after data collection, I recorded informal conversations with students, teachers and teacher managers and word processed longer field notes whenever possible. I noted daily times of arrival and my movements during the day, and recorded anything that attracted my attention for potential deeper investigation (Hall 2012: 179).

During the course of field work I coded arising themes in the margin or made handwritten annotations in my note book. This began a coding system from which themes were identified as the study progressed. For longer descriptions I used a separate page or drew a box around my thoughts, to distinguish them from the main field notes. Prior to college visits I made a list of points from previous observations as cues for asking further questions or to observe behaviours of particular interest to the research project (Hall 2012: 179). Enquiries about these points led to further participant accounts of cultural practices or symbolic implications, the processes of engagement, and even the psycho-social dynamics they suggested (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 233). This process helped me to focus on the purpose of the research and the relevance of recurring and emerging themes.

I made notes whenever possible because it would have been easy to become lost in the “working environment” and hence overlook the need for detailed description of procedure, an omission which could undermine the importance of demonstrating rigour in terms of engagement with the setting (Holliday 2007: 20). In reality, as a qualitative researcher my aim was to “reproduce experiences that embody cultural meanings and cultural understandings that operate in the ‘real’ world” in my written accounts (Denzin 1997: 32-33). Even though I have described collaborative and friendly relationships with all participants, this brings the question of my descriptions of ‘participating versus observing’ to the fore (Davies 1999: 82). In recent times, “most qualitative researchers will attempt to be aware of their role in the (co)-construction of knowledge – to make explicit how inter-subjective elements impact on data collection and analysis in an effort to enhance the trustworthiness, transparency and accountability of their research” (Finlay 2002: 212). These aspects also relate to Sub-Section 4.2.4. “writing the study”.

4.4.3 Interviews and audio-recordings

In this sub-section I conceptualize the use of interviews, interview reflexivity, the benefits offered by biographical and autobiographical narratives, and audio-recordings. Upon entering the field, after initial conversations with participants in recruitment workshops, I realized that our social dialogue was emerging from our (auto)biographies and as such:

“narratives will work outward from the researcher’s biography, entangling his or her talks of the self with the stories told by others. As lived textualities, these personal experience narratives and ‘my stories’ recover the dialogical context of meaning, placing the observer on both sides of the ‘keyhole’. As an emergent cultural form, these fragmented, moral texts mediate and connect persons to culture, history and ongoing group life.”

(Denzin 1997: 47)

From the beginning of the research project, I was aware that my autobiographical insights led me to hear participants' life stories about writing and literacy shared freely with me in interviews, which included mobile phone and SMS text messaging conversations. I realized how essential social group sharing was for sustaining research rapport, thereby enhancing interview experiences to enrich my written interpretations.

a) Interviews

In this research project, I regarded interviews mainly as conversations with participants which were at times stand-alone sources of data and at other times were used to compare against other research material (Blommaert and Jie 2010). Interviews with all participants were significant, not only for data collection but to open discussion and enable clarification of problems as they arose to give more reflective meanings to interpretation of the data (Creswell 2007: 142). Case study participants, teachers and teacher managers also agreed to telephone interviews, which assisted in clarifying unclear points following face-to-face interviews. I recorded telephone conversations in my field notes, whenever possible as the call was taking place or immediately afterwards. I used semi-structured interviews to ask questions about my research agenda and these were interspersed with interviewees' conversations. However, I strove to include my role in the co-construction of shaping of the quotes that I wrote in field notes through my on-going personal reflection on any tensions, balances and choices recorded (Mann 2011: 14).

Typically, there are three types of interview: structured, semi-structured and open (Hall 2012: 179). Interviews range from highly structured, where specific questions and the order in which they are asked are determined ahead of time, to unstructured where topic areas are explored, but neither the questions or the order are predetermined (Merriam 2002: 13). I believed that structured interviews were counter-productive in this setting, because they did not fit with the reflective and collaborative nature of my relationships with participants. However, semi-structured interviews (a mix of fixed questions and more open-ended discussion) with teachers and teacher managers was informative at the very beginning and at the end of the research project. I asked specifically structured questions to enable my understanding of the effects of policy changes and specific details, such as teaching qualifications, number of years employed, etc. and perspectives about involvement in this research project. The response of teachers and teacher managers indicated that participation in reflective interviews enabled them to explore their theories about writing pedagogy and its impact on identity construction in classroom practices, which they were not always able to do in day-to-day teaching operations.

However, the majority of my interviews with teachers and teacher managers were conversations as part of on-going data collection activities. I found that many of my experiences and those of teachers were shared as we reflected on our perceptions of students' needs for writing inside and outside the classroom. In fact, Richards (2003: 232) believes that ESOL teachers naturally reflect on student needs and classroom techniques, although most reflections are lost in the welter of daily activity. In addition, it was possible to theorize with teachers beyond pedagogy to consider the process for informal learning potential for early adult migrant writers (Barton and Hamilton 1998; Street 2001 cited in Baynham 2004: 287). On the other hand, I was surprised to find that we often had quite different perceptions about writing pedagogy and even focused on different aspects of students' identity construction and how agency played out in the classroom. Their reflections on this research seemed to draw teachers and teacher managers out of everyday routines for hidden thoughts to emerge as "questions, puzzles, insights and even moans and grumbles" (Richards 2003: 233). These specific insights revealed clues and provided data towards answering research questions two and three.

However, all interviews were an on-going process of analysis in which I listened carefully to participants, checked my understanding of what was said and prompted for expansion on topics raised by participants and encouraged them also to ask me questions (Richards 2003). During in-depth interviews, cycles of mutual reflection assisted my interpretation and descriptions recounted by participants (Finlay 2002: 218). For example, when S2 talked about his on-going legal situation and how he perceived poor English was recognized by others, the collaborative nature of the interview led to more profound personal participant insights, as happened in other instances. This meant that I had to reflect deeply on those meanings and to ask further questions to clarify my understanding. In this way reflective practices helped to reduce the criticisms that participants might be willing to provide accounts that the researcher wants to hear rather than giving their own perceptions (Finlay 2002: 219). In fact, as Heath (1993) cautions, there is a need for researchers to be aware that they should not use data collection and analysis to justify their prior knowledge or biases.

Therefore, through an on-going process of reflexivity and reflection on the data collected, I could ask follow-up questions to enable participants to refine and extend their ideas from one interview to another or in face-to-face meetings as part of the research project. Thus, many interview questions on my part, as a participant researcher, were stimulated through curiosity, observation or further reading of literature to follow up emerging themes (Seliger and Shohamy 1989: 45). I now turn to audio-recorded interviews.

b) Audio-recorded interviews

Throughout this research project most one-to-one interviews with case-study participants and teachers and teacher managers were audio-recorded in agreement with the participant at the beginning of the meeting, in “bounded settings out of earshot of others” (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 108). When the audio-recorder was turned off at the end of interviews, I double-checked verbally that participants still agreed for me to use the research material. I believed that it was necessary to double-check because of the open-endedness of the accounts and the unexpected biographical details that sometimes emerged, which might be sensitive to the people involved. However, none of the audio-recorded interviews were withdrawn.

The four case-study participants met me for at least one in-depth audio-recorded interview and several follow-up audio-recorded informal interviews and field notes of spontaneous meetings. These enabled me to write narrative accounts and descriptive vignettes which could be compared and contrasted with observation data and other research material. Nevertheless, S2 was shy of being audio-recorded and therefore only agreed to two audio-recorded interviews.

Audio-recorded interviews with all participants were integral to data collection because of the in-depth nature and quantity of research material produced. This was essential because the fieldwork was not an open-ended endeavour, with specific periods for data collection agreed, as shown in Sub-Section 4.1.5, this being a quite usual expectation in research:

“... the fieldwork carried out ... today is, at best, likely to last months rather than years. This reflects, no doubt, the intensification of work in universities, the increasing pressure on academics for productivity, and the shortening of contracts for researchers employed on particular projects. However, it probably also arises from the use of portable audio-recording devices, which can produce very large amounts of data quite rapidly’

(Hammersley 2003: 5)

I believe that audio-recordings were carefully considered in negotiation with participants at the time of recording and were not adopted as a matter of routine, but provided most of my primary data (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Nevertheless, the multiple methods for studying the phenomena drew heavily on narrative accounts between participants and the researcher and audio-recorded interviews enabled me to analyse the finer details of participants’ perspectives. In Norton’s (2000) study for instance, there were no examples of recorded conversations with participants. Block (2007) later commented on Norton’s (2000) study, suggesting that even powerful and compelling stories lack the extra perspective offered by audio-recorded conversations, which is an essential ingredient in second language learning studies, especially where identity is concerned. The transcriptions of data collected from audio-

recordings were time-consuming and for comprehensive analysis they were supported by field notes (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). I will now turn to interviews and reflective practices.

c) Interviews and reflective practices

In a broad sense the recruitment workshops provided informal informant training before their commitment to being interviewed (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 98). Therefore, I began with a set of suggested questions which were included in the consent forms (Appendix 8), but interviewees were invited to extend or elaborate on their answers, which gave me insights into their perspectives and challenges (Hall 2012). The priority was to treat people as knowing, creative and knowledgeable individuals and to give them time to feel comfortable about talking with a stranger about themselves in an interview situation (Merrill and West 2009; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Barton and Hamilton 1998).

All interviews were undertaken in a reflective manner by examining research interactions in the context of wider social structures. During interviews, I often asked for participant clarification of my interpretations of what people said, so as to enable me to describe emerging and changing social practices that differed from my own, as suggested by other research work (Howatson-Jones 2011). I was careful about self-representation, so as not to damage the interview process, but I was willing to disclose reasonable personal details for ethical or strategic grounds (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 109). These data also added to theorizing beyond pedagogy to consider the potential processes for informal learning for early adult migrant writers (Barton and Hamilton 1998, Street 2001 cited in Baynham 2004: 287).

The processes explained above enabled me to share emerging themes and to refine my understanding in reflective practices with students, teachers and teacher managers. I now turn to the (auto)biographically informed case study interviews.

d) (Auto)biographical interviews

Interviews with case-study participants were a significant means for primary data collection but were also shared experiences that opened for discussion and clarification problems as they arose, to give more reflective meanings to interpretation of the data (Creswell 2007:142). As Richards (2003: 20-21) advocates, I worked with the case-study participants to understand the particular in terms of how they engaged with writing in their lives.

I decided to take an (auto)biographical approach for case study interviews to enable me to work with (rather than on) participants, which I believe offered transparency and was a

respectful way to encourage people to share their experiences (Howatson-Jones 2011). Interviews with case-study participants began with a general “warm up” question about writing and their lives. However, it would be true to say that there was no time for an in-depth life story, although participants’ experiences about learning to write led to the telling of stories which were important to them in the context of literacy (Barton and Hamilton 1998).

In an attempt to ensure that the volunteers were as willing as possible to talk freely, when I invited the four case-study participants to meet for face-to-face interviews I asked them to decide the date and time to fit in with their lives. However, in academic year two I also included one telephone interview with S1, S2 and S4, again on a date and at a time at their convenience (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). This was helpful for data collection towards the end of the study to reduce any incompatibility between participants’ life schedules and the dates that I was available.

Initially, interviews took place in a vacant college room or quiet space, but in the second academic year I also met S4 for interviews in a city centre café and S2 in a public library. I adopted a strategy whereby case-study participants were interviewed on their own territory or a place of their own choosing to allow them to organize the context in the way they wished (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 116). Indeed, interviews were flexible enough to allow participants to offer their own life events and interpretations, which often moved the interview in a number of different directions (Howatson-Jones 2011: 39). I expected to interview case-study participants several times to enable me to trace patterns over time which could be double-checked and clarified against previous accounts and other research material (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 106). This assisted me to collect more in-depth accounts of these migrants’ engagement with writing and literacy practices over time (Barton and Hamilton 1998: 65). Sometimes one-off interviews may barely scratch the surface, but a succession of several interviews led to deeper explorations of writing practices and insight into participants’ identity construction (Merrill and West 2009). Indeed, (auto)biographical methodological perspectives are not just about eliciting a life story from one person, but fragments of many lives are at the heart of all the stories, which reveals the human condition in new ways (Merrill and West 2009). In the next sub-section I discuss focus groups, as they provided a powerful tool for gathering wider and deeper insights from a cross-section of respondents.

4.4.4 Focus Groups

I used two focus groups to elicit the general perceptions of migrant students by asking two questions. In the first focus group I asked “What is writing?”, and in a second focus group I asked “What is literacy?”. These two questions were presented on different occasions and were

held at the end of classroom observations. The groups included all of the migrant students who were present on those occasions. The focus groups enabled me to ask these two specific questions, which arose from other data sources and for which I perceived I needed more in-depth interpretation. In brief, focus groups enabled data collection from multiple voices (Finlay 2002: 219). The two questions were posed to support interview and observation data.

A particular advantage of using focus groups in this research was their "empowering" qualities for giving voice to ethnic minorities in cross-cultural situations, when they become active group members (Kitzinger 1995: 299-302). This was especially helpful to collect deeper insights into grey areas of the research and to elicit fresh ideas from students who were not direct participants, which offered an alternative analytical perspective (Riessman 2008: 199). A major advantage of these focus groups was the ability to facilitate the expression of ideas and experiences that seemed to have been left underdeveloped in case-study interviews, and I was able to elicit other migrants' perspectives through group debate (Kitzinger 1995). For instance, the focus groups raised my awareness of how central SMS text messaging is for early engagement with writing, so that digital texts became significant aspects of data collection.

4.4.5 Digital texts

My flexible research design took data collection methods beyond writing as a print-based activity (for a wider vision of digital literacy see Baynham 2004: 288). I was initially in a dilemma about giving my personal mobile phone number to participants and I pondered on how I felt about this for some time. However, I realized that data collected through text messaging meant going beyond local situated literacies in order to extend my evolving good research relationships. In fact, SMS text messaging opened insights into the growing visions of education as connecting with all areas of life and thereby reduced a criticism that NLS methodology sometimes struggles to connect the local micro-context of what people do and global macro-contexts of policy and beyond (Baynham 2004). I kept an SMS text messaging log of communications (Appendix 3). This log became a focal point for tracking data collection with participants during their social lives outside college and also enabled me to observe how their confidence to write text messages changed over time.

4.4.6 Artefacts

I collected artefacts in the form of students' handwritten texts and study materials such as textbook exercises and lesson hand-outs. I also downloaded a practice examination paper that was used as the basis of one lesson. I took copies of policy documents relating to the ESOL setting, such as ILPs, the student handbook and college papers from meetings that I attended. The context of this study was organized around social activity that included the moving around

of objects and the creation of material sources, from which the social world and meanings were made, especially in the classroom (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Thus artefacts provided extracts for inclusion in the data chapters and were also analysed as part of the interpretive process. In the next section I turn to practical and ethical concerns.

4.5 Practical and ethical concerns

4.5.1 Ethical issues

It was important to discuss ethical issues with prospective participants early so as to reduce surprises throughout the study, over which I might have little control (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). As explained in Sub-Section 4.3.2 above, recruitment workshops set the scene for the research agenda and therefore, when it came to arranging interviews, with migrants, teachers and teacher managers, all participants were aware of the topic that was of interest to me and the kind of questions that would be asked. The recruitment workshops, I believe, enabled me to take an ethical and proactive stance “concerning what is just and right in a research relationship” (Merrill and West 2009: 168). The recruitment workshops (see Sub-Section 4.3.2) introduced the research purpose, agreed methods for data collection and presented researcher and participant research roles and the kinds of questions that could arise in interviews. I discuss now turn to potential harm, protecting the privacy of participants and leaving the study.

a) Potential harm

I considered potential harm that might result from the relationships with known and new participants. This related to what experiences and observations I decided to include in the study and to write about, especially with respect to those I felt uncomfortable with, or if participants feared that I might expose their views to college management or outside bodies (Creswell 2007). Such situations might cause stress and anxiety to all concerned and need careful management to maintain harmony.

When I was making hand-written notes during interviews I frequently checked with participants that note-taking was acceptable. I read back what I had written in my notebook at the end of the interview for on-the-spot participant comment or clarification. Sometimes during the interviews I was asked not to write down what was said, so I would put down my pen and listen, but I wrote field-notes about these situations as soon as possible after the interview. Ultimately, there was a powerlessness, which any researcher has to deal with, when observing participants’ life struggles, as a migrant, as a local citizen or as a wage earner, who might be affected by the state and macro-economic forces (Heath 1993: 261). There were times when strong emotions emerged and this added to the participatory nature of my fieldwork, as I

empathized with participants' expressions of their feelings (Denzin 1997: 121). During interviews, I checked once again that the participant wished to continue with the interview and whether further recording was still acceptable. For example, during an hour-long interview, one participant was explaining the circumstances surrounding his war-torn country. After turning off the digital audio recorder, I checked again that the participant agreed to my use of the interview data.

I remained acutely aware that the teachers and teacher managers were employees of this college and as a visiting teacher I was enveloped into the research setting as a "usual" member of staff. Therefore, I was conscious of the fine balance between my storytelling and ideology, and the need to respect teaching policies and everyday practices. This meant that I observed bureaucratic constraints or difficulties experienced by the people involved in the setting, but concentrated on recording the realities that enabled me to answer the research questions.

Even though participants sometimes asked me not to use an audio-recorder or to turn it off at points in the conversation, fortunately none of the actual completed audio-recorded conversations were withdrawn after interviews or at any later date. In this way, I could fulfil the aims of the research to obtain data and also to some extent change the balance of power surrounding interviews from the researcher to the researched, who in interviews should be the "powerful ones" (Roberts 2006b: 21).

b) Protecting the privacy of participants

Anonymity and confidentiality were high priorities, so that they were a point of discussion in recruitment workshops, where the teacher and I ensured, as far as possible, that prospective migrant participants understood what being involved in this research project meant. All prospective participants were encouraged to take the ethics consent forms home to discuss with friends, family or peers in other English classes. I considered that discussions with different people about the research project were necessary so that they would fully understand participation, research procedures and the fact that the final thesis (effectively a book) would be widely read by other students and educational departments and that sections of the thesis might be published for the public to read.

I made every effort to protect the privacy of case studies and all informants by using anonymous identifiers instead of the names of people. Wherever possible, I have referred to geographical regions, rather than naming towns or specific countries. When working through my field-notes and other documentation, I used a black permanent marker pen to conceal

identities or anything that might be sensitive or cause emotional distress. I noted individual preferences for anonymity throughout the study (Spradley 1980).

c) Leaving the study

I was aware that the collaborative nature of data collection meant building close friendly relationships, but I discouraged participants from becoming dependent. This was achieved to some extent through the flexibility of the research, which meant I was able to work around participants' lives and college schedules. Even when data collection activities were coming to an end, there was a natural tailing-off of contact with participants, which meant that it would be possible for me to go back and clarify any outstanding issues. One case-study participant, S3, left the study in November 2011, sending me an SMS text message:

'I'm sorry Ive a lot of responsibilities I'm not longer interested in meeting you'.

TM.11/11 received from S3

The ethical responsibilities moved with me through the research, and I tried to make judgements as I went along, as shown here. I was privileged for this man to have shared his experiences with me and when he was leaving the research "thank you" somehow didn't seem enough but I replied:

'Thank you for what you have done up to now.....I respect your decision and I will not contact you again. If you would like to read what I write, please let me know your new address, or phone me next year. Thank you for sharing your life for writing with me.,

TM.11/11 reply to S3

I am satisfied that, to the best of my knowledge, the relationships throughout the study grew out of a healthy interest in the research, were not dependent and continued in a way that gave participants agency to choose their level of involvement, to make decisions about methods to meet their needs and to tell me when they wanted to make changes or to leave the study.

4.5.2 Reflexion and "reflexivity"

In the literature, the term "reflexivity" is used to stress the extent to which researchers should keep in mind, when reflecting, an awareness that their own life histories may have an impact on the research in collaboration with others, on what is observed and the way in which meanings emerge from the events that are written about in real (historical) contexts (Blommaert

and Jie 2010: 66). The following is a definition which I drew on throughout this research by considering that:

“The concept of reflexivity acknowledges that the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations, including the values and interests that these locations confer upon them. What this represents is a rejection of the idea that social research is, or can be, carried out in some autonomous realm that is insulated from the wider society and from the biography of the researcher, in such a way that its findings can be unaffected by social processes and personal characteristics. Also, it is emphasised that the production of knowledge by researchers has consequences. At the very least, the publication of research findings can shape the climate in which political and practical decisions are made, and it may even directly stimulate particular sorts of action. In fact, it may change the character of the situations that were studied.’

(Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 15)

Reflection enhanced by this sort of awareness was for me a way of including a process of on-going thinking and questioning of my own beliefs and values to ensure that my interpretations did not say more about me than other people involved in the research project (Richards 2003: 232). In this way, the knowledge I was creating from the raw data was recycled and remoulded through reflections shared with other teachers and with students in the setting so as to minimize distortion and to reduce the bias of my own views and of political influences, and even to guard against taking the most convenient interpretation (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). I was nevertheless open to spontaneous opportunities for data collection.

a) Spontaneity

Opening up to spontaneous occurrences enriched data collection. For example, on one occasion, towards the end of a teacher interview, the door opened and another teacher apologized for interrupting. However, I invited her in, and rich in-depth reflective discussions followed. I quickly asked if I could record our conversation and, with their approval, I turned on my digital recorder. Such improvisation was possible because the standard items that I carried, a digital means of recording, a field-note book and a pen, prepared me for the unexpected.

b) Reactivity

Alongside “reflexivity”, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) state that “reactivity”, or the influence of the researcher on the individuals in the study, is a possible further threat to the validity of qualitative research. They also believe that eliminating this researcher influence is impossible.

As an on-going part of the research, I often re-iterated written notes to participants, sought agreement that data was a fair record of events, re-confirmed participants' permission about using recordings and wrote specific notes of individual requests. I was also acutely aware that individual observations could not be assumed as typical of what happens in the setting, for several reasons:

“...that our own behaviour affects what we are studying, and that this will lead us to misunderstand what normally happens in the setting. This is especially likely if we only spend a relatively small amount of time there. But it is also important to remember that what goes on in any situation changes over time. Some of these changes are cyclical, in shorter- and/or longer-term patterns’
(Hammersley 2006: 5).

I found my procedures for data collection helped me to keep an open mind. This reduced the possibility of attempting to “take sides” that Heath (1993: 261) cautions against, especially when in the middle of multiple and conflicting roles and values that could lead to inappropriate descriptions of what people do not do, which suggests that there is something that they should be doing. In addition, subjectivity was reduced by reflexivity which ran as a thread through the raw data.

4.5.3 Subjectivity

As explained above, reflexivity awareness helped me to minimize the effects of researcher subjectivity by continually examining data to identify any points where my views might come forward, rather than the views of participants. In addition, subjectivity was reduced by the systematic analysis of data to identify statements on which claims might be made in a factual way. Besides this, I checked for any unclear points that might say more about my values and which needed counter-checking against participants' perceptions to ensure accuracy (Blommaert and Jie 2010: 67). Interpretive research, by definition, entails interpretation in a disciplined, framed and structured way, but that does not mean that it is a mechanical process (Barwell 2003). The primary goal is to produce knowledge and minimize any possible distortion of my interpretations that might arise from political or practical interests (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Furthermore, qualitative analysis that identifies minority opinions and examples that do not fit into the overall research theory assists in overcoming subjectivity (Kitzinger 1995).

This kind of transparency may reduce problems with subjectivity and can be achieved in academic writing. As Holliday (2007: 21) points out, the writer does not need to remain invisible, but may explain oneself and argue in the first person, “I”. In this sense, the research

becomes compatible with a flexible ecological methodology (van Lier 1997: 783). Therefore, writing becomes a particularly powerful aspect of the research study.

4.6 The research material: preparation and analysis

In this section, I explain the treatment of research material, audio-recorded data, data storage, the word processing of transcriptions and observation field-notes, and other aspects. Analysis of the research material was, however, an on-going inductive process.

a) An inductive process

Analysing the data collected in the field was a continuous inductive process throughout the study, which involved continually organizing and refining themes for meaning (Merriam 2002). As explained above, in my field notebook I wrote about striking in situ aspects of observations from talk around texts in literacy events and practices and in identity construction for on-going analysis. This involves a way of thinking to examine different aspects of data and their relationships in a search for patterns to enable cultural behaviour, artefacts and knowledge to be described (Spradley 1980: 85). This process opened possibilities for interpretations to be made.

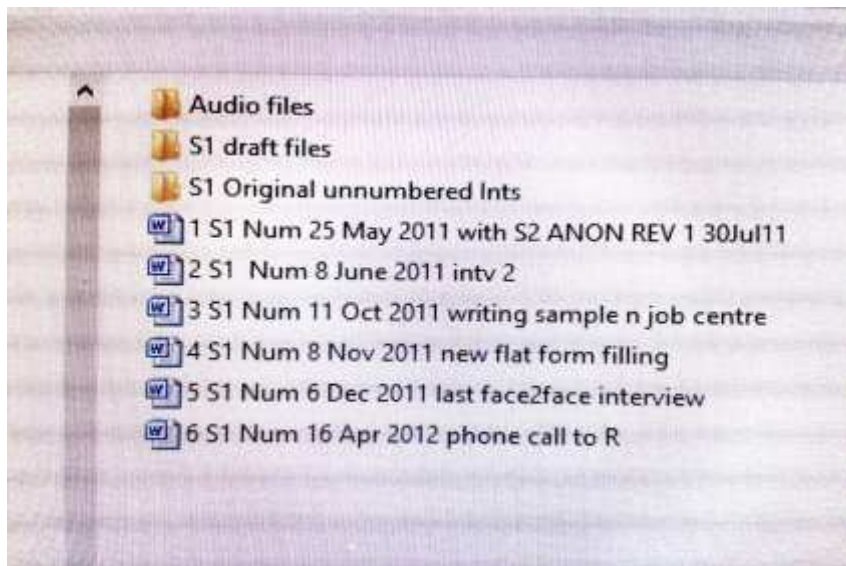
b) Interpretations

There are two legitimate and complementary ways to use the accounts given by participants. These may either be taken as telling us factually about the phenomena to which they refer or be analysed in terms of the perspectives they imply, the discursive strategies they employ, and even the psycho-social dynamics they suggest (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 97). What people say may lead to interpretations about their perspectives or about the cultures or sub-cultures to which they belong, shaped by the contexts in which they occur. Therefore, by comparing and contrasting the data collected by different methods, as explained in Sub-Section 4.4.2.(a), I was able to identify recurring regularities which became themes for interpretation, whilst at the same time remaining open to new insights being illuminated in the data (Creswell 2007). In the next sub-section I turn to the treatment of audio-recordings and data storage which formed the initial stages of preparing the research material for in-depth interpretation.

4.6.1 Audio-recordings and data storage

A digital recorder was used to collect interview and classroom data. As soon as possible after data collection, I transferred digital audio recordings to a personal computer (PC) for labelling and secure storage. I then made back-up copies of all recordings from my PC to a USB storage stick.

Digital audio recordings were stored and organized in PC folders by participant descriptor, for example 'S1'. Each main folder contained sub-folders of digital recordings, previous drafts and the most up-to-date word processed transcriptions. The following is an example relating to S1:



Extract of Data storage files in respect of S1

4.6.2 Transcriptions and observation field-notes

When digital audio recordings had been stored, I listened to and transcribed all recordings, which was an extremely time consuming procedure. I then cross-referenced transcriptions with other research material, observation field-notes and artefacts. I believed that transcribing everything and making cross-checks was necessary for four specific reasons.

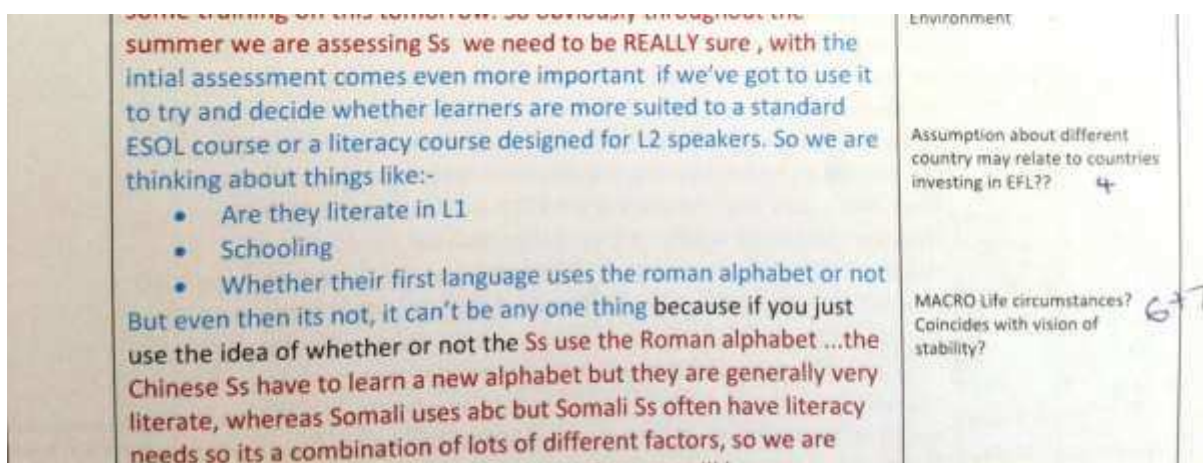
1. Interviews provided the main source of data collection from which narrative stories about migrants' engagement in writing were anticipated to develop over time.
2. Complete transcriptions enabled more accurate links to be made across all data sources over the course of the study.
3. Digital audio recording durations varied from approximately five to seventy minutes, and I considered that all data collected could include valuable contributions.
4. Even though student participants had chosen to engage in English during interviews, their linguistic competence and resources varied, and ease of recall for coherence was sometimes challenged.

Following these considerations, the data transcriptions and field notes were colour coded to enable themes to be pinpointed.

4.6.3 Colour coding and annotation

As I read through the whole data set, audio transcripts and field notes, I made annotations by highlighting text, using colour coding and capital letters as shown in the following two examples of a first reading. In fact, this procedure began in the earliest stages of the research (see Sub-Section 4.4.2), which helped me to cross-reference themes later:

- Blue – problems and difficulties
- Pink – writing
- Green – identity



Extract of final coding of teachers' audio transcriptions in preparation for interpretation

I merged all audio-recorded transcriptions into one word processor file: case studies, teachers', teacher managers' and other participants' interviews and focus group transcriptions. I included audio-recording time markers at points in the transcriptions that I might be listening to again when selecting episodes for deeper analysis and cross-checking with other data later, as shown in the second example below.

293.	R: Do you use a computer outside college.
294.	S1: No I don't know how to use a computer. (CANNOT USE PC OUTSIDE)
295.	R: Do you use the computer in college?
296.	S1 Yeah once a week. (IN COLLEGE USES PC)
(S1.1.25.5.11)	

Extract of cross checking

As I went through all of the research material repeatedly, I reflected on the following three points:

- a) How categories/themes changed over time.
- b) How recurrences become poignant and led to themes.
- c) What influence or activity led to themes and particular practices.

These points led me to deeper analysis of interview episodes, to which I now turn.

4.6.4 Deeper analysis of interview episodes

In order to foreground case-study participants' and teachers' narrative statements from their stories or anecdotes, I have excluded my supportive interventions and clarification requests (Blommaert 2001b: 428). I demonstrate why I made this decision by taking an extract from S4 interview one. In the column headed 'Extract 1' my interventions and clarification requests are included, but they are excluded in 'Extract 2':

Line number	Extract 1 Includes researcher interventions and clarification requests	Extract 2 excludes researcher interventions and clarification requests
46.	R: so you never worked in your country [name]?	
47.	S4: No.	No.
48.	R: OK.	
49.	S4: We have shop err :: parts in the car :: in [home country]. Err parts, the car	We have shop err :: parts in the car :: in [home country]. Err parts, the car
50.	R: Car parts?	
51.	S4: Yeah, car parts.	Yeah, car parts.
52.	R: In a factory?	
53.	S4: No in shop!	No in shop!
54.	R: Oh, in a shop?	
55.	S4: We buy parts and bring it shop and supply here and people is buy here is mmm :: mechanic, you know mechanic?	We buy parts and bring it shop and supply here and people is buy here is mmm :: mechanic, you know mechanic?
56.	R: Yes.	
57.	S4: Market.	S4: Market.

Extract S4 .1.22.6.11

In the context of engagement with writing in a literacy event, Extract One indicates that I begin the episode of talk in the interview with a clarification request and continue with several more as the episode continues. However, Extract Two shows S4's statements only. Here, despite the "broken" English, in line 49, S4 spontaneously introduces an insight into an historical family context in his home country that presents the "main statement". S4 then elaborates in line 53 to reveal the point of his statement in line 55. In order to make his point clear, he uses the particle "and" as a cohesive marker (shown in italics).

I believe that this demonstrates that "...‘stories’ told in ‘simple’ language are not necessarily ‘simple’ stories." (Blommaert 2001b: 428). Therefore, the techniques explained here offered me a solution for analysing "bottom-up" episodes of narrative from migrants' in-depth interviews, teachers' and other participants' stories that were told and collected over time.

This meant that my analysis of the data prioritized narrative accounts, descriptions of the roles that participants played and the practices they enacted, to enable me to show and interpret their processes of negotiation (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 235). My procedure for identifying participants processes were part of my intellectual struggle with the enormous amount of raw data from which I draw interpretations (Bassey 1999). Hence, taking a thematic approach and focusing on participant accounts enabled the data to be holistically re-arranged under headings which emerged from insights into the hidden and silent structures of narratives that "let the data speak for itself" (Holliday 2007: 30). The emerging themes gave a structure to the data chapters which I will now explain.

4.7 The structuring of the data chapters

At all times as I worked through the research material, I kept strongly in mind the need to try to understand the lives of the four migrant case study participants as these emerged from their stories about their lived experiences. I was also conscious that teachers' and teacher managers' perceptions arose from their professional and personal experiences as they reflected on policy, curricula and pedagogy in relation to their migrant students' early writing. Throughout my involvement with all participants I considered my influence on data collection. However, my reflexive collaboration led to the emergence of several themes from the research material, to which I now turn. They were:

1. Conceptualizing teachers' and teacher managers' perceptions of migrants' engagement with social practices for writing and writing pedagogy showing how opportunities for writing occurred and progressed in lessons.
2. Interpreting the possibilities for (re)conceptualizing the role of teachers and teacher managers as intermediaries for migrants' engagement with writing and identity construction.
3. Conceptualizing migrants' learning history and early engagement with writing in various contexts, in social practices, in different languages and with intermediaries or teachers.
4. Conceptualizing migrants' processes for negotiating engagement with writing and identity construction to reveal their complex social practices inside and outside the classroom in different contexts.

Chapter 5 concerns my interpretation of the research material from inside this college setting, to show how top-down structures influenced teachers' perceptions about migrants and writing pedagogy. This chapter also reveals the processes of migrants' negotiation of early engagement with writing and literacy practices to show objects of reification, which influenced the behaviour of teachers and migrants in the setting.

In Chapter 6, I grouped together the themes that arose as I interpreted the research material relating to the four volunteer case-study migrants and other migrant informants. I begin by presenting what early engagement with writing meant for the four case studies in their lives. The purpose of this is to show similarities and differences relating to their education and life histories and how they engage with writing as social practices inside and outside a college setting in England. I then show these migrant participants' and other migrant informants processes for engagement with early writing and identity construction, which includes their successes and struggles with teachers and teacher managers, with intermediaries, and with other people in different contexts.

Finally, the conclusions, in Chapter 7, discuss the findings from the foregoing two data chapters to reveal the study's implications and possibilities for future research.

This structuring of the data chapters enabled contrasts between data sets to show similarities and differences that reflect the diverse perceptions and experiences of the participants. However, I recognize that there is inevitably some overlap between data in different chapters and sections.

Chapter 5: Teachers' Perceptions and College Influences on Migrants' Engagement with Writing: Literacy, Skills and Digital Texts

5.1 Introduction

The data set presented in Chapter 5 focuses on this college setting and shows teachers' and teacher managers' perceptions of migrants' engagement with writing and demonstrates how migrants' opportunities for writing occurred and developed in the classroom, as shown below:

Following this introduction, Section 5.2 presents data that foregrounds teacher managers' and teachers' perspectives of the influences of "top-down" policy on pedagogy and migrants engagement with writing in a college context.

Section 5.3 incorporates data showing teacher managers', teachers' and migrants' conceptualization of literacy in this setting.

Section 5.4 then turns to pedagogy and teachers' perceptions about writing, "literacy issues" and migrants' engagement with writing.

Section 5.5 presents data that demonstrates how writing opportunities occurred for migrants in the setting and were developed during lessons or as homework.

Finally, Section 5.6 turns to practitioner perceptions of migrants' outside lives for engagement with writing, followed by Section 5.7 chapter conclusions.

In the next section I present data that shows how teachers' perceptions about writing pedagogy and literacy in this setting seemed to be shaped by the college response to policy changes and official classroom observation feedback.

5.2 Eclipsed "bottom-up" perspectives; "top-down" influences

In this section I present data showing teachers and teacher managers perceptions relating to the challenges arising from policy, Government funding and students' ability to pass writing examinations in this setting.

5.2.1 Writing: “... a big risk”?

As explained in Chapter 4, data collection in this college setting appeared to be influenced by anticipated policy changes. This was because data collection coincided with a period of proposals in England relating to ESOL funding from September 2013 and new qualifications and funding from 2014 (Kings and Casey 2013). Another significant influence of Government policy changes (as shown in Chapter 4) was the interpretation in the setting of the anticipated impact of those “top-down” influences on migrants’ ability to enrol on ESOL courses, as Tm explained:

“a lot of students are not going to be accepted because of their benefit status, only active benefits are going to get remission. So if you are an ESOL learner you need to be in receipt of Job Seeker’s allowance or ... basically looking for work, ... however, if they [students] study a literacy course it is free ... there are certainly learners in this group who have ESOL needs but literacy needs [as well] so it may be appropriate to put them on a ‘literacy for ESOL qualification’ and they would have literacy exams” “..if ESOL is not being funded then ... it is just trying to find out ways within the funding system that we can still offer education to the learners but in a meaningful way.”

(Tm int 1.265, 7, 9/8.6.11)

In this extract, external pressures relating to migrants’ Job Seeker’s allowances forced this college to reconsider enrolment and people’s ESOL “needs” that appeared to impact on college conventions and thus led to consideration for alternative possibilities such as “literacy for ESOL”, as Tm mentions above. The research material revealed that, in turn, there were implications for teachers and classroom pedagogy that raised particular discourses and from which particular ‘labels’ emerged.

In the next sub-section I present data that showed the use of labels for examinations for funding purposes, the effects of official classroom observations on pedagogy, and teachers’ perceptions about pedagogy, and policy.

5.2.2 Labels: “full award”, “achievement”, “satisfactory” and “literacy”

In this sub-section the data showed some frequently used labels and jargon that surrounded writing and were terms often used in the setting. The research material revealed that labels such as a “full award”, “achievement”, “satisfactory” and “literacy” were part of professional discourse and were talked about in this college setting in relation to pedagogy and migrants’ engagement with writing.

This became evident when I interviewed a teacher manager to gain an organizational perspective at the beginning of the research. The mention of “changes” prompted the response “it’s a nightmare, it’s all about funding” (Tm int1.269/8.6.11). Moreover, the data indicated that professional college targets were tied to examination success, which appeared to be labelled as a “full award” or as an “achievement” by teaching managers. This was explained by Tm; [the college] “get an ‘achievement’ for a course if they [students] pass speaking and listening” [examinations] (Tm. Int1/8/6/11). In fact, teachers generally seemed aware of this factor as they explained their views: “of course they [college] want them [students] to pass all of the skills, which many of them [students] do, but the emphasis is at least for them to pass the speaking because the college gets funding” (T1.Int1.13-15/18.5.11). “For the first examination [speaking] there is pressure for them [students] to pass” (T4. Int1.682/8.11.11). “If students want to go for the ‘full award’, which includes reading and writing, there is a big risk that if they [students] pass speaking and listening but fail to pass reading and writing then the college cannot claim funding” (T2. Int 2.536/7.12.11).

This meant, as data revealed, and as Tm suggested, that [the college] “put an emphasis on speaking because it is easier to get learners through and harder for them [students] to pass reading and writing” (Tm int1.272/8.6.11). I thus came to believe that there was probably a frequent pedagogical focus emphasizing speaking over writing, which was one implication for teaching to meet college needs for “achievement” for funding purposes. In the classroom however, data showed that the curriculum was also influenced by official classroom observations that impacted on teachers’ and migrants’ engagement with writing in particular ways and to which I now turn.

5.2.3 Classroom observations: “today you are just going to learn new words”

I will now present data extracts from the research setting that followed an OFSTED inspection. These data revealed factors that teachers seemed to perceive could have a negative impact on migrants’ engagement with writing. In fact, the data revealed several teachers’ despondent recollections about classroom observation feedback: “OFSTED did not look at the teaching and ask the students how they felt; we were judged on paperwork which ... is not important to the teaching ... for example with me, I should have written one or two more objectives on the board which is not important in my opinion ...” (T1 int 1/18.5.11). “Objectives are useful, but when you are marked down it is not productive” (T3 telint 2/26.11.12).

From T1's and T3's accounts, my interpretation was that the observer's emphasis on paperwork led to a "top-down"² perspective of classroom practices. The records that had to be kept included the ILPs that were discussed in Chapter 2, but also detailed lesson plans for every class, with aims and objectives that had to be overtly linked to individual student's learning targets appearing in their ILPs, and that were also publicly announced by being written on the board. The teachers' accounts also seemed to imply that the observation focused on the practitioner's presentation, or "delivery", of the curriculum to correspond with written objectives, rather than teacher's perspectives at that time. In addition, T3 drew attention to a perceived further drawback:

"...to check that there was learning in the classroom one OFSTED inspector asked a student 'Do you understand what slippers are? What are they?' The student didn't know such a random question when asked to explain ... the OFSTED inspector didn't consider the low-level learner needs to be prepared to answer a question."

(T3 telint 2/26.11.12)

Here T3 might be suggesting that the observer attempted to elicit a "bottom-up" perspective from a student. However, I believe that T3 perceived that the observer's request was inappropriate and possibly caught the student off guard at that time. The research material also showed that observation feedback, and together with other related labels and jargon generated particular reactions from teachers.

a) Labels: "I am satisfactory"

Assigning labels and acronyms, such as "satisfactory" and "SMART targets" (ILPs should contain SMART – "specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound" –targets <http://www.nrdc.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=539andArticleID=462> accessed 29.08.14), seemed to generate particular perceptions, as teachers recounted:

"I want to become a better teacher, not to say 'I am satisfactory', why and what to improve on ... it's not useful to give a sticker and that's it! It is about immediate impact rather than depth. ... What do inspectors think? You need to entertain the students or they get bored? ... but have they [students] learnt anything? Many teachers may be entertainers especially at the lower level but there has to be balance"

(T3 telint/26.11.12)

In addition, "the people from OFSTED set SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely) targets; everyone comes up [students] 'What is a SMART target?' but

²"Top-down" refers to perspectives that are generated at the top of a hierarchy and disseminated downward for those below to adopt.

setting targets, I don't agree with either" (T1 int 1/18.5.11). Another teacher said; "My students are doing very well. I've had students going up to Entry Two, these guys have improved so much, so I am doing something right and they are doing something right and I just get marked on one observation." (T3 Int 1.638/16.6.11).

These data suggested that the assigning by observers of labels such as "satisfactory" to describe a teachers' performance following a classroom observation was unproductive and demotivating for T3. In addition, T3 seemed to perceive that an observer desired her to "entertain" migrants who were early-stage English learners, and that was a measure of her performance. I interpreted T3's account to mean by "entertaining" students that she stood at the front of the classroom, as in a formal classroom layout, where the teacher may orchestrate the lesson. Indeed, T3 also conveyed to me the impression that she felt she had been given little opportunity to explain her deeper pedagogical approaches to the observer in respect of that lesson. In addition, it seemed to me that T1 saw the setting of targets, and particularly the use of the acronym "SMART", as of limited value to her or to students. In fact, the setting and meeting of targets were perceived by teachers as having particular impacts on migrant students, to which I now turn.

b) Pedagogy: "in theory everything ... [is] fine"

It therefore seemed possible from the foregoing that "SMART targets", as T1 explained, created little clear guidance. In fact, T1 clearly stated how she perceived that teaching was affected by targets which had a negative impact on migrants' engagement with writing:

"in theory everything they [OFSTED] say are fine but it doesn't apply, absolutely not in practice! Because you are limiting the students, for example, one student might keep forgetting the third person 'S', but there are many other little things to write them all down; this, this, this, ... you have to connect their target into the lesson ... it does not matter what lesson I do, when they do the writing I have to make sure the third person 'S' is correct ... but that isn't the only thing in writing I have to do ... it is the [need to follow the] policy ... [but beforehand] ... the results were really good, so why change it? That's what I don't understand. Every year without fail it changes and why?"

(T1 int 1.5-10/18.5.11)

Here T1's account seemed to indicate that the flow of a lesson might be interrupted by one aspect of target setting. I gained the impression that this perhaps slowed down a lesson and even led to narrowing the teacher's possibilities for including migrants' spontaneous interruptions. In the following comment, T1 seemed to perceive that frequent changes were unproductive for pedagogy and pondered more deeply on classroom observations:

“... five years it is getting worse every year. The paperwork! Because of OFSTED the examiners ... when they [OFSTED] came to inspect us. There is the lesson plan ... which very likely the inspectors never ... never taught ESOL, or even if they did it was probably forty years ago, so they are totally out of touch. The theory is good but you can't put it into practice without something giving way”
(T1 int4.104-6/15.11.11)

As in T1's comments expressed here, other reflective interviews with practitioners revealed negative repercussions of observation feedback which seemed possibly de-motivating for them. I reached the conclusion that teachers were torn between complying with what was expected of them, on the one hand, and using what they felt were common-sense pedagogical practices, on the other. In addition, as the research continued, I noticed that teachers appeared busier with, and talked more about, paperwork such as ILPs in the corridors and when we met in the photocopy room. The accounts of T3 and T1, who were prepared to comment in interviews, I believe, suggest that observations left teachers to an appreciable extent burdened by critiques and guidance about record keeping, such as ILPs and assessment, or the criteria for meeting targets. This, I thought, suggested negative impacts on teaching and learning, and specifically for migrants' engagement in writing as T1 explained:

“Sometimes I do not want the aims on the board because you are just limiting the students. OK, today you are just going to learn new words, prepositions but there are many things”
(T1 int 1/18.5.11).

“... because it takes a long time to develop writing so the other skills will suffer, but if my job is in jeopardy then, yes, I will do the paperwork, but my teaching will suffer ... you can't have both. If they [college] want perfect paperwork every time then they [college] will have poor exam results.”
(T1.int 5.195/16.11.11)

I believe that these data reveal how aspects of policy led to underlying repercussions that related to the nature of setting objectives and targets for the pedagogy involved in teaching migrants writing. This was because, as the data indicated and as T1 recounts in the above extract, target setting seemed often to lead writing pedagogy to focus primarily on discrete items, such as new words or prepositions. In contrast, teachers expressed beliefs that writing took a long time for migrants to learn, so that college conventions for working towards the targets agreed with students in ILP interviews could sometimes have negative impacts on migrants' engagement with writing. The negative impact could relate to the time available for teachers to teach writing, but also to the fact that ILP targets might lead to a pedagogy narrowly focused on prescriptive technical skills for writing.

5.2.4 Section summary

It seemed from these data that the influences of “top-down” policy on “bottom-up” pedagogy led to teachers and teacher managers’ particular perceptions. As explained above, the teaching and learning of writing appeared to be perceived as “risky” in this setting. I gained the impression from these data that this college showed less confidence in migrant students’ ability to pass writing examinations, and sometimes the negotiation of ILP targets between teachers and migrants could create mismatches in expectations. College conventions required teachers to take time to complete ILPs and other paperwork and teachers perceived that they had less room to focus on lessons and felt that official observations focused on SMART targets, which excluded migrants’ spontaneous engagement with writing and outside experiences. This college seemed to encourage teachers to focus on migrants’ speaking skills so as to enable them to pass examinations and thus gain funding for “achievement”. There hence may be a mismatch between the requirements of “top-down” policy for funding purposes and the need to meet official observation criteria, which may encourage teachers to focus on skills to meet targets. Additional complexity was revealed in data concerning writing when the meaning of literacy were added.

5.3 Writing: “what is literacy?”

An overview of opinions expressed in the first section left the impression that in this setting, the conceptualization of pedagogy relating to migrants’ engagement with writing was affected by a focus on four individual and separate skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. This meant that writing seemed to be perceived as separate from speaking and listening, although possibly connected with reading, rather than as being an integral and combined aspect of literacy as social practices. However, as Tm explained, the deeper impact of literacy was recognized: “... tomorrow afternoon in our [teachers’] meeting session about ... identifying if they [people] have literacy needs ... What is literacy? How do you [teachers] know which learners have a literacy need? ... the different types of students we are going to have next year and that staff are aware before we go into the process ... we are not going to have ‘one size fits all’ ESOL next year ...” (Tm int 2.288-300/28.6.11).

The question suggested here, “what is literacy?” and the idea of “identifying if they [people] have literacy needs” seemed to indicate to me that this college were taking up the OFSTED comments and college policy considerations (as explained in the introduction) to propose a possible alternative curriculum for students who might not qualify for free ESOL

course enrolment. This was an aspect of the teachers' professional development meetings, to which I now turn.

5.3.1 Identifying literacy needs: “a checklist or guidance note for staff to work with”

There seemed to be frequent professional development meetings in this college and as a visiting tutor I was invited to attend sometimes along with other staff. The purpose of this particular meeting, as shown in this data set, was to establish “a checklist or guidance note for staff to work with” (Tm int 2.297/28.6.11). The agenda of the first half of the meeting was set by a paper entitled “Identifying Literacy Needs” (Appendix 7). The following field note related to my impression of the proceedings and the teachers' perceptions about literacy:

“As I read the criteria (Identifying Literacy Needs – see Appendix 7), my thoughts fell upon the testable, technical aspects of writing and the possible extent to which migrants' previous language or educational experiences could be similar or different to standard expectations, rather than literacy as social practice ... Teachers debated fiercely in small groups, one teacher suggested that ‘it depends on students' speaking’ and another asked for a ‘definition of literacy’ only to be drawn back to the criteria with the explanation (by presenters) that ‘there was no specific definition of literacy for the purpose of the meeting’. Finally the session was closed, but teachers continued their noisy debate and were slow to move from the room as we left.”
(FNB2.42/29.6.11)

I was bemused by how “criteria” to identify literacy needs seemed to overshadow an opportunity for this college to take up teachers' possible eagerness to explore the wider definition of literacy and its contribution to writing pedagogy. It became clear to me that the main purpose of this meeting was to disseminate college proposals rather than to open discussion with teachers about their perceptions of writing pedagogy and the meaning of literacy. This, I thought, was implied by Tm's comment the following day; “teachers were not listening, they were talking between themselves and not paying attention to the criteria” (Tm.FNB2.39/30.6.11). It was revealing, I thought, how Tm seemed averse from exploring teachers' possible concerns and perceptions about writing pedagogy and literacy from the classroom perspective on that occasion. I gained an impression that staff training might be more concerned with informing than with encouraging development.

5.3.2 “Well, training: we know what we should not do!”

Training seemed to be an integral part of college teaching life and was included in weekly staff meetings. The meetings covered policy and training liaison, but were also social gatherings, although they could have a serious message, as shown in the following field note:

“the atmosphere appeared to be a relaxed time for exchange of information and

an opportunity to catch up with colleagues. Nevertheless, the training sessions also seemed quite formal. The sessions were held in a classroom at the usual language annex and teachers sat around tables that were organized in a half circle facing the whiteboard, where a senior teacher or presenter stood. Even though there was some discussion, teachers seemed to listen and follow the instructions or procedures laid down by the presenter and the agenda for the session.”

(FNB3.9/13.07.11)

I noticed how different the teachers’ response was in this field-note from that in the training session in Sub-Section 5.3.1 above, which was held in the main college building. It seemed to me that college management had perhaps been complacent that teachers would quietly engage with training session agendas. However, managers seemed to be taken off guard and were possibly surprised by how noisily teachers wished to debate the meaning of literacy at that particular meeting. In fact, T1 was surprisingly forthright when she said in a later interview: “well, training: we know what we should not do!”. She then clarified by saying “it is how the college are over the top with training ... it is a minus for the students because they [college] take away the time we can be looking at our paperwork. I don’t see any plus points, anywhere ... they just give us information! The thing is they [college] keep saying ‘the students come first’ [but] ... they told us ‘finish your classes earlier’ so that we could go to [another campus], so how is that putting students’ first?” (T1 int5.229/16.11.13). T3 also said that “as long as you cover the lessons they [college] don’t care about anything else and we [teachers] got together last year and did a petition and wrote all the things we were unhappy about ... [it was] just swept under the carpet”. (T3.int1.644/16.6.11).

For these reasons, it struck me that the teachers’ apparent desire to define literacy, as they debated the checklist to identify literacy needs in Sub-Section 5.3.1 above, was possibly a surprise to Tm. My interpretation was that teachers had their own particular opinions about writing and literacy that they had hitherto been unable to express or reflect on openly.

I believe that this was revealed in teachers’ response to email interview questions asking for feedback relating to their participation in this research.

One teacher wrote: “Great! Good to get feedback and somebody to talk to and brain storm”. Another suggested that “it helped to pay more attention and look into further details of why we are doing writing ... that will improve the quality of your lessons”. Another teacher described the research encounter as being: “a two-way talk as teachers, not meetings where there is no chance to talk as a teacher and collaborate about problems with students: reflecting on and identifying the needs of low level learners’ writing. Often there is no chance to explore ideas – you are just told you are not doing this right or that right – rather than this is good/suitable may be do this or this, xyz ... I want to become a better teacher ...” (Exit int.26.11.12).

These teachers' comments, I believe, suggest that they welcomed the opportunity to reflect on writing pedagogy and to explore students' needs with other practitioners. They also indicate to me a desire on the part of these teachers to build theories from a bottom-up perspective. I thought that this was evident when the proposed introduction of "a checklist for identifying literacy needs", for example, seemed to challenge practitioners' beliefs and college assumptions about migrants who were learning to write. I interpreted this from the considerable response from teachers when they were confronted with concepts that seemed to run counter to their knowledge and beliefs.

My interpretation of these data was that, despite the reported "social turn" for ESOL pedagogy, practitioners were perhaps unclear about the wider meaning of literacy as social practices. Indeed, I came to believe that teachers might be interpreting writing as a skill and struggling to conceptualize it from a socio-cultural perspective in terms of literacy as social practice. The considerable debate that teachers engaged in when attempting to identify migrants' literacy needs may have meant that some of them were seeking more in-depth and critical knowledge about writing and the meaning of literacy. This was a process that this college seemed unable to engage in at that time. It struck me that even though the records showed regular meetings for teachers' continuous professional development (CPD), the underlying agenda seemed to relate to stating "top-down" policy or to training in the completion of paperwork, as indicated at the beginning of this section. In addition, even though there were frequent classroom observations, it seemed from this data set that teachers may have had limited opportunities to participate in the practice of friendly reflection with colleagues with an eye to explore the pedagogy of writing for migrants' early engagement with writing in English. Moreover, the data from the teachers' email interview, as shown in the comments above, seemed to indicate their preferences quite clearly. Teachers stated an interest in reflective practices on the lines of "somebody to talk to and brain storm", saw it as helping to "look into further details of why we are doing writing" and involving "reflecting on and identifying the needs of low-level learners", and expressed regret that there might be "no chance to explore ideas – [when] you are just told". These comments are all extracted from the exit interviews for teacher feedback of November 2012. Teachers' comments were also reflected in other data sets and I now intend to present deeper insights into teachers' perceptions about literacy.

5.3.3 Teachers' conceptualization of literacy: "that is what basic skills is"

In this section I present data that reveal how teachers' conceptualized literacy for the purpose of migrants' engagement with writing in this setting.

As most people might do, teachers' perceived literacy, in its most fundamental sense, as the ability to read and write. Teachers used words to the effect that "it was if the person speaks the language [English] but cannot read and write" (T1.Obs/16.11.11), and felt literacy "came under the umbrella of Basic Skills [it was] for people brought up in England with little or no formal education and were not necessarily ESOL students" (T4 int2/15.11.11). Therefore, "if a person attended a Basic Skills class, it was not about speaking but reading and writing" (T1.Obs/16.11.11). For Basic Skills, see Sub-Section 2.2.3. However, T1 also believed that "we do literacy already which officially is ESOL, but many of the students are literate so what they have is literacy issues such as spelling in relation to writing" (T1 int5/16.11.11).

It seemed to me firstly that the perception of a division between speaking and writing, as though they were almost totally separate language systems, indicated that some teachers conceptualized writing exclusively as an isolated discrete skill, and not also as social practice. It also appeared to me that the distinction between people learning English as a first or a second (or other) language was blurred. Here practitioners' perceptions seemed to highlight the possibility of facing the problems involved in the separation of language into compartmentalized individual skills, such as speaking or writing, which are to be learnt in isolation, autonomously from one another, but not all together as social practice. These problems will be touched upon in Section 6.3). In addition, it seemed that difficulties with writing could lead to an interpretation that there were "literacy issues" where teachers might consider migrants' writing difficulties from a deficit perspective, seeing them as lacking something they need – a perspective of people being needy rather than capable.

However, notwithstanding this college's conventions and the expectation for teachers to encourage "skills" as targets, some teachers did seem to recognize to a certain degree that increased diversity and social practices for learning to write perhaps brought additional complexity to their existing set of teaching and learning knowledge. On these lines, one teaching manager drew attention to the increasing diversity of prospective students. Migrants' different life circumstances in the future may mean that some people enrol on courses for the first time having lived in England without attending college previously and that might create pedagogical questions because: "there are different types of student than we are used to, different [literacy] issues ... [we are] getting familiar with ... what will work best because ... some came over 30 years ago and have been working in a restaurant, operating in that community and never needed English ..." (Tmb int 1.418-422/8.11.11). Another teacher added that: "if a person has been here [in England] for 10 years, some students still cannot speak properly; they can very often read but have difficulty spelling, so definitely basic skills" (T1 int 5.209/16.11.11).

Therefore, the increasing diversity of migrant students seemed to have increased awareness of a need for more holistic methods in these teachers' comments, but also raised questions of including the differences these migrants brought to learning to write: "different types of student than we are used to, different [literacy] issues" (Tm bint 1.8.11.11). Hence, it seemed to me that if migrants' diversity was interpreted merely on a scale of "literacy issues", then their engagement with writing could be assessed from a deficit position. Even though there seemed to be a glimmer of recognition that people move to new countries and draw on social practices, it was not clearly appreciated that they may not always engage with writing in English. This view seemed to me to reflect the assumptions that literacy is an essential basic skill as shown above: "there were people who could speak English, but the person speaks the language [English] but cannot read and write" (T1.Obs/16.11.11), and if people have some writing, then "what they have is literacy issues such as spelling in relation to writing" (T1 int5/16.11.11). In other words, migrants' early engagement with writing seemed to leave them open to teachers seeing them as deficient by interpreting their ability against standard expectations or college conventions which were perceived as "literacy issues" (such as spelling) as shown in Identifying Literacy Needs in Appendix 7. In addition, this possibly raises the question of dichotomies of difference, stereotyping and prejudice, or a distinction between "them", those studying basic skills who cannot write or have "literacy issues" and "us", those who can write.

On the other hand, some teachers did seem to reflect deeply and critically on migrants' struggles and investment in learning to write. T5 said:

"these factors, literate/illiterate, the first language of the learner - which is big anyway - then you add ... talent that some would have, the inclination, [but] may not be even aware of and just discover it now when they have to learn a foreign language. Then you have their actual social circumstances ... although somehow ... we are expected to do a 'tick box exercise.'"
(T5 int 1.978 and 987/28.6.11)

The deeper reflections found in T5's account suggested to me a struggle for pedagogy to identify student needs and the challenges of harnessing migrants' lives for learning and processes for engagement with writing. It seemed to me that T5 was aware that migrants' life experiences and their learning aspirations could contribute to pedagogy. However T5 also indicated a site of struggle between pedagogical beliefs and meeting college targets.

In fact, a couple of teachers saw problems with the organizational view of literacy for migrants, juxtaposed against British-born people with low levels of literacy for engagement in writing and T3 said: "in respect of putting low level ESOL writers with British-educated 'literacy' learners [Basic Skills]; they have different needs and I would not like to teach such classes. Some people with literacy problems are put into ESOL because they were not born

here [in England] but have bad writing, such as some Polish students who have poor grammar and low literacy”. T3 went on to make a specific point: “for low level ESOL writing there are lots of things to consider. They need to be prepared with the foundations of what is to be taught, given the vocabulary and grammar and given the chance to practice”. (T3 telint/26.11.12). In addition, when I raised the question of definitions of literacy with T4 he also recounted that: “I think [there are] people who have been brought up in this country and had formal education but they still don’t grasp literacy” (T4. Int2.718/15.11.11).

From these accounts, it seemed possible to me that practitioners privately reflected on alternative approaches to writing that challenged organizational expectations. My impression of some practitioners’ accounts was that when writing was associated with literacy learning per se, it was conceptualized as Basic Skills, and not aimed at second language learners.

I interpreted teachers’ accounts in this sub-section to mean that, if students had some ability to read and write, then the concern for pedagogy frequently became what were termed “literacy issues”, which were often not much more than spelling and punctuation. In turn, it seemed to me that teachers’ beliefs could influence their teaching approaches and techniques, and their attitudes in respect of migrants’ engagement with writing, which might lead students generally to take a narrow view of literacy, as simply the “mechanical” aspects of producing and consuming texts, rather than a more holistic view. I therefore now turn to data that revealed migrants’ perceptions about literacy.

5.3.4 Students’ conceptualization of literacy: “what? ...’li-trc-i’?”

In order to unpack what was going on from the “bottom-up”, the following data set shows students’ perceptions about literacy, when they were asked the question “What is literacy?” in relation to their writing in English. The data set was taken from interviews with S1 and S4 and a classroom focus group.

When asked “What is literacy?” in an interview, S1 replied: “What? ... ‘li-trc-i’? (S1 int5/6.12.11) I don’t know the meaning”. S1 took a few seconds to respond to the question, looked quizzical and frowned before answering. S1’s reaction indicated that the term “literacy” could be unknown to him. This interpretation was supported by the fact that S1 appeared to struggle to pronounce “literacy” as though it was new to him. In addition, the question “What about writing?”, generated what appeared to be a more well-defined perception, as he said: “Yeah I’m getting better ... writing this very important for me ... holding the pen no problem just writing when too fast like what I am managing, but writing ... not so far [as good] like other people” (S1 int5/6.12.11). S1’s vision of his own writing here was linked to his slow progress, compared to others’. It seemed possible to me that S1’s belief might reflect a

perception in this college that migrants' learning was slow, although he suggested that the physical aspects of writing may be unproblematic for him.

S4 also looked quizzical and seemed to struggle when he said: "Literacy? Literacy? What er ..." (S4 int3/15.11.11). S4 seemed perturbed by a possible new word, so I helped by clarifying "You don't know what it is?" (S4 int3/15.11.11), to which the reply was: "No" (S4 int3/15.11.11). In order to move away from what seemed to be the awkward concept of "literacy" for S4, the question "What is writing?" was asked and S4 said: "OK?" (S4 int3/15.11.11). Here S4 seemed to perceive a trick question, so referring to writing again, I rephrased the question "How do you do it and what do you think about?" (S4 int3/15.11.11). S4 then said: "Writing ... just I am patrolling [at work] and outside, I come back, no problem nothing I will write this" (S4 int3/15.11.11). Now, S4 appeared to conceptualize writing for work, as a procedure. The concept of writing for S4, I thought, seemed more easily perceived by him if it related to a procedure and that could be because S4's writing practice outside college seemed to rely on social practices, as seen in Sub-Section 5.2.1.

I will now turn to the focus group of seven adults in a college classroom. The students came from the countries of Somalia, Hong Kong/China, Iran and Sudan. They were also asked "What is literacy?" and the sentence was written on the whiteboard. The following response is an extract from the recorded focus group transcription (FGS means focus group student):

- 14) R [pointing to the sentence written on the whiteboard]: Do you know, What is literacy?". What do you think literacy is?
 - 15) (FGS1) yes, I know.
 - 16) R: can you tell me?
 - 17) (FGS2) English and maths. 1
 - 18) (FGS1) no no it's just English how to improve when you get good listening English you good speak English you are good at English.
 - 19) R: So is it about speaking, is it?..
 - 20) (FGS3) yeah.
 - 21) (FGS4) and listening and writing
 - 22) (FGS1) and writing, writing
 - 23) R: Is it about everything?
 - 24) (FGS6) Yeah
 - 25) (FGS1) no no
 - 26) R: Is it about maths?
 - 27) (FGS1) no maths is call numeracy
 - 28) R: What about writing, where does writing come?
 - 29) (All FGSs) long silence erm
- [The focus group participant students were thanked and the discussion was closed]
(FG1. /15.11.11)

The focus group was included at the end of a regularly observed lesson. The migrant students were therefore used to seeing me in the classroom and to talking with me about

writing during lessons. However, when I asked this group of students “What is literacy?” there was at first a slow response. From the interaction above “literacy” seemed to relate possibly to the individual skills of speaking, listening, writing, but also possibly to maths, although one student clarified: “no maths is call numeracy”. My impression of these migrants’ comments, together with S1’s and S4’s responses above, was that the concept of literacy as social practice was limited to beliefs about autonomous skills production for these migrants.

5.3.5 Section summary

The conceptualization of literacy in this setting seemed to challenge both teachers and migrant writers of English. Teachers seemed to struggle to conceptualize the term literacy in relation to migrants’ engagement with writing. I believe that teachers to some extent recognized the increasing and evolving diversity of migrants from a “bottom-up” perspective, relating to classroom pedagogy and student views of teaching and learning to write in English. However, their opinions appeared to me to be overshadowed by college conventions and curriculum requirements. I drew this conclusion from the way that this college seemed intent on introducing a “top-down” check-list to “identify literacy needs” at the training meeting that I attended. Teachers’ beliefs and opinions appeared to me to be left under-explored when they attempted to have a serious debate on the meaning of literacy. I concluded that perhaps both teachers and migrants were associating the term “literacy” with the Basic Skills curriculum, which differs from ESOL, as explained in Chapter 3. I will now turn to pedagogy and teachers’ perceptions about migrants’ writing that seemed to be entwined with the concept of “literacy issues”.

5.4 Pedagogy: “they need someone to do the exercise with them”

The data presented in this section relate to pedagogy and teachers’ perceptions about migrants’ engagement with writing in classroom English.

5.4.1 Meeting students’ needs: “they [students] need ‘one to one’ support constantly”

In this sub-section I will present data that showed teachers’ perceptions about meeting migrant students’ writing needs.

During interviews, teachers recounted their perceptions: “as a teacher you need to fulfil your students’ needs and if some can do better with help, I am more than happy to spend more time, but the other students don’t take it well, they feel kind of abandoned. They need one-to-one support constantly - I don’t think they are confident enough to complete an activity on their

own. They need someone to do the exercise with them.” (T2.Obs.25.5.11). T1 also said; “we have to tell them what to write about. I give them a sentence and they have to write it. If I just say ‘write about your holiday’ then they would have to use the past tense verbs.” (T1.int2.16.6.11). T1 continued; “I do not mollycoddle them. I want them to do something and communicate with their partners and sometimes explain, although it is not voluntarily; too difficult for them to understand, too technical may be?” (T1.int3/23.6.11).

What I believe comes to light here is how these teachers perceived that “one-to-one support” was negative, or even a “literacy issue”, for migrants’ early engagement with writing in English. A request, even tacit, for such support seemed to be interpreted as a sign of a weakness or a deficit. The indication was that in the contexts described here, the teachers expected students to complete “an activity on their own” and to cope with “technical” or grammatical skills for writing. I believe that, these data show ways that migrants draw on their social practices and rely on intermediaries to complete everyday writing tasks. Therefore, if migrants engage with classroom writing tasks alone then their everyday resources seem considerably reduced. It was thus unsurprising to me that teachers might perceive students as seeming “abandoned” or “lacking confidence”, as they might well be in the context of skills-oriented performance. In addition, it seemed to me that if teachers frequently “tell them [students] what to write”, it could be that tasks included or comprised de-contextualized or prescriptive language models, such as those found in a course-book, which were likely to be different or remote from their life experiences. In the next sub-section, I turn to a classroom observation that demonstrates how a lesson might become prescriptive when working with a preconceived task and writing context.

5.4.2 A course-book task: “it is not here, so what else?”

In order to demonstrate the effects of preconceived language learning tasks for writing, such as that found in a course-book, I present an extract from a classroom observation audio transcription of T1’s lesson. I present the extract in two columns to show clearly the effects of teacher talk. In column “A”, T1’s talk dominates students’ writing practice. In column “B” I present the students’ response to pedagogy. The related task was on page 38 of *New Cutting Edge, elementary students’ book* (Comys-Carr, J., Cunningham, S., Eales, F., and Moor, P. 2005) in Appendix 11.

I have highlighted the key points of dialogue as referred to below, in bold italics:

Line No.	Column A	Line No.	Column B
158	T1: <i>you can't say "have a homework"...</i> What do you write?	159	S(m) write a letter
160	T1: yes, what else do you write?	161	S(m) I write e-mail
162	T1: it is not here, so what else? What can you write?	163	[Class giggle and talk together]
164	T1: You would say "write books"? You would say write one book first ... Write a book, yes? And if it is shorter, just one page you write – what can you write? A story, could be a story, write a story	165	S(f) I write a message.
166	T1: Write a message, yes. Write a note err little yellow message you stick on – write a note to your husband. Go shopping, clean the house.	167	S(f) err
168	T1: Write a paragraph, very good. Ok ' DO '. What do you do?	169	S(m) I do homework. I do grammatics.
170	T1: No, you don't do grammatics [laughs]	171	S(m) I do my exercise.
172	(7.45) T1: Yeah, do exercise or do my exercise.	174	[class talk together]
173	T1: So you do your homework , you do your ' housework '. What's the difference?		
175	T1: Ss do homework, what is housework?	176	S(m) cleaning cooking
177	(8.18) T1: yes... now		

Extract of classroom observation transcription extract (T1.Obs.16.11.11)

Here, in line 158 of the extract, T1 elicits a student response to correct a written grammatical error "have a homework". The student's attention seemed immediately drawn to the concept of "homework" that was perhaps a pedagogical requirement that T1 wished to reinforce. The student, however, in line 159, chose to introduce an alternative by saying "write a letter", rather than to correct the initial grammatical error that T1 suggested. T1, in line 160, indicated that "write a letter" was not what she expected and elicited more ideas. The student, in line 161, responded with "I write e-mail", but T1 pointed out in line 162 that "it is not here, so what else?". T1's response indicated a desire for students to complete the prescribed course-book task. However, the student's answer in line 161, "I write e-mail", was grammatically correct and answered the question posed by T1 in line 158 "What do you write?". Here, an

opportunity for that student to explore a personal interest seemed to be lost at that time.

In addition, in line 165 a student said “I write a message”. However, the answer desired by T1 in line 164 appeared to be “write a story”. Nevertheless, on this occasion, in line 166, T1 takes up the student’s utterance from line 165, “I write a message”, and elicits ideas from the class. However, students’ opportunities to explore personal ideas seemed possibly reduced in line 166 when T1 said “go shopping, clean the house”. Here, T1 seemed to introduce an opening that could enable students to explore their own ideas, yet in line 168 T1 changed the question to “What do you do?”, followed in line 173 by “homework”, being an organizational desire, and “housework”, being a menial task. The line of reasoning presented by T1 elicited the response from one student, in line 176, “cleaning, cooking”, therefore the potential for that migrant to extend personal language learning seemed limited. Working towards a prescriptive task for these migrants appeared to confine their opportunities for language learning to menial personal chores or to homework that related to a college agenda. There was a social rapport between students as shown in line 163 where the “class giggle and talk together” but it seemed usual for the class to wait for the teacher to elicit ideas and to give instructions during the lesson. Nevertheless, I believe that this extract demonstrates the possible reductive qualities of preconceived or prescriptive pedagogy.

I now turn to an extract from a classroom observation of T2’s lesson that seemed, on the surface, to be quite different from the extract above.

5.4.3 Collaborative writing: “one piece of work produced by the class”

In this sub-section, I present a classroom observation field-note extract of T2’s lesson. The lesson was also attended by S3 and it was the first observation that I made after S3’s decision to become a case study participant:

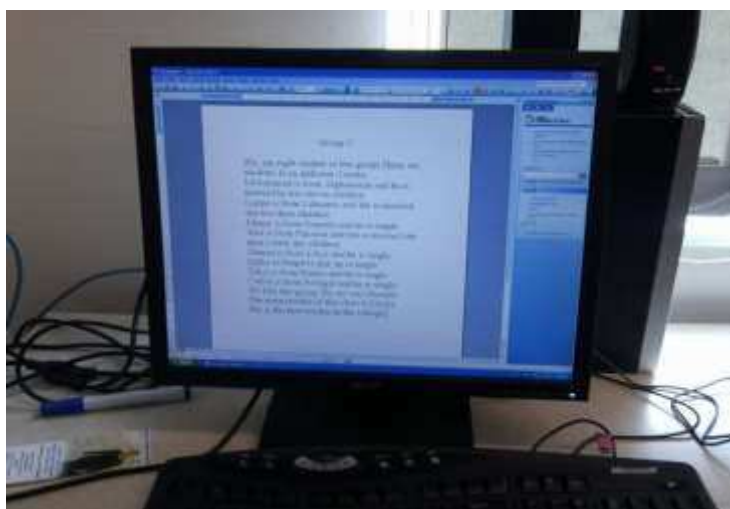
“S3 was a lively class member who stood out as soon as I walked into the classroom, because he was talking more than anyone else. He was clean shaven with a full head of black wavy medium-length hair which made him look younger than his 40 plus years. He was dressed in casual, but pressed, blue denim jeans and jacket and wore an open necked shirt with black leather shoes, rather than the usual trainers that many other students wore. His behaviour was jovial and enthusiastic but not overpowering. When the teacher posed a question, after a long silence, if no one spoke he would jump in with an answer. The conversation during that lesson centred on the previous cohort’s college year book entry and a copy lay in the centre of the group table that students sat around. The college year book contained a photograph and a written entry which had been composed by each class giving insights into student lives and learning during that academic year. The written text was either hand-written or typed. The teacher was eliciting ideas about what could be written for their class entry and she suggested that they could use the computer. There was one computer in the room, which was located at the front of the classroom, on the

desk where the teacher was sitting. She smiled and moved away from the computer leaving a blank screen for students to use.

In the classroom there were five students sitting in a group. S3 sat with the two others who were bringing the task together and writing down what the group agreed. As part of the group, S3's enthusiasm mobilized the others to talk, and he asked the teacher if they could use the computer to write their class entry for the college year book. S3 encouraged the other two students to pull up chairs and they sat around the computer. S3 asked the other two students what they should write, as he typed."

(FN 25.5.11).

The three students who were sitting around the computer agreed to let me take a photograph of their work. The photograph below shows what was written on the computer screen that was composed by the three students within 15 minutes as they worked together:



There are eight student in this group. There are students from different Country.
XXX is from Afghanistan and he is married he has eleven children.
XXX is from Lithuania and she is married she has three children.
XXX is from Somalia and he is single.
XXX is from Pakistan and she is married she
Doesn't have any children.
XXX is from Libya and he is single.
XXX is Bulgarian and he is single.
XXX is from Portugal and he is single.
We like this group. We are very friendly.
This main teacher of the class is XXX.
She is the best teacher in the college.
(Extract T2.Obs/ 25.5.11)

My perception of what was actually written during the lesson revealed the diversity of the people in that classroom, and indeed within my study. However, the contents of this collaborative composition appeared limited and simple to me. Nevertheless, three students collaborated for writing that was facilitated by the teacher, as though it might have been a workshop. I did not see students working in this way in other lessons during my observations,

although there was a dedicated lesson once a week in a computer room where students worked alone at computers. However, a college perspective of including workshop lessons, I thought was surprising.

5.4.4 Workshops: “they [migrants] want a class, taught by a teacher”

After the classroom observation shown in Sub-Section 5.4.3, I suggested in a later interview with T2 that the lesson seemed to resemble a workshop and that the students participated in literacy as social practices for writing. However T2’s perspective of that lesson seemed quite different, and she explained that the reason was:

“because ... I would like to have one piece of work produced by the class. If I asked every student to write something individually they wouldn’t come up with the same ideas. That’s why it came out that way [workshop style].”
(T2.Obs.25.5.11).

It seemed to me that even though the classroom observation in Sub-Section 5.4.3 showed students’ potential for collaborating together for writing, they were in fact following the preconceived written language model from the previous year’s handbook, such as ‘X comes from China. He speaks Chinese. He is 21 years old’ and so on. It appeared probable to me that this factor confined the composition by S3 and his two peers to the context that appeared in the handbook. I believe that students enjoyed the lesson, but that the written content became prescriptive and seemed to limit migrants’ opportunities to discuss and include their own wider life experiences or aspirations for learning.

Following on from the course-book task presented in Sub-Section 5.4.2 above, I asked T1 if she perceived struggles to include topics from outside and T1 replied:

”not really, this lesson is course-book. We have a bit of SfL which is really like everyday life topics ... [in] computer classes I prepare a lesson but nobody has to do it, they can do some things of their own, it is [a workshop] because if it is to do with like a workshop if you like, they need to print it out, I set them some tasks what they have to write about themselves.”
(T1 int 5.213/16.11.11).

T1 seemed to believe that the EFL course book, *New Cutting Edges Elementary*, (Comys-Carr, J., Cunningham, S., Eales, F., and Moor, P. 2005). And SfL curriculum included “everyday life topics” that were possibly sufficient for learning. Even though T1 seemed open to the possibility of migrants bringing personal tasks into the computer classroom, the broader possibilities for a workshop offering opportunities for literacy as social practices seemed remote.

In fact, the value of workshop-style lessons for encouraging migrants to bring writing to college that they might do outside the classroom generated a particular response from Tm when she said:

“Although they [migrants] have a limited education they might want to come to college and learn in class. They wouldn’t want just workshop sessions. They want a class, taught by a teacher . . . where they listen and they learn stuff.”

(Tm Int2.372/28.6.11)

There seemed to be an assumption about migrants’ needs for learning to write here. Firstly, the opening remark “limited education” implied to me “low level” or “basic skills”, which could possibly lead to negative positioning, as will be discussed in Chapter 6. Secondly, the idea that “they want a class taught by a teacher” suggested to me that this college probably believed that migrants’ anticipated formal classroom organization and perhaps traditional lessons. It struck me that pedagogy that was similar to the example in Sub-Section 5.4.2 above was favoured by this college for preconceived lessons prescribed by the course-book and the curriculum. Furthermore, these perceptions suggested to me that practitioners might possibly face a struggle if they wished to include the social processes that migrants engaged with for writing in everyday life.

5.4.5 Section summary

I noticed that formal classroom organization seemed usual throughout the college. In many lessons I observed students sitting around tables and listening to teachers who were positioned at the front of the classroom and framed by the whiteboard and a computer. In other observations, teachers walked around the room engaging with students individually, but generally students remained in their seats. It seemed to me that teachers’ perceptions about writing pedagogy possibly stemmed from a college desire for writing skills production. Moreover, to this effect students’ individual performance may be paramount to this college as a measure of successful teaching and learning performance. Indeed, it was unsurprising to me when official observations (see Sub-Section 5.2.3 above) reminded teachers, as college representatives, of the necessity for measurable objectives.

In the next section I present data relating to writing development and “literacy issues” showing teachers’ perceptions about migrants’ spelling, learning opportunities and homework.

5.5 Writing production: “every word really was just a spelling mistake”

In this section I present data that showed teachers’ perceptions about spelling, vocabulary

production and language learning.

T1 explained: “what I do, especially with writing ... most students have difficulty with writing, it is just er repetition, that is the only way they [students] can improve.” (T1 int 3.66/23.06.11). T1 also recounted an example: “one student’s writing, although he is very busy, he is a businessman, very busy, but he improved so much it is very difficult because his writing every word really was just a spelling mistake and he improved, amazing. It was amazing!” (T1 int 3.63/23.06.11). From T1’s account, I was left with no doubt about what appeared to be a strong belief in repetitive practice for skills production. Another teacher, T5, explained that it could be an advantage if people learnt to write “outside the country [England] the way I learnt it in [my home country] and that is the reason [why] Chinese usually have very good writing ... at least they have something to lean on.” (T5.1.967/28.06.11). Here T5 seemed to conceptualize an ideal student as possibly being able to draw on the advantages of prior English knowledge, such as those who studied EFL before arriving in England. In turn, T5 seemed to imply, when she said “at least they have something to lean on”, that prior English experience could support new language learning. I believed that T5’s perception could reflect her own experiences of learning English in her home country.

If this was the case, it would imply that teachers’ prior language learning and socio-cultural experiences might have an impact on their beliefs about teaching and learning for migrants’ engagement with writing. So, in the next sub-section I turn to teachers’ beliefs.

5.5.1 Writing practice: “I’d just learn words”

In this sub-section I present teachers’ accounts relating to their beliefs about repetitive writing for lexical development to meet institutional conventions. Tm recounted a personal experience of learning French:

“it is like ... when I was doing my French evening class ... I downloaded podcasts to listen to or noted down new words, had a vocab book and ... at the end of each week I’d write down the new vocab that we learnt. I’d learn them, have my vocab book with me ... and in my bag when I’m on the bus I’d just learn words [from] poetry or I’d listen to French songs ... but that is because I know how to study ... because I’ve been through education and I know what I need to do to learn ... but they [migrant students] don’t know how to do any of that stuff. You can tell them ... you can’t just say do it, you have got to keep reinforcing it”
(Tm Int2.366-8/28.6.11)

It seemed to me that Tm’s possible ideal perception of language learning assumed, firstly, access to, and the ability to use, the internet. Secondly, there appeared to be an assumption that personal time was available and that migrants’ lives were compatible with the systematic

repetitive recording and writing of vocabulary lists. In fact, this college gave the impression of being particularly concerned with reinforcing lexical development. In its “ESOL Handbook” for students there was a section entitled “Preparing for study” and item “C” drew specific attention to a “vocabulary notebook” and its purpose:

“How to use your **vocabulary notebook**:

Write the new word and:

- A definition in English
- A translation in your language
- Draw a picture
- Write a sentence or two in English using the word”

Extract from (college ESOL Handbook 2010-2011 p.9)

I thought that Tm’s account probably reflected an institutional desire for student concentration on lexical development. However, I believed that Tm’s perception about studying and vocabulary learning was probably influenced by her own educational background. The college’s insistence on a vocabulary notebook would reinforce that view. However, even though S4 had studied basic EFL at primary school (shown in Sub-Section 6.2.1) in his home country, he seemed naturally drawn to social practices for learning Arabic (also shown in Sub-Section 6.3.1). The poem for S3 (shown in Sub-Section 6.3.3) relied heavily on his life contexts and vocabulary was repeated through social interaction with me as an intermediary. Even though S1 appeared to write repetitive lists of words he digressed into sentences that appeared to be personal notes (shown in Sub-Section 6.3.2). This was a factor that suggested to me that the systematic repetitive noting of words might not be enough for learning in S1’s case. In addition, the use of technology seemed familiar to S3 yet S1, and particularly S2, struggled to use a computer or to access the internet (as will be seen in Section 6.5a). In reality, S2’s first experience of writing in any language was in English. It would not be surprising for such experiences to run counter to institutional conventions that assume a body of taken-for-granted knowledge, such as study skills, seeing them as “common sense” and unproblematic (Lillis 1997: 186).

The perceived benefits of repetitive writing practice were also recounted by T1 in a personal anecdote. In the next extract, T1 set out her beliefs by explaining her encounter with a student struggling with German outside college that related to meeting standard examination conventions for the G.C.S.E. (General Certificate of Secondary Education). The student T1 referred to was:

“doing GCSE German ... [the person] wasn’t doing homework [and] exams

were due so: two weeks to improve German which [the person] couldn't ... [the person] had a writing exam so had to write this text every day three or four times ... Most of the time [the person] understood some of it, but not all of it, so if [the person] didn't have the same thing over and over and over again [the person] would have failed. So it is repetition!"

(T1 int4.128/15/11/11)

Here T1's belief about repetitive writing practice, I thought, related specifically to standard language use and the gaining of competence or appropriate skills in German to meet the conventions for passing examinations. It seemed to me that repetition here related to a mechanical kind of writing production enabling a student to meet a broader socio-political ideological requirement, such as the National Curriculum, in order to gain qualifications or as one might attain "achievement" in ESOL. I perceived that migrants might be encouraged to produce appropriate chunks of written language to meet pre-specified assessment criteria, but lacked the opportunity for negotiating meaning of the language in wider social contexts (Lillis 1997: 187).

In fact, T5 reflected on the effects of institutional expectations for migrants' writing in English when she said that it was:

"assumed that there is something very natural, like English is the centre of it, and ... normal to be able to do ... [but] it depends how further removed they [students] are not just linguistically but literacy-wise it is going to be a steeper mountain to climb ... the system at the moment does not allow for that. What is the achievement? How can you expect people who have been illiterate, in their own language, which they speak fluently, or who have been illiterate, tried, or never tried to learn to write for fifteen to twenty years then time-wise, in a year or even what, three to six months, to start doing that! ... suddenly it starts to make sense why these people would be stagnating for a bit or not moving up."

(T5 int 1.961/28.06.11)

I believe that T5 was here drawing attention to specific assumptions in relation to the perception that learning English might be a natural progression from migrants' first or other language and that a particular "standard" or "traditional" European pathway for learning was anticipated. It seemed to me that the concerns for "achievement" could lead to homogeneous procedures for teaching and migrants' learning to write. I perceived that T5 also recognized how the conceptualization of "literacy", social contexts, and time to learn might impact on migrants' ability to write or to "achieve" college targets. I believe that Tm's and T1's perceptions about repetitive skills production above also implied teachers' conceptualization of writing as an "autonomous skill" rather than as part of literacy as social practices. I believe that the emphasis on repetition, as described here, and teachers' views of literacy and Basic Skills, in Sub-Section 5.3.3 above, suggested challenges for adapting pedagogy to fully include migrants' social practices for writing in English.

In order to demonstrate this possibility, the next section turns to teachers' perceptions about writing opportunities for learning inside and outside the college.

5.5.2 Learning opportunities: “we set ILP targets”

“I don't think they [migrants] see, and that is part of the problem, see college as a learning opportunity or a learning environment and that is what we struggle with ... we set ILP targets that often try to encourage students to do things outside class, to do homework ...”

(Tm.2.355/28.6.11)

I believe that this well-meant reflection by Tm showed concern for providing migrants with writing opportunities. However, at the same time Tm may have been highlighting a perceived separation between “they [migrants]” as “other” or different people, and a collective “we”, the institution, and perhaps a symbolic wider society. It seemed possible to me that Tm's quote above suggested that learning to write for migrants was perhaps a “compartment” restricted to college conventions. Whereas, in migrants' everyday lives, social practices seemed essential for learning which was especially noticeable as they seemed to rely on intermediaries to get writing done.

The ILP was an institutional form that set and recorded learning targets, see extracts in Appendix 7, for migrants. The targets for writing were recorded in the ILP at the time that they were negotiated between a teacher and a student in one-to-one tutorial sessions in college time outside the classroom, as explained in the student ESOL Handbook (2010/11):

“From the results of your diagnostic assessments and from the work you do in class, you and your tutor will prepare an ILP in your tutorial. Your ILP will show the areas in English you need help with and need to improve. You will review your ILP every term. If you have any problems you can talk to your tutor in the tutorial.”

Extract from ESOL Handbook 2010-2011 p. 7

Even though, as Tm explained here, ILP targets were possibly perceived by this college as a goal and learning incentive, it was unsurprising to me that migrants appeared slow to engage with college writing at home. For example, the extract shown of S1's writing at home in Chapter 6 suggest that repetitive targets practice at home might leave little opportunity for makings sense of writing with other people through socio-cultural encounters. In contrast, in the

cases of S2, S3 and S4, social practices with intermediaries for learning in real-life contexts enabled word meanings to be conceptualized and explored. The following classroom observation field-note extract related to S3 when he attended T1's lesson:

“T1 explained to students that they should concentrate on ‘verbs’ and she asked them to get out their ‘blue writing books’ (handed out after enrolment). The task was for students to write sentences about themselves and related to course-book Module 3 (Appendix 11). There were several closed dictionaries dotted about the desks for students’ use. A man arrived late and sat on the right of S3, who appeared to explain the writing task to the latecomer, and as part of doing so, S3 also showed him something in the dictionary that appeared to illustrate his explanation. Students wrote in silence as T1 walked around the table, looking over students’ shoulders to help or correct writing. A student asked ‘I live house all right?’ T1 pointed to the structure in the course book and said the correct version ‘I live **in** a house’. Students continued to write quietly and T1 moved to the computer at the front of the class, as she said ‘Do not close your books. Check capital letters and full stops. I am coming round to check each one.’ Students continued to write until the break.”

(T1.Fieldnote.Obs/2.11.11)

The lesson plan was taken from *New cutting edge. elementary students’ book* (Comys-Carr, J., Cunningham, S., Eales, F., and Moor, P. 2005), Module 3, pages 27-29 (Appendix 11), projected onto the whiteboard that provided a screen from a website.

This extract demonstrated how T1 controlled the lesson by telling students what was expected, and walked around the classroom, apparently checking that students’ answers matched the models shown in the course-book. Students worked in silence, and even though dictionaries were strewn over the table, no-one used one until a latecomer arrived, and S3 seemed to use one as a resource to explain a lesson point. Then, before the break, what seemed to be an objective for T1 emerged, when she referred to a possible expectation for capital letters and full stops to be correct. The fact that T1 indicated “I am coming round to check each one” suggested that students’ individual work on technical skills and getting them right was an aim of the lesson. The focus on technical skills also related to homework that had been set, as the following field-note extract shows:

“A convenient pause followed as the end of the lesson approached. T1 said that she remembered giving homework before the holiday, ‘write about your family’. S3 immediately passed his blue workbook forward to T1, who marked it and said ‘it is very good’, as she handed it back to S3. T1 looked around the class and said, ‘Two people did their homework. That’s rubbish! Spelling test!’ T1 asked students to close their books, because the words for the spelling test were used during the lesson. The spelling test continued: company, university (sighs), chocolate, restaurant, coffee, Chinese, friends, beach, photo, Britain, meal, railway station, Italian, brother, babies. T1 writes the words on the whiteboard and says, ‘If you have ten correct you should have fifteen next time’. S3 said he had ten spellings correct and some students had more. Later, when I talked to T1 she

explained that spelling was a target so she wanted to push students and did not want to make spelling too easy.”
(T1 Obs FNB.20-2.11.11)

There were several points that struck me about this lesson and the homework set. Firstly, they both related to domestic topics, as the phrase “I live in a house” was used in the lesson and “write about your family” was the homework topic. Secondly, a high degree of focus on technical skills seemed to limit possibilities for people to discuss meanings that might have enabled them to work out grammar and technical points socially rather than to rely on the teacher for answers. Even though S3 took an opportunity to talk to a latecomer, the usual classroom culture seemed to be that students worked in silence and provided answers when encouraged by the teacher. In contrast, it seemed usual for S3 to make meaning socially, as will be shown in Chapter 6, and to draw on his past experiences for learning. Thirdly, the focus on technical skills, spelling and grammar seemed to meet T1’s expectations, which may have related to monitoring student ILP targets. Finally, in this lesson the domestic topics for learning from the course-book may have reduced the teachers’ possibilities for understanding to what extent students’ real-life writing concerns outside college were met. I now turn to the ILP and targets that were set for the four focal participants.

The ILP, as explained in Chapter 3, was a college procedure for setting targets and monitoring students’ progress. The ILP Flow Chart (Hamilton 2009: 235), see Appendix 7, shows where the ILP fits into the students’ learning journey and stakeholders involved in the process. In the following table the four case-study participants’ ILP objectives set in 2010, as a result of interviews with teachers, were set against the curriculum objectives shown in column 2. The objectives that were agreed for S1, S2, S3 and S4 are shown in underlined italics:

Student/ date	ESOL Writing Core Curriculum Ref.	Objectives set by classroom teacher and ‘other comments’
S1 ILP 4.11.10	Ww/E1.2a	<u>Write 10 sentences with good handwriting especially e, s and n.</u>
	Ww/E1.1a	<u>Write 10 sentences with good spelling.</u>
	Other comments:	Feels <u>spelling is more important and when spelling improves will be able to write longer sentences.</u> Understanding new words is a smaller issue; S1 doesn’t feel we need to make it a target at the moment.
S2 ILP 4.11.10	Ww/E1.1a and 1c	Get <u>10/10 on 1 spelling</u> test by February. Think about syllables and ‘cut-up’ the words.
	Ww/E1.1a	<u>Write 10 complete sentences with a verb/noun</u>
S3 ILP 3.11.10	Ws/E1.1	<u>Write 10 full sentences (SVO) every week - The teacher to check and give feedback.</u>
S4 ILP 8.10.10	Ww/E1/1	To learn the <u>spelling of 10 words</u> every week. These are to be written in his vocabulary book. Teacher to do a spelling test every Tuesday morning.
	Ws/E1.1/2	To <u>write at least 5 sentences in his writing book</u> every week with the correct use of punctuation (capital and small letters, question marks and commas)

Extract from ILP objectives for S1, S2, S3, S4

It seemed possible to me that S1's objectives probably led to his repetitive writing homework, as will be discussed more fully in Chapter 6. These targets seemed measurable and could provide evidence of production if students completed and presented their homework in lessons, as S3 demonstrated here. However, the ability and desire for migrants to complete homework appeared to be taken for granted by teachers and the college, but it seemed also dependent upon migrants' life and social circumstances. Tm gave a specific example:

“he has got three daughters, all of whom were born in the UK ... are native speakers ... somebody ‘on tap’ ... if he sat down with them for half an hour each night ... he would improve ... but he doesn't do it ... maybe that is part of it, he does not see the connection between what he does outside and I tell him, he goes ‘Oh yeah, yeah,...’.” (Tm int 2.355/28.6.11).

Here, my impression was that Tm was perhaps assuming that it was somehow unproblematic for parents to learn from children, whereas in reality the family hierarchy or socio-cultural relationships could be challenged by this. When I asked a migrant that I met outside the research setting what he thought about learning English from his English speaking-children, he smiled broadly. The informant said that children sometimes manipulate situations to meet their own needs, especially where writing for school was involved, and that the imbalance might challenge parental authority. Of course, that might not always be the case, as recounted by S3 when I asked him if his children helped him with English. He said, “When I need something I ask my children is able to do everything for me ... yes, better than me! (laughs) I'm er very bad!” (S3 Int 2 /23.7.11). Nevertheless, as I saw it, this college and teachers at times assumed migrants' life aspirations and/or social circumstances would easily meet college conventions and expectations. In the next section I turn to teachers' perceptions about writing development and student learning.

5.5.3 Writing development: “people get demoralized”

Teachers' recounted their perceptions about the benefits of homework: “it [writing] demands more attention. They [students] need to practise at home, need to be conscientious, those that do homework are doing much better than those who are not.” (Tm. Int 1/8.6.11). One teacher considered that for “literate Europeans it speeds up their speaking development quite dramatically if they ... continue to write at home.” (T5 int 1.923/28.06.11). In fact, Tm saw one student as exemplary: “... he takes homework home, does homework, looks for opportunities to learn and wants to ... I printed off a load of word searches and he wants to do them ..., he is looking for ways to learn English, he has [also] been to the library and got books out.” (Tm int 2/28.6.11).

The opinions expressed here suggested to me particular views about migrants' personal

time, and Tm suggested that:

“attendance was quite poor in the last term. Maybe late Easter, a lot of bank holidays and school closed for training days effected peoples’ attendance – got out of the habit of coming. Think also at the start of year people are enthused for speaking and reading and towards the end of the year we are working on writing. It’s not the sole issue, but I wonder whether people get demoralized, because it is the hardest skill for most of the students to do.”

(Tm.Int 1.250/8.6.11)

I thought that Tm seemed to connect lack of enthusiasm for writing with low attendance in the explanation here. The fact that migrants’ writing might increase speaking proficiency is certainly a theoretical point for debate. However, practitioners’ expectations above seemed often to envisage an ‘ideal’ academic student from a literate European background. In other words, migrants may well have enjoyed speaking and listening more than writing, but it may also have been a question of how appropriate migrants perceived that the process for learning to write in English was and how far it helped them in their lives. For example, in an interview, T3 considered the emotional side of learning and migrants’ engagement with writing: “it is important for the lower level learners to laugh, especially to laugh about their mistakes. Mistakes are ok in the classroom but in tests or examinations mistakes are not ok.” (T3 telint/26.11.12). Here, I believe that T3 was hinting at the possibility of making a deviation from formal rules, which are an accepted part of pedagogy, towards suggesting a more creative and user-focused social approach (Street 1995: 47). In addition, T1 stated, “I don’t know about other teachers, but I always start straight from the beginning on writing, and yes the speaking exam is first, but still the writing takes longer to develop.” (T1.int5/16.11.11). However, college control of the writing curriculum and the timetable may leave teachers limited room for creativity, as T4 indicated: “I am following a syllabus in terms of reading and writing which is appropriate to their [the students’] level.” (T4.1.670/8.11.11). Furthermore, student perspectives may be quite different, as T5 evinced when she recounted an anecdote:

“I have a case with a student ... he has been in England for a year and all the time [laughs], it was quite funny because he lives with another student who has found it easier to adapt, [but] all the time [he says] ‘Why like this? But this is stupid? Why do I have to do this?’ Actually a clever student, very good at English and I finally said ‘look [name], because it is England ... it is natural ... resisting change because change is stressful ... you cannot ... assume that [the home country] is the norm and then of course England would not fit ...”

(T5 int 1.959/28.06.11)

It appeared to me that T5’s account suggested that the student had a problem with the formal and traditional rules for learning English. It seemed to me that the student perhaps resisted the limited choice offered for meaning-making with limited connection with his life

context which was probably different to his house-mate.

In the next sub-section, I present data showing a selection of teachers' perceived views of challenges for writing.

5.5.4 Examination preparation: "Sitting down just doing writing practice"

During the first interview, I was to join Tm for a lesson observation. I was surprised to find Tm seemed to believe that, because the lesson objective was to complete a reading examination sample paper (ESOL Entry 1 Reading Examination Paper, March 2007, in Appendix 10), I might not be interested, since there would be little writing. There were in fact three out of ten questions in Task 1 that required a written response. The extract that I present below is taken from an audio transcription. Students were sitting around a large desk and the teacher was circulating. As the teacher circulated, she was looking over students' shoulders as they sat looking at the examination paper or writing. The extract begins with the teacher giving positive feedback to one student and then moving to another student (line 2), who was attempting to write an answer for Task 1, Question 2, "I in the text is" (Appendix 10):

1.	Tm [to Sa]	That's it, well done.
2.	Tm [Task 1 Q2: "I" in the text is?]	[moving to another student Sb] No, "I", because "I" is (student's name). We need to say "Kate". Kate is::: Kate is a woman so what do we say for a woman? Is that her name?
3.	Sb	yes.
	Tm	That's it and because it is she, Kate works. Good, all right then [question 3]. Which sentence is correct? [question 6.] Mark loves cooking mmm what's it say about Mark? Mark's a "policeman". No information about cooking; we don't know may be yes, may be no? We don't know. So <i>it's not that one.</i>
4.	Tm	Adam loves working in a police station. Adam's a hotel manager. <i>There's no police station not that one. Kate loves living in the Lake District.</i>
5.	Tm/Sc	[T dictates Sc writes] "I love living in the Lake District." Yes? Yes. That's it. Who loves walking? Mark's a policeman, Adam's a hotel manager he loves "walking". Who is he? Is it Mark or Adam? Adam, so Adam loves "walking". Who loves "walking".
6.	Sc	(writing in silence)
7.	Tm	What is Kate learning how to cook, so she is learning "cooking". What is she cooking? All kinds of things. What foods is she learning to cook? [T looks towards the back of the room where three students sat: Sd, Se, Sf]
8.	Tm	I'll come; explain to both of you. [Sd and Se] <i>I'll come and explain to all three of you in fact. [Sd, S3 and Sf] Now this one here, you have some signs, you have three museums. The museum of "science" is here, the museum of "art" and the "open air" museum. Three different museums. Now in the museum of science, can I eat food?</i>

Extract examination preparation classroom observation (Tm Obs/8.6.11)

In line 2, a student, Sb, was working alone. Tm appeared to attempt to guide Sb towards deeper understanding of the pronoun “I” by using Sb’s name, but because the answer related to the passage that students read, while the pronoun “I” was, in fact, the writer of the text, “Kate”, I thought that the explanation was confusing. Tm went on quickly to answer her own question thereby giving Sb (and the class) the answer. Tm then seemed to reinforce the pronoun by asking “Is that her name?”, to which Sb answered “yes”.

It seemed unsurprising to me that Sb (and probably other students) struggled because the reading text title was “tell us about yourself” and might lead students to perceive that it could relate to them personally. In addition, the name and job title of “Kate Sanders, Local Librarian” appeared below the printed text, so as to show that she wrote the autobiographical account. I am drawing attention to this, because unless students were familiar with where authors’ names appear some early literacy students might be confused about who wrote the text and who “I” referred to. After all, when I engaged with S2 as an intermediary for him to write a letter, the first stage was for S2 to familiarize himself with the letter structure, and that included the salutations and signatories, because these points seemed unclear to him on that occasion.

It seemed to me that when they worked alone the possibility for these students to make sense of the text and the questions, as migrants normally might in social encounters, and the opportunity for deeper meanings to emerge, was reduced. After all, in this lesson students were merely preparing for examinations. Increased work with peers socially, as they might with intermediaries outside college, might ease performance stress or even turn anxieties into empowering learning experiences. In addition, I thought how unusual it might be for a fluent English speaker to be asked who “I in the text is”, because it seemed to be an interrogative or leading question, even though a question mark does not follow the phrase in the examination paper. It seemed to me that the phrase invited justification of identity that someone in authority or a lawyer in a courtroom might demand, as opposed to a request within the context of an autobiographical account by a librarian. I believe that the students in this lesson were confronted by a de-contextualized passage in Task 1 and that Item 2 presented an ambiguous phrase for early migrant students to negotiate alone (Appendix 10, question 2 on page 2).

The lesson continued and in line 4 Tm gives positive feedback to a student about Question 3 and moves quickly to Question 6. In line 5, Tm attempts to scaffold a student towards circling the correct sentence, but the student went for an incorrect response and Tm gave the answer “Kate loves living in the Lake District”. Tm then, in line 6, dictated an answer to a student (and the class). In line 8, Tm seemed to attempt to guide students towards a written answer for

Question 8, “What does Kate like doing at night?”. Students seemed to take time to respond, and Tm paraphrased answer clues three times “What is Kate learning how to cook ...”.

I thought that Tm was pushing the students to complete the questions, perhaps because examinations are subject to time limits or because Tm wanted the class to finish the paper during that lesson. It seemed to me, however, that students were disempowered by the lack of social engagement for writing, and also that perhaps more time was needed for people to bring different perspectives to bear on the questions or to find links to their own lives to give contextual clues. Indeed, by the end of the lesson observation the students’ examination test papers were incomplete and Tm asked students to finish the paper for homework.

I recorded in my classroom observation field-note that:

“as I left the lesson observation the class were dispersing and I noticed S1 and S2 sitting together at a table looking down at the examination paper, talking, pointing at the paper and turning the pages. S1 and S2 seemed to be engaging in social practices, perhaps to make sense of the task because it was their homework.”
(Tm Obs/8.6.11)

It seemed to me that teacher talk and direction during this lesson left students with a lack of opportunity to work socially with peers for sense making. Tm seemed to push the lesson forward, possibly to get the practice examination paper completed during the lesson, although it appeared to me that students needed more time to conceptualize the task. Students’ limited response to Tm’s feedback could also indicate their lack of confidence. These factors seemed possible, as S1 and S2 sat together with the examination paper at the end of the lesson.

In a reflective interview immediately prior to the above classroom observation Tm said: “Today they [students] are doing reading practice, but half a lesson of teaching and half a lesson of sitting down just doing writing practice or just doing reading practice. I think it gets quite hard, because it is quite intensive and a bit demoralizing for people coming away from class thinking ‘I am not doing as well as I could have done’. I don’t know.” (Tm int 1.250/8.6.11)

I was left with the impression that Tm anticipated students’ struggles with examination preparation and the test paper that was set as the objective of the lesson. I also thought that Tm seemed challenged to reduce students’ anxieties, possibly because the task demanded a specific format and ultimately because of the need for students to read and write by engaging in individual skills production. On the other hand, these students may well have had ideas about tackling the test paper, but lacked the opportunity to express their thoughts freely. In view of the cognitive demands of the lesson to complete de-contextualized tasks with little social

support, it seemed unsurprising to me that these migrants struggled with time pressure and completing the test paper during the lesson.

5.5.5 Section summary

In this section, it seemed evident that these teachers' perceptions about the desirability of students' repetitive skills production stemmed from their own language learning beliefs and the assigning of measurable targets. This college also appeared to reinforce a requirement for lexical development in the students' handbook. Indeed, in the setting of homework there also seemed to be a pedagogical assumption that migrants were able to fit systematic repetitive drills into their outside lives. In addition, whilst homework relating to domestic topics, such as 'write about your family' may seem accessible for people, their real-life writing issues might be left underexplored. In fact, encouraging migrants focus on skills development suggested a perceived deficit and a need for correct writing, which was reinforced through spelling tests and the availability of dictionaries. Moreover, examination practice seemed de-contextualized and encouraged people to work alone, which reduced the possibilities for negotiating meaning, as people might outside college. In the following section I present teachers' perceptions relating to time pressure and cognitive effort, diversity and life contexts that may impact on migrant students' writing.

5.6 Migrant students: "Uncertainty is always hanging over them"

This final section shows teachers' reflections on how to teach migrants and learning to write. The first sub-section relates to the time pressure and cognitive demands for writing performance. The second sub-section turns to classroom diversity, and the final sub-section demonstrates how teachers perceived that migrants' life circumstances might impact on learning to write.

5.6.1 "Too much information [that] just does not go in"

Cognitive demands and the time pressure for writing performance that migrant students need to begin writing in English was considered by these teachers in interviews. The transcriptions of interviews with teachers illuminated their perceptions about migrant students' engagement with writing. One stated that:

"it is very hard to remember virtually everything in a class, so imagine if you cannot take notes ... the ones that are illiterate in their first language, it takes them for ever ... to start doing even basic writing in English ... [whereas] those that are literate ... can potentially take notes in their own language ... say you are teaching the present continuous, they could put an auxiliary help verb in whatever and get all this information ... which the others just have to do on memory - it is horrendous to

expect people to remember what happens over three hours.”
(T5 int 1.926/28.06.11)

A perceived reason for this was that students “cannot take anything in after an hour, you just kind of shut off.” (T3 and T5 int.1048 and 50/28.06.11). Another teacher cautioned about the possible limitations of “too much information [that] just does not go in; we [teachers] have meetings ... sometimes for three or four hours, but we switch off after one hour.” (T1 int5.223/16.11.11). T5 agreed and made the point that it is “quite a bit of information over a three hour class ... [that was] for the convenience of colleges ... it would be better for them [students] to have an hour [and] a bit of a stop.” (T5 int 1.1047/28.06.11).

I believe that the accounts of these teachers probably reflected their own observations from classes that they had taught. I thought that teachers perceived a difficulty for migrants to cram details into their minds over a long lesson, also suggesting a recognition that students struggled with written content. As shown in Sub-Section 5.5.3, I believe that de-contextualized tasks, especially when working alone, probably challenged migrants’ sustained engagement with writing, especially over long periods of time. As T5 suggested, when I engaged with S2, who was in the early stages of writing in any language, as an intermediary for letter writing, much cognitive effort seemed necessary, and time, for him to conceptualize what to write before putting pen to paper. In addition, lexical awareness might help with grammatical structures, even if migrants are supported by their first language, as shown in S1’s writing practice which is discussed in Sub-Section 6.3.2. In fact, when I was learning Japanese I found it was useful to take notes phonetically in English. These factors suggested to me that teachers recognized the challenges of keeping migrant students, who were very early writers of English, engaged in lessons. In addition, even though practitioners seemed to perceive migrants’ struggles, they were probably disempowered by “top-down” college conventions that expected skills production. The points raised here might be magnified when other aspects arise, such as the diversity of students.

5.6.2 “What they do outside the classroom”

I believe that teachers’ perspectives of students’ experiences showed an awareness that migrants’ life history, social contexts and challenges outside college had an impact on classroom learning. One teacher stated this clearly: “I think they [students] have outside problems.” (T2 int1/25.5.11). Another teacher explained that: “quite often the difficulties they [students] face outside they [people] bring [into the classroom] to try and find a solution or a route to overcome those difficulties, whether it is with [the teacher] or with other students.” (T4. int1/8.11.11). This suggested to me that teachers perceived a kind of conflicting boundary crossing by migrants as they moved from one life context (outside) to another (inside college).

Another teacher explained a perception of such boundary crossing and the possible emotions involved:

“sometimes people seem to shut off and just concentrate on learning. Other people bring [problems] in with them so have days when they [migrants] are not learning, not picking anything up, when normally they are better. It could be personality but some [migrants] have gone through some awful things [for example], one student said he was ‘going to be sent back’ [deported from England to his home country] two weeks ago and of course now his attendance is low, he’s different in class, not concentrating on learning because he doesn’t know where he’ll be in one week’s time. Uncertainty is always hanging over them I think. Any emotional trauma does affect your learning ability.”

(T3 int1.16.6.11)

It seemed to me that these teachers’ perceptions suggested that they did recognize that migrants’ life contexts varied and perhaps also that the effects of new experiences could be cumulative, because of the different life situations, or the people, they had to come to terms with as they moved from place to place (Holliday 2013). However, when considering the broader social context within which migrants live, T1 recounted the perception that:

“Everybody had some bad experience and they leave it behind. It is up to the student as well. I think English society pick on this person - who had a traumatic experience years ago [and] it will take a much longer time to be self-sufficient. A migrant does not want to be ignorant; [wants] to give an opinion. It is an attitude, not only chance, if an asylum seeker comes from his country without much experience but it is not an excuse if there was a war ten years ago.”

(T1 int3/23.6.11)

It is true that everyday life at times conflicts with classroom learning. As T3 explained; “One student is having to look for work back in France, so she has had to go over there for job interviews, so she will be coming back for the exam and the last few weeks. That’s the only time she can attend, because she has to find a job now.” (T3 int1.547/16.06.11).

It seemed to me that T1 and T3 grasped certain aspects of the complexity associated with moving across borders that went beyond the college context. I believed that T1’s reference to the necessity for being self-sufficient quickly to enable people “to give an opinion” possibly meant enabling migrants to make informed choices as they build their lives in a new country. It also seemed that T1 probably perceived identity struggles for migrants and I was left with the impression that T1 viewed assimilation into mainstream dominant culture as beneficial to reduce the possibilities of migrants being stereotyped by others (the dominant culture). I interpreted this because she said “I think English society pick on this person” [who is different]. I presumed T1 used the colloquial term “pick on” to mean that a person was viewed negatively by others.

5.6.3 Section summary

This sub-section, I believe, shows the teachers' sensitivity to migrants' needs when they had time available to reflect deeply on their classroom practices. These teachers recognized the effects of students' cognitive demands when they are expected to engage with writing during long lesson periods, and when people have much detail to conceptualise before putting pen to paper. It was also recognized by them that learning to write created greater challenges for adult students who were learning to write for the first time in any language, such as S2. Teachers seemed aware of the effects of new experiences on migrants' engagement with writing as they move from one country to another. In fact, T1 seemed to believe that migrants needed to engage with the dominant culture so as to reduce the possibilities of being stereotyped and to enable them to express their opinions. These teachers did appear to have some comprehension of the complexity of migrants' lives, but the starting point for the classroom culture was the need to meet college conventions and targets.

5.7 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been noted that the need for pedagogy to work towards targets appeared to drive teaching technique. This seemed to be reinforced by classroom observations, and by the imposition of college conventions in teachers' training-meetings. Thus, the way that migrants engaged with writing in this college seemed to be shaped by a political act that emerged from perceptions that migrants were in a deficit position. In other words, migrants were seen as lacking an ability to conform to perceived standard language for writing correctly (Kress 2000: 97). Moreover, spelling seemed to be a part of the classroom culture which was reinforced through college documents, frequent tests and the availability of dictionaries (Sebba 2009). Furthermore, basic grammar and spelling seemed to be seen as an aim isolated from real-life usefulness or aspirations. As college conventions appeared to direct teachers towards prescriptive teaching methods and target setting, they were left in judgement over migrants' prospects to perform in examinations to gain "achievement" (Clark and Ivanič 1997). In reality, migrants' identities seemed shaped by the categories into which teachers place students as "inexpert", while college conventions and targets determine what is of value for them and what has less value (Hamilton 2009: 239). Thereby, migrants might generally have no choice but to fit into this college culture and norms for writing. These factors, I believe, seem to foreground the role of the educator in shaping migrants' "top-down" learning experiences. Even though teachers may see their migrant students as creative people with complex life experiences, they are obliged to conform to college conventions and to meet the targets set.

In the next chapter I present data that shows migrants' complex processes for constructing identity and cultural practices for writing inside and outside the college.

Chapter 6: Identity: The Complexity of Migrants' Processes for Engagement with Writing in English

6.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the research findings from the in-depth interviews with the four case-study participants and other migrant students in the setting and beyond. The purpose of this chapter is to explore these migrants' early engagement with writing from observations of literacy events and practices, because:

“through engagement in practice, we see first-hand the effects we have on the world and discover how the world treats the likes of us. We explore our ability to engage with one another, how we can participate in activities, what we can and cannot do. But all this takes place in the doing. Our enterprises and definition of competence shape our identities through our very engagement in activities and social interactions.”

(Wenger 1998: 192-193)

Therefore, I present the four case study migrants' perceptions about “doing” writing in literacy events and practices in their everyday lives, in a variety of contexts and cultures, and in social or institutional settings, which also includes other college migrant participants' data. The chapter sections appear as follows:

Section 6.2, turns to these four case study participants' personal history, their home country, their first language education and especially writing within it, because this was probably where their initial beliefs about writing commenced.

In the research material presented in Section 6.3 each participant recounts experiences of engagement with writing in other languages, including English, and the influence of attending college in England as they moved across geographical borders.

Section 6.4 then turns to these participants' pathways towards independent writing in English in England.

Then, Section 6.5 relates to the case study migrants' early writing and digital texts.

The foregoing four sections show how the four case study migrants engaged with writing in their day-to-day lives and relates to the first of my four research questions, then:

In Section 6.6 of this chapter I present data that shows participant migrants and others processes for negotiating engagement with writing for identity construction in the classroom context, and teachers' perceptions of these migrants' writing and learning

aspirations. I include data examples to show the classroom culture at that time and how these migrants reified what was important to them as they made sense of learning to write in English, as a new language (reification was discussed in Chapter 3). These data relate to my research questions two and three.

Finally, in Section 6.7 of this chapter, I present data showing how the complexity of these migrants' early engagement with writing impacted on their identity construction and life aspirations in relation to research question four, before turning to my thesis conclusions in Chapter 7.

I will begin the next section by presenting the four case study migrant participants' accounts about their first language education and writing.

6.2 First language education and writing: “different situation”

In this section, I will introduce data extracts from S4, S1, S3 and S2 that related to the focal participants' educational history and engagement with writing in their first language. This was important, because migrants' past experiences of learning could shape their adult beliefs for engagement with writing in other languages, including English, which will be explored in later sections. I will then comment on each participant's perceptions before including a brief summary at the end of the section.

6.2.1 “I went to school nearly 5, 6 years”

Firstly, S4 described his educational experience in a matter of fact and positive manner. S4 said:

“I went to school nearly 5, 6 years [and] after that I finish school, reading and writing but er ... [and] English ... just little, some parts of the body an ... a, b, c, d.”
(S4 int1/22.6.11).

“I am 6, 7 year old when I start school ... I think 13 when I finish ... I went to school may be 6 years ... [then], my father my mother tell me you can't do study ... I say OK.”

(S4 int2/12.10.11).

The first point of note was that S4's school curriculum probably included English as a foreign language, which might assist him to learn English in England. It seemed curious to me that S4 recounted attending school for about six years and leaving at the age of 13, yet offered no explanation as to whether that was a normal experience for boys of his age, at that time. This could be an indication that S4 was usually compliant with parental or other authority. I will now turn to S1 and his focus on the future.

6.2.2 “my country there was a war”

The focus of S1 seemed to be mainly on the future and he appeared reluctant to dwell on his home country language-learning experiences. This was unsurprising when S1 revealed that “my country there was a war ... because they killed my mother, father ... so I didn’t want to go back.” (S1 int2/8.6.11).

In contrast to S4 above, S1’s poignant explanation, for me, opened the possibility that experiences in a war-torn country could have influenced S1’s decisions about education and migration, which could continue to affect his future aspirations.

In the next account S3’s education and future also seemed to be shaped by circumstances beyond his control.

6.2.3 “3 years military academy”

In comparison to S1 and S4 above, S3 explained that his education “began at primary school and [then] come to BaccaLaureate³ ... because the country was ... different situation, army need to catch people to come to army and I don’t have choice [but] to study ... 3 years military academy.” (S3 int1/22.6.11).

It seemed to me that the most important focus for S3 was his education in adulthood that was possibly enforced as part of military or national policy requirements. Nevertheless, S3’s adult education appeared to be a significant point of access to learning, as he quickly seemed to gloss over primary school. This may indicate that S3 engaged for a longer period of time in education than S4 or S1, but perhaps it was because he had no choice but to study in the army. The next account was quite different, as S2 talked about his early schooling experience.

6.2.4 “I am scared of the teacher”

As S2 explained his educational experiences, I realized that his schooling seemed quite problematic when he said: “I first go to school by this My Teachers HIT ME ... I am no understand something ... my sisters help me ... give me copy, after my teachers hit me ... by then, I no go back to school ... my dad is told me why you no go to school? [I] say ‘hit me’ and ‘I never go back to school’. I am scared of the teacher. [laughs]” (S2 int2/8.6.11). In fact, S2 adamantly continued to explain his educational experience in his home country:-

³The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme is a challenging two-year curriculum, primarily aimed at students aged 16 to 19. It leads to a qualification that is widely recognized by the world’s leading universities(<http://www.ibo.org/programmes>: accessed 28.2.14)

“... too much hit me you know look like ... [he demonstrates] take my hair ... by stick ... slap sometimes take this [pulls hair] ... yeah, I don't like is my country decision hitting people before, but I don't know for now ... big problem for me because I can't read and write.”

(S2 int2/8.6.11).

It seemed that from the above extract corporal punishment was condoned at school, although that might not be unusual in S2's, or many other institutional settings around the world. I was left with the impression, from S2's accounts, that school was stressful for him but that learning collaboratively with his sister was helpful for him. Nevertheless, S2's description of his teacher's response, I perceived, led to S2's fear and withdrawal from school at a primary age. In addition, S2 indicated to me that his father knew that he was not going to school, yet offered no indication of a parental response. I also believed that S2 recognized how a country's educational policy changes, when he said, “is my country decision hitting people before [at that time], but I don't know for now” (S2 int1/8.6.11). In view of the foregoing, I interpreted S2's accounts to indicate that he believed that his school environment, his teacher's actions and possibly his father's perceptions about him attending school contributed to his being unable to read and write. It also seemed possible that, in S2's home country culture, being able to write was perhaps not essential for getting things done in everyday life. I interpreted this because S2 also said that: “I work in butcher's shop [which was] yeah, not bad [for] about five years.” (S2 int1/8.6.11). Therefore, as a result of S2's educational history, I pondered on the possibility that as an adult S2 might struggle to engage with writing in England. This was because the ability to write in the standard English language in England is highly valued for access to work, housing and most other life needs. Therefore, S2's inability to write could be perceived negatively by other people and leave S2 at times with low self-esteem. Therefore each of the four participants' accounts about their first language education and writing were different and I have summarised these below.

6.2.5 Section summary

These accounts, suggested to me that these migrants' early experiences of learning to write were guided by local and national policy structures, as might be the case in any country. However, each educational experience appeared to be different and presented individual challenges. This raised the points that even though identity may offer a resource for adult learning, as Morgan-Klein and Osborne (2007) have observed, schooling can also raise complex emotions surrounding fear of failure as Jonker (2005) cautions (see Chapter 3). Therefore, it appeared that social practices also showed potential for identity conflicts that seemed particularly noticeable for S2 as he was learning to write as an adult. I now turn to participants' accounts of the effects of moving across country borders and using other languages, before or around their arrival in England.

6.3 Engagement with writing in other languages and English: “write in all five ...”

This section introduces migrants’ engagement with writing, which emerged as participants recounted moving across borders. This included their experiences of other languages, including English, and the influences of attending college in England. I illustrate this by presenting data that seemed particular to each participant’s account about writing, either as skills development or as part of social practices in a variety of contexts. Here participants’ individual perspectives about learning and writing surface. Therefore, the next sections relate firstly to S4’s engagement with writing in a new language and in a new country, secondly to S1’s focus on technical skills and vocabulary, thirdly to S3’s experience of integrating languages and writing a poem, and finally how I was engaged by S2 as an intermediary for writing as he composed a letter. I will begin with S4’s experience of writing in a new language in a new country when he encountered Arabic, which appeared to lead to positive identity construction.

6.3.1 Writing and social processes for learning a new language in a new country: “then I can start Arabic writing”

Moving across borders for S4 seemed to ignite his interest in learning new languages to reveal what appeared to be very much part of his identity. This was evident as S4 explained his language repertoires with much enthusiasm, stating, “my first language is Pashto and then Urdu as well. I speak three, four, five languages! Arabic as well! ... third, understand and speak Punjab, fifth language, little bit English ... write in all five languages!” (S4.int3/15.11.11). S4 explained that “when I came to this country [England] I didn’t know about anything because I write my language writing”. Indeed, S4 later explained his approach to study: “I can use a dictionary ... sometime internet, books, dictionary yeah any words difficult for me, difficult spelling I will write in my book this word and this spelling ...” (S4 int3/16.11.11).

I noticed that S4 referred to Pashto as being his first language, along with Urdu that he previously associated with primary school, with confidence. I noted a pride in S4’s accounts of his ability in other languages. This suggested to me that he probably valued learning other languages. It was also notable that in England S4 seemed to place high value on vocabulary learning and spelling. However, I was overwhelmed by S4’s exuberant account of linguistic triumphs in other languages that appeared to stir his enthusiasm. I therefore now include an example of S4’s account of learning a new language in a new country. The following extract relates to S4’s explanation about how moving to Saudi Arabia, as he seemed to perceive it, facilitated his learning of Arabic as a new language. The context that S4 described in Saudi Arabia, I thought, showed how he took a pragmatic approach to language learning, as he explained:

“I lived in Saudi Arabia and there is Arabic... I will mostly try ... when I went to Saudi Arabia I speak Arabic just one word. After that 3 or 4 years I speak very well Arabic too, all business to Arabic people I listening I speak Arabic ... I understand and speak like my language. ... When I come to Saudi Arabia, I didn't know counting ... I can understand just similar [to] my language and Arabic, ... I write till receipt. We supply things for shop and market [and] after that we are writing by hand, what we are selling and after that I can start Arabic writing” (S4 int3/15/11/11).

I believe that S4's account of opportunistic social encounters suggested that he was involved in a rich socio-cultural and socio-linguistic environment. Indeed, S4 seemed to learn from everyday business activities, and probably harnessed what he needed to learn on a moment-by-moment basis. It appeared possible that S4's level of enthusiasm for writing related to the value he placed on how social encounters in that context stimulated his behaviour to promote learning. Indeed, I felt that S4 took control of his own language learning in Saudi Arabia. S4 apparently recognized an opportunity for spontaneous engagement that was stimulated, probably because of necessity, curiosity or risk taking. S4's social practices may have extended his language repertoire through the recognition of universal and first or other known language words, phrases or structures to support less familiar Arabic vocabulary for writing. In terms of language learning encounters, as Blommaert (2013) tells us, people draw on past experiences to negotiate their new identities in the new linguistic context, and that includes dealing with structural challenges (see Chapter 3).

Overall, in the business of buying and selling, handwritten “till receipts” and “counting”, S4's Arabic language acquisition seemed to mushroom from one word to what S4 implied could be a level of spoken and written fluency to meet his needs, in three to four years. I believe that S4's engagement with writing in this context resembled “literacy as social practice” where spontaneous opportunities were identified and harnessed for learning.

The next example turns to S1's account of experiences in England and introduces the influences that attending college had on engagement with writing.

6.3.2 Focus on technical skills: “if we have spelling test, I just practice at home”

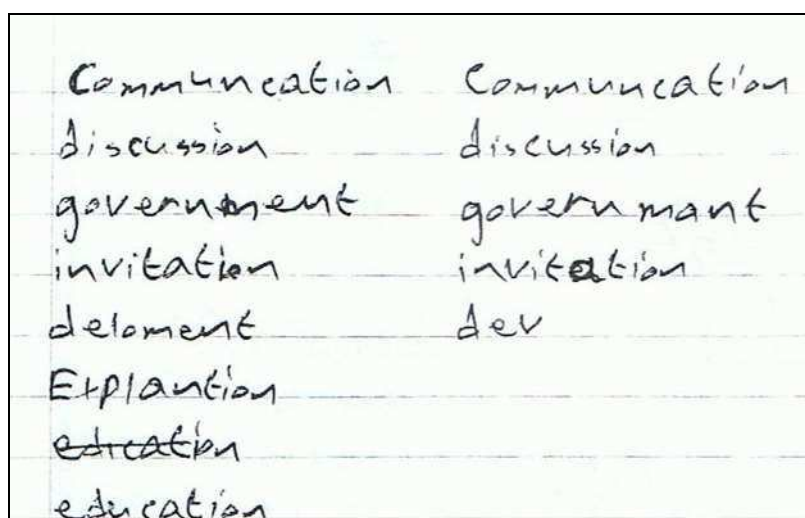
As soon as I talked to S1 in the first interview about writing, I recognized that his main focus seemed to be upon technical skills. When I first asked S1 about writing, he immediately replied, “No, never”. I therefore continued to probe, “You didn't write?”. He then replied: “What English I started last year here [2010 in England] ... is bit difficult because we are writing like this, Arabic [he mimes writing from right to left] ... you know English write like this:: [he demonstrates writing from left to right].” (S1.int1/25.5.11). S1 also explained: “I don't know how to make the word correct ... if I write ‘beautiful’ you can't read, cos it's not

correct, so I need more help.” (S1. Int1/25/5/11). I noticed that S1 drew particular attention to vocabulary learning, especially in respect of orthography, as he said: “I want to be good with my writing because this moment everything is wrong, I have problem spelling.” (S1 int1/25.5.11).

At first S1 seemed bemused about the idea of my interest in his first language writing, almost as though his writing before English was insignificant. I noticed here that S1’s account seemed to focus on the technical skills of writing and identifying the differences in script between his first language and English. I wondered if S1 believed that I expected him to draw attention to the technical aspects of writing, such as spelling or handwriting in relation to privileging English, as many people might.

As S1 continued, his accounts about writing in England appeared to focus mainly on spelling, so I include an example that gives insights into S1’s deeper perceptions about writing in English. Firstly, S1 explained his approach to writing: “after college , if we have spelling test, I just practice at home ... mmm ... we don’t have spelling test as well I practise because my writing no very good - I have to keep trying to make my writing good.” (S1 int1/25.5.11). S1 continued to explain his college experiences when he said: “Teachers they are very, very good because they give us all the time spelling test that help us a lot, but ... I still need more ... because I have problem spell.” (S1 int1/25.1.11).

I was surprised at S1’s focus on spelling and how strongly skills development appeared to create a powerful perception about his poor technical abilities surrounding learning to write. I include below an example of S1’s preparation, at home, for a college spelling test.



Extract one of S1’s spelling test practise for college (7 words out of 23) 11/11

It seemed probable that S1's concerns about spelling were fostered in a college context. It also seemed possible that there was increased anxiety for him to meet standard expectations, which perhaps resulted in his practice drills outside college and at home. The next extract continues with technical skills in mind, but contains S1's personal writing practice at home, which appeared distinctively different from the last extract:

دُعَاءُ عِنْدَ الْفَرَاحِ مِنَ الْمَقَامِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي
 لَمْ يَقْرَأْ قَبْلَهُ وَآرَاقِيهِ مِنْ عَجْمٍ تَوَلَّى مِنْهُ قَوْلَهُ قَوْلَهُ
 كَثِيرًا لِيَكُونَ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا قَبْلَهُ وَبِغَيْرِهِ مِمَّا قَبْلَهُ
 Vocabulary Nouns, Verbs, and adjectives. Look at these
 common nouns and adjective suffixes. They are use.
 Noun: Complete the charts below and mark the
 stress. There are some spellings. Noun communication
 communicate discuss discussion govern government
 invitation invite develop development explain
 explanation edca education educate decide
 decision enjoy enjoyment organize organization
 improvement improved employ employment
 science scientific friend friend friendly happy
 happiness different danger dangerous use useful
 help helpfull special specialty care careful noise
 noise noises industry industry industrial ambitious
 ambitious Complete the sentences. Complete the
 sentences. Complete the sentences with one
 the words form Word from every exercise
 My English my English improved a lot after I lived
 in London London for a month. I have two ambitions
 in life. I want to be rich and I want to be
 famous famous. I'm going to work hard from now on.

Item 1
S1's first language

Item 2
Grammatical instructions

Item 3
S1's aspirations

Extract two of S1's personal writing drill at home 11/11

This personal example of S1's writing practice at home initially appeared quite dense and could indicate S1's diligence to improve his writing in English, his agency to engage and willingness to learn. In fact, upon closer examination, S1 began by writing in his first language (item 1). Secondly, S1 continued in English (item 2), where he seemed to write the teacher's grammatical instructions (verbal or copied from the whiteboard) and to note what happened in

the classroom when he mentioned a “chart”. He then continues to practise spelling using different forms. However, S1’s writing then moves away from the listing of words. In item 3, there seems to be a personal written note, giving insights into S1’s life aspirations. Overall, to me, it seemed that S1’s personal engagement with writing differed from the discussions in literature about students taking their outside experiences or social practices into the classroom for learning, a concept that is often referred to as “bringing the outside in” (see Baynham 2011). What S1’s personal writing practice at home suggested to me was a reversal of that theoretical concept, because S1’s engagement with writing pointed to his bringing what he was doing inside the classroom, literally into his social world. In other words, he seemed to take up classroom behaviour in his personal life, rather than using classroom learning to enhance his everyday social processes for writing. I interpreted matters in this way because at home, S1 seemed to spend much personal time practising writing drills, which may have been encouraged by teachers in the classroom, or by what S1 perceived was necessary for learning to write in English.

It seemed to me that any good student might practise writing by producing spelling lists as shown in Extract one above, especially in preparation for a college spelling test. However, S1’s personal writing sample in Extract 2 seemed possibly more influenced by the teachers’ instructions and perhaps standard college expectations for standard English (Item 2) than real life experiences. As Block (2007: 242) has indicated, these extracts show identity conflicts appearing in local moment-by-moment practice (at the micro-level), but they are shaped by global forces (at the macro-level).

Indeed, towards the end of S1’s writing sample, in Item 3, S1 appeared to provide clues about his wider personal aspirations that deviated from his focus on skills production in Item 2. I believe that if S1’s writing practice was often solitary then the opportunity for him to explore his life experiences and to extend his processes for identity construction were probably reduced (as similarly recounted by S4 above). Therefore, conflicts may lead to opportunities for positive identity construction, as indicated by others (Block 2007; Holliday 2013). I now turn to data that demonstrated how S3 seemed to harness literacy as social practice for writing that also enabled him to integrate his past experiences, skills production and life goals.

6.3.3 Integrating languages and experiences: “difficult when I learn Dutch”

In this sub-section I present S3’s alternative perspective that offered potential to prolong and push learning further.

The following data, I believe, demonstrated S3’s holistic process for engagement with writing that involved me as an intermediary as he organized an opportunity for learning socially.

It seemed to me that S3 managed the process by bringing together his past experiences and skills production from different contexts and languages. As S3 engaged with me socially, his self-efficacy revealed his ability to connect his past, present and future aspirations for engagement with writing in English, as we shall now see.

First of all, S3 referred to his struggles to learn a new language and recounted his arrival in England from Europe when he recalled: “difficult when I learn Dutch ... Chinese students that difficult in their language ... my teacher say Chinese difficult.” (S3 int1/22.6.11). S3 explained, “I never write [L1] when er in this country [England] because don’t need it when my son live in Holland I contact with him via msn. I have to write Dutch and I do that with him in Dutch language. In UK with my friends, for example, if needed a text message write English but no in [L1] but two important languages one Pashtu and Dari ... I am speaking Dari ... when I talk with somebody [on the telephone, but] I write address in English and ... the phone number or ... something.” (S3 int2/13.7.11).

I was aware, through interviews with S3, that he was the only case-study participant who had lived in a European country before moving to England. I wondered if he thought his experience in another European country might speed up his learning in English. S3 immediately responded: “Of course!” and he went on, “... when I come to England I couldn’t speak one word but I can now ... I am happy with Dutch language because help me more same, for example, ‘street’ Dutch ‘straat’ more things help me to learn English quickly ... I need to learn more but at the moment confusing spelling sometime - ‘the’ I write ‘de’, with ‘the’ in Dutch it is ‘de’.” (S3 int1/22.6.11).

In contrast to S1, S3 seemed to naturally integrate his first languages and knowledge about learning other new languages with confidence. The process that S3 undertook for integrating different languages I perceived as being dependent upon the purpose and context of his communication, which appeared to be instrumental for writing, as he explained above and as Livingstone’s (2001) study shows.

I was left with the impression that S3 engaged readily in the language that appeared to be most useful for him in a particular context and at a particular time. This emerged in how S3 introduced the use of digital media, such as msn messenger for writing in Dutch and he also talked about writing SMS text messages in English, in England. I noticed how S3 specifically seemed to focus on spelling, but by drawing on previous recollection of Dutch lexical similarities for support. Indeed, S4 recounted making comparisons with this first language, possibly for experimentation, when learning to write in Arabic.

I was surprised how enthusiastically S3 talked about writing a poem in Dutch. Indeed, this was a critical point in our meeting, which led to my involvement with him in a literacy event to combine social practices and skills development for engagement with writing.

During the first interview S3 had asked me to copy a page from a published booklet that contained the poem that he wrote in Dutch, along with poems that other migrants had written. These poems were enabled, S3 explained, because of his involvement with local researchers. For S3, the poem extended his personal reflections on his life experiences and migration as well as language learning. These experiences, for S3, were evocative long after his personal life events which were described in the poem. Therefore I perceived that for S3 the writing of a poem in Dutch created a learning opportunity for him a long time after his experience and physically writing the composition. The process for S3's engagement with writing was managed by him in discussion with me which I will now explain.

In the early stages of the initial interview, S3 made the writing event his own. He did this by explaining how the opportunity to write a poem emerged, as he explained: "I was student ... [he held a booklet in his hand and showed me the page where his poem appeared] in Dutch language." (S3.1.1-3). "The poem ... was registered in this organization and in [European country] and they make surprise for me and they were bring ... the poem and music and a picture and they describe the situation ... [at a] theatre place in [town name]." (S3 int1/22.6.11).

I was struck by S3's zeal, which seemed to relate more to the effects of being involved with others and in an event that appeared to raise his self-esteem. It seemed to me that S3's written work recognized his personal experiences, which were meaningful to him, but were also communicated to other people involved in the process of presentation and possibly audience participation. Here, Norton and Toohey's (2011) perspective seems evident, in that a dual focus on the social and on processes may enable a person's agency to shape their identities in different contexts. This became clearer when S3 continued: "I was a student like ESOL classes in Dutch language in [early 2000s] somebody from this organization they are interested to make people poems, history and something. He give me the chance to do that ... I didn't have idea to write a poem. And they help me with this. When I write the poem that was ... trahidi poem in Dutch ... I don't know in English how does it work? Do you know trahidi, what meaning?" (S3.1.139). ".....what you get when you pine if you are held you were not happy ... it is nice, but very bad experience." (S3 int1/22.6.11)

Despite my efforts I was unable to offer an English word that S3 thought gave meaning to his description, when he used a Dutch word, as he said: "Do you know 'trahidi', what

meaning?” (S3 int1/11.6.11). I explained to S3 that I had no experience of the Dutch language. Amazingly, my admission about being unfamiliar with Dutch seemed to raise S3’s confidence and triggered a role reversal. It was S3 who became my teacher, as he began:

“ in English is different ... the Dutch language is different ... that is my point ... can I explain the title I write first in Dutch then I try to explain in English.”
(S3 int1/22.6.11)

Immediately S3 had positioned me as the listener as he prepared to organize the literacy event. As shown in the extract above, S3 prepared me for engagement with him as he was about to translate the poem, that he had written, from Dutch to English. I have presented an extract from S3’s process for translation from Dutch to English in the extract included below.

In column “A” of the table I have written the original sentence from S3’s Dutch poem. Then, in column “B”, I present S3’s process as he explains and translates the Dutch sentences into English, which I believe shows the social processes involved in our learning encounter:

Line No.	Column A <i>(S3’s published poem pros that were written in the Dutch language)</i>	Column B <i>(S3’s English language translation and the on-going conversation with the researcher as an intermediary)</i>
1)Title	<i>‘vluchten in mijn eigen land’</i>	That mean Escape from where you born – I escape
2)	Met mijn gezin, mijn vrouw, mijn moeder en mijn kinderen.	with my children and my wife, my mother and my children ...again
3)	Ik kan zelf niet meer lopen.	I can err not walk.
4)	Geen eten, geen medicijnen	[S3 laughs as he speaks] err the medicine is the same er English. That mean no medicine and no eat
5)	De hele dag gereisd.	That mean all day we are in journey [3] to get somewhere
6)	Om zes uur een kleine kamer gehuurd.	At six o’clock in the evening we err take a small house share. House to err for rent [6]
7)	Alleen twee dekbedden voor acht personen.	Only 2 blankets for 8 persons. It is winter it is cold <i>it is ‘donker’</i>

8)	Het is winter, het is koud, het is donker.	..you understand [S3 laughs softly]? R: “it is a cold winter and:: S3: it was winter, was cold. [2] It was dark. R: Dark, yeah?
9)	Op de harde grond ligt een oud tapijt.	Of er of the floor we erm very very old and er carpet.[5]
10)	Geen kaarsen om het licht an te doen.	No erm [6] I forgot erm the word erm. No candle erm no light. Nothing and it was dark.It was nothing to get light. In the house. It is dark. R: so it is a dark old house?

Extract from poem translation transcriptions, lines 1-10 (S3 int1/22.6.11)

In terms of language learning, for S3 this extract was quite remarkable for several reasons. As part of a holistic process which S3 managed, I was an intermediary, a listener and a student, as he took control of his opportunity for learning. Moreover, these practices seemed to enable S3’s positive processes for the negotiation of meaning to shine through.

Perhaps the most obvious points were that the poem was created and written by S3 in Dutch; it was set in the context of his own life experiences and pushed him to engage with two of his other languages for learning. The collaborative nature of my sociable interview with S3 immediately changed the power relations within the encounter, which was open to S3 becoming the “expert”. In addition, the poem was written in a language that was unfamiliar to me, as a teacher, researcher and listener. This meant that I was the “illiterate” receiver, and my role changed to that of a “student” within that interview setting. The poem that was written by S3 previously, was at that time the central focus for engagement with writing which emerged from a social encounter.

It seemed to me that because S3 recognized an opportunity for learning he evoked his agency, which enabled his identity construction to build on his different past life experiences. Moreover, S3’s process enabled him to engage with his past for writing in English, which was very much in his present life, and this appeared to facilitate learning in particular ways. For example, the words that S3 noticed, such as “medicine” he identified as being the same in Dutch or English. He then turned to mixing English and Dutch language “(7) ... it is ‘donker’.” He paused to check my understanding of the word “donker” (or “dark” in English), as teachers do, and he continued in line (8) to emphasize the English word “was”; “... it was winter, was cold. [2] It was dark.” Here S3 noticed the tense and changed my utterance “is”, to “was” and S3 then answered his own question by emphasising the word “dark” for which I made a clarification. In line (10), he suddenly remembered the word “candle” that occurred to him as

he translated from Dutch to English. I believed that through translating the poem to me, S3 exploited a rich spontaneous opportunity and I will now explain this further.

It appeared evident to me that S3's recognition of English words or phrases, as they arose, on a moment-by-moment basis enabled language exploration. This exploration in different languages was relevant to S3's specific contexts, from which he appeared to make sense of the written language. I therefore draw attention to how vocabulary learning became beneficial to S3 as he explored specific personal and contextual aspects of his life. I believe that such social practice raises the significance of one's personal background knowledge for learning to write in a new language as an adult. In other words, drawing on one's own life trajectory in a continual process of learning about culture in everyday life extends beyond or across boundaries (see Holliday's (2013) 'Grammar of Culture'). In fact, the poem for S3 seemed somehow to captivate his curiosity and aroused lexical interest for extended learning. I interpreted this to be so, because one month later, in another interview, I noticed how S3 engaged with an unfamiliar word: "I just err remember the word you say now. Yeah, the poem was very emotional; I hope that I er write a very happy poem ...[in future]" (S3 int2/13.7.11).

I believe that, for S3, learning new word meanings and spellings was far removed from individual skills development. Vocabulary learning became part of a complex encounter with an intermediary, where S3 was truly the expert for taking control of and extending his language learning opportunities. This was different from the experience recounted by S1 above (Sub-Section 6.3.2), who at that time seemed to engage with skills development rather than social practices. Moreover, for S3 spontaneous engagement with writing seemed to be engineered by him, because he recognized an opportunity for learning and was articulate in involving me as an intermediary.

It was evident that S3 was prepared to harness opportunistic encounters, as indeed S4 did above (Sub-Section 6.2.1), when he engaged with the writing of a handwritten "till receipt" and "counting" in the act of selling. Nevertheless, S3 appeared to go further than S4 by taking agency to engineer a holistic process for learning English for his specific purpose as he integrated different contexts and took control of that situation. It seemed that S3's experience brought together the social practices from S4's account and the technical aspects from S1's focus on skills development. S3's practices, I thought, were quite different from the skills production that S1 engaged in alone, as shown in the previous Sub-Section, 6.3.2, and apparently extended the opportunistic encounter recounted by S4. In stark contrast to the experiences of S4, S1 and S3, however, was my involvement with S2 as an intermediary for engagement with writing to enable him to compose a letter.

6.3.4 Writing a letter: “I don’t like [writing], every time phone”

It seemed remote from S2’s experience to engage with writing letters or using social media via a computer to contact family. This was apparent when I asked S2 in an interview about whether he had to write in order to contact his family. S2 said quite firmly and almost with dread; “No I don’t have, that is by phone, no, no I can’t! ... I don’t like, every time phone for my family” (S2 int 1/8.6.11). In a strange way, though, I thought that S2’s perceptions about writing could be two-sided. Firstly, there was S2’s indication of “dread” about writing here, and secondly, S2’s surprising optimism about the prospect of his engagement with writing in England as he later indicated:

“My writing is no good, I can’t write full sentence, but some word look like a word; my name may be ... yes I am very like for future speaking English, read and write; look like interpreter you know [smiling]? “
(S2 int2/8.6.11).

Despite S2’s account of negative childhood school experiences in Sub-Section 6.2.4 above, and his possible struggles to write in any language, he seemed to believe that he could write and was relaxed enough to conceal any negative feelings in a joke.

Throughout the research project period, when I was in contact with S2, I perceived that his engagement with writing was more complex than S1’s, S3’s or S4’s. It seemed to me that for S2, engagement with writing coincided with fluctuating self-esteem, underlying personal conflicts, or fear of failure, which could reflect the negative school experiences he had recounted. I felt that these potential obstacles for S2 were manifested in his background and this was reflected in his cautious approach when attempting to take up, or to recognize new opportunities for engagement with writing. Clearer insights into these complex struggles were evident in data that showed S2’s processes for engagement with writing, such as my involvement with him as an intermediary as he composed a letter, to which I now turn.

a) Intermediary support: “You see about it write letter make apologise?”

The process for engagement with writing a letter began as S2 enlisted me, to my surprise, as an intermediary to help him, as shown in the following conversation extract:

S2: Yeah? You see about it write letter make apologize?
R: Me. I ... I what do you want me to help you write a letter?
S2: Yeah.
R: To apologize?
S2: Yeah.
R: Oh I see, OK. Yes I can help you to write a letter.
(S2 tel int/6.5.12)

In this short conversational extract S2 made an unexpected, clumsy and direct request (line 1) for help. I was surprised by S2's request, but agreed to help him to write a letter. The request took me off guard and my reaction was to say "me. I ... I what ..." (line 2). I then gathered my thoughts and I made two further clarification requests in lines 2 and 4 and finally agreed to help S2 to write a letter, in line 6. I subsequently arranged to meet S2 at the city library entrance. We entered the library, found a suitable place to write and engaged socially to enable S2 to write a letter. I described this experience in my field notes, as the following extract explains:

"I walked slowly and slightly apart from S2, as I observed him scanning the rooms on the ground floor from one side to the other. His posture was upright and purposeful as he appeared to stride on in a confident manner, with no obvious hint that a library visit might be a rare occurrence S2 sat down on an easy chair and I sat opposite. The chairs were low and soft making it difficult to lean forward towards the equally low table between us. The atmosphere, I thought, was a little uneasy. There were several children and parents looking for books not too far away. ... As I got out my papers and put them onto the table, I looked at S2 again and realized that he was not engaged with preparing to write but was distracted by the environment ... S2 was looking uncomfortable [therefore] I left him to see if there was a quieter place to sit ... Another room resembled a reception area ... There was a full-sized table and chairs in front of several racks of information leaflet trays, near to an assistant's desk... I went back to S2 [who was sitting on the low chair near to parents and children] and suggested that we could work in the nearby 'office' area (this seemed to be a more adult environment). S2 nodded his head and also seemed relieved. I pointed out the area where the assistant was working. ... S2 looked surprised and said, "Is it ok?" (S2 FN.12.5.12). I said, "Of course it is". (LW FN.12.5.12), so S2 walked on, in front of me ... He pulled out a chair from under the table on the left and he indicated with an outstretched hand that I should sit opposite him at the round table."

(S2.FN/12.5.12)

Here, S2 made a premeditated decision to engage with writing, in order to compose a letter. Perhaps it was because it was S2's decision, and on his terms, that he could stride with confidence into the library. It seemed that S2 quickly identified a table where he and I could sit and prepare to write. However, in reality, for S2 the environment appeared challenging, or even may have been a new experience. S2 gave me the impression of being anxiously distracted by others who were involved in literacy practices nearby. This was a familiar feeling to me when I was learning Japanese in Japan, as I was drawn to particular people and places that offered a comfortable setting, often with friends, for concentration on writing. Because of S2's response to that particular context, I could only assume that S2's self-imposed negative identity construction distracted him from the process of engagement with writing, perhaps due to an underlying wave of low self-esteem. Again I recognized my own response to engagement with Japanese and my tactics to avoid self-imposed, or others', negative perceptions. In recognising S2's response to the library context a more adult-like office kind of atmosphere appeared to reassure S2 into taking control of the process again, when he pulled out a chair for me to sit

down. During this encounter it seemed possible for both parties to learn from the context, and especially for S2 perhaps to reflect on his personal worth, as indicated in Tett and Maclachlan's (2008) research. In turn, opportunities for positive identity positioning seemed to arise out of S2's increased self-esteem and confidence that was evinced through his actions. The next challenge for S2 was the process of explaining the contents and purpose of his letter. I will now explain my role as an intermediary and the process that enabled S2 to engage with writing and then to compose a letter.

b) Letter writing: intermediary role

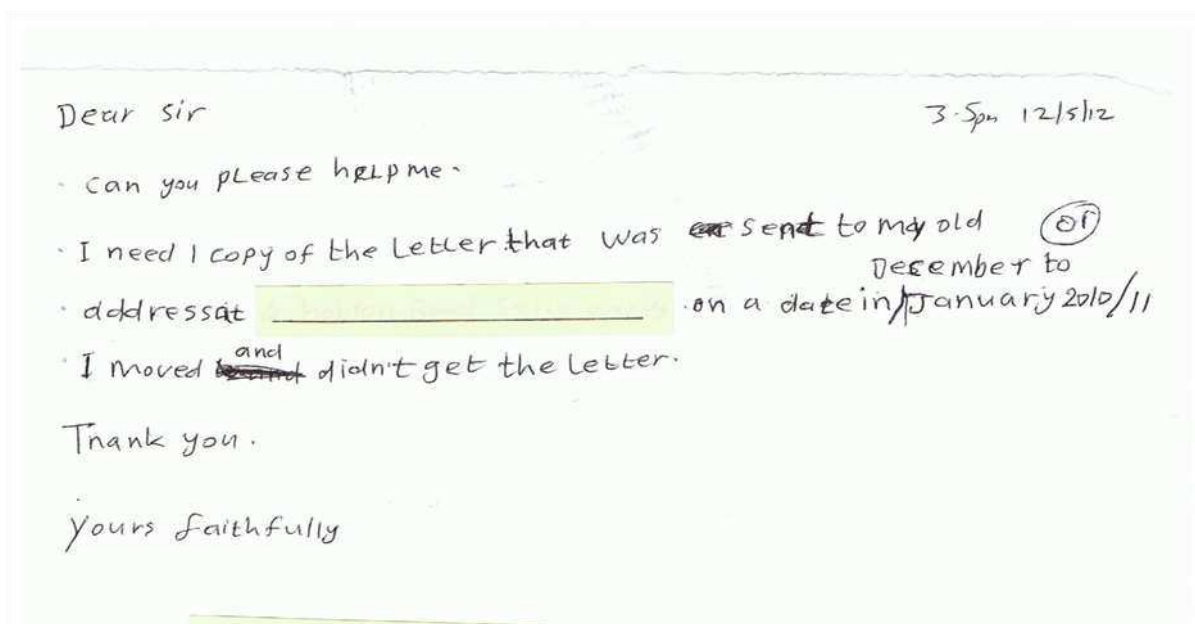
First of all, I asked S2 to tell me what he wanted to say in his letter in English. However, S2 looked at me with hunched shoulders as he shifted slightly awkwardly on his chair. I remained silent, but took a blank piece of paper that was lying on the table, and drew a template of a letter. I then asked S2 if he could put the official letter that he had brought with him, next to the template.

We looked at the letter structure together and compared the letter that S2 had received with the template that I had drawn. I encouraged S2 to identify the structure and salient points of the letter, including where contact names and the date appeared. When S2 had identified and explained the features and structure of the letter he had, we then turned to the template. The purpose of the template was to elicit S2's knowledge about writing a letter and where the content was positioned to structure a formal letter.

The next stage was for S2 to write a draft letter. I encouraged S2 to verbalize what he wanted to write. Slowly, S2 negotiated every word with me. S2 did this firstly by saying a word and secondly by actually writing the word down, often as I said the word again or spelt out each letter slowly. It was a time-consuming process, because S2 asked me how to pronounce and how to spell each word. In this respect, I could say that he was fastidious. It was evident to me that S2 wanted to write as accurately as possible, and as S2 wrote I continued to spell out or voice words, but still S2 checked again as he was writing or before putting pen to paper.

After a while, I challenged S2 to write alone, without checking. However, S2 continued to ask me how to spell each word or if a phrase was correct. It was as though he was afraid of making mistakes, but also had pride in writing as well as he could. Slowly S2 wrote, and he took a deep breath before creating each neatly written word whilst voicing it syllable by syllable at the same time. After a while, as S2 continued, I listened, but reduced my suggestions of rephrasing or offers of spellings to when I was pressed hard by S2, sometimes countering by asking "What do you think?". I tried to encourage S2 to work out what he wanted to write

alone. Nevertheless, I also bore in mind that my experience here, with S2's process for engagement with writing, also involved him in getting to grips with English cultural expectations relating to writing conventions, presentation and structure, which were probably different to those of his home culture or usual practice. Indeed, in agreement with Festino's (2007) point of view, this encounter seemed to offer some critical reflection on writing in English but also, as Purves (1991) notes, possibly raised S2's memory of past knowledge of struggles with literacy to present further challenges for him in that moment. Therefore, after approximately one hour and fifteen minutes of working together, we reached S2's first draft (with the addresses and signature deleted):



Extract letter writing draft one (S2 FN /12.5.12)

I will briefly comment on the technical aspects of S2's engagement with writing and the composition of the letter in Extract Four above. I will then turn to the process relating to S2's engagement with writing.

In the extract letter shown above, I included the faint dots that appear against the left-hand margin to provide a guideline for S2 to follow on straight lines as a structural model. This letter was the first draft that S2 wrote before producing the final version that he took home. The technical support process can be observed. For example, "I need 1 copy of ...": in this sentence "1" came from the fact that I asked S2, "How many copies do you want and how can you write about that?". I hoped to elicit the article "a", but S2 wrote "1". Later, he corrects the phrase "send to me" by writing "sent to my". The first could be a tense error, the second might occur because he was using the vernacular "me", that commonly occurs in spoken English to mean

“my”, in the way it would be written in standard English. I will now turn to the challenges for S2 that appeared as struggles to engage with writing.

The letter Extract shown here, for fluent writers might appear simplistic in structure and easy to compose. However for S2, as with many migrants who are early writers of English, such a short letter could be monumentally challenging. Nonetheless, as Crowther, Maclachlan and Tett’s (2010) research shows in Chapter 3, S2’s apparent positive identity may have significantly reduce any possible effects of negativity about learning, especially in view of his previously recounted poor schooling experiences. With this in mind, the effort may be magnified for people such as S2 who are beginning to write, in any language at all, for the first time.

It seemed to me that S2 was used to getting things done in his own way, because he effectively enlisted my participation as an intermediary. However, I believed that S2 strove to maximize the opportunity for writing that he himself had created. I believed that this was partly because he was wary of reader evaluation if he made mistakes and also because he seemed unsure how to manage the process with confidence. This was a strikingly different example from S3’s articulate engagement with the discussion about writing the poem in 5.2.3 above.

Outwardly, S2 appeared confident yet his struggle to engage with writing seemed to create anxiety, although his determination pushed him to succeed, as Holliday, Hyde and Kullman’s (2010) study indicates. Because of the experience in the library, I felt that for S2 engagement with writing coincided with fluctuating confidence to achieve what he wanted to do, which led to underlying personal conflicts or fear of failure. These hidden aspects, I thought, were divulged through his cautious approach to spelling, his attention to detail, and the need to seek approval, and his body language. This suggested to me that S2, as with S1 in Sub-Section 6.3.2 above, was possibly partly influenced by classroom pedagogy in England, and by his previous early engagement with writing with different people. Even though S2 seemed to grapple with a process to utilize the help of an intermediary he was unsure about taking full control of the writing encounter. Here it seems that S1 and S2’s approaches to their writing processes may have emerged from their writing experiences in different communities of practice and this was a factor identified by Angouri and Harwood (2008) in Chapter 3. Nevertheless, I perceived that, despite such complexity, there was no suggestion that S2 might give up trying as he showed determination to persist in learning to write in English.

6.3.5 Section summary

These data showed four individual processes in respect of these migrants' early engagement with writing as they drew on past life experiences in moment by moment practice. It appeared that integrating different languages and recognising opportunities for spontaneous social encounters for writing in different contexts increased their opportunities for identity negotiation, as Hull and Nelson (2009) claim. These possibilities increased with raised self-esteem and confidence for negotiating their positive identity positioning, as perceived by Hull and Stornaiuolo (2010) (see Chapter 3). On the other hand, especially for S1, conforming to college expectations seemed to generate writing from a deficit identity position as he strove to reduce his perceived poor spelling alone in his personal time. Nevertheless, as Davies and Harré (1990) tell us, opportunities for engagement in different social contexts offer deeper exploration of one's life aspirations for negotiating new positions with others. It appeared that for these migrants, taking control of their early engagement with writing in different contexts, enabled openings for their positive identity positioning regardless of the identity challenges. Moreover, these migrants' negotiation of different social structures and cultural contexts that emerged from drawing on their life experiences, seemed frequently to shape and re-shape their processes for learning to write in a new language, in the here and now (Block 2013; Holliday 2013).

The next section introduces data that showed how the four participants were involved with intermediaries for writing towards independence.

6.4 Intermediaries: "I wait help of my friend"

This section presents further data showing how the role of intermediaries and their involvement with migrants assisted these four case-study participants with everyday writing. I will firstly introduce some of the reasons that participants raised for their involvement with intermediaries for writing. Secondly, I will present data extracts that show how the four participants' involvement with intermediaries led to some independence or struggles to write in English. I also demonstrate these migrants' determination to become independent. I include stories and anecdotes that participants recounted about their involvement with intermediaries for engagement with writing towards meeting their life aspirations, or challenges they had to overcome. The data extracts show participants' encounters with bureaucracy, work and digital technology that impacted on their agency to act in different ways.

6.4.1 Independence: “just I doing my sign and then he is help me”

The accounts of the four participants indicated that intermediaries seemed helpful for getting everyday life writing done. This was indicated by S4 as he explained his experience in England: “My friend he speak English as well, he born here ... he is going with me for speaking and writing ... just I doing my sign and then he is help me.” (S4.2.21 and 23). It was apparent to me that the help of a friend, who was engaged as an intermediary, and who was possibly a fluent English language “expert”, was invaluable to S4. There were particular reasons for S4’s desire to write and he explained this when he said: “Anywhere important is writing ... because you can’t go to bank ... you can’t fill in the application form and ... you can’t go to different countries by plane:: yeah.” (S4.2.15). From S4’s account, I perceived that writing for him was an imperative part of his life, as it might be for anyone, although an intermediary offered him greater independence that led to access to local services and possibly international travel. In addition, it seemed to me that writing in new languages and travel was perceived by S4 as part of his life aspirations and identity construction. I believed this because of his account here and especially in view of his enthusiastic accounts in Sub-Section 6.3.1.

In moving across geographical borders, S3 also sought the assistance of an intermediary for a major life change when he came to England, as he explained, “[in] August 2009 ... I come first to apply for National Insurance number and then I wait help of my friend in England ... he help me to find a house but doesn’t need visa or something I have [Western European] passport all my family. When I come in England in that period one and half month I get ten month visa because I have got everything.” (S3.1.180-184). I perceived from S3’s account that he believed the help of an intermediary paved the way for a smooth passage for him and his family to settle in England. I interpreted S3’s account to mean that help from his friend perhaps reduced the burden of bureaucracy towards meeting possible stressful time limits for completing the immigration process. I also wondered if the satisfaction indicated in S3’s account implied some pride about his efficient facilitation of a process for getting a ten-month visa within one and a half months of arriving in England, thereby enabling positive identity construction. This particular data extract shows one example of positive encounters with intermediaries who seemed to be friends. However, participants’ also recounted experiences of encounters for writing with other acquaintances or professionals that sometimes led to struggles, to which I will now turn.

6.4.2 Struggles for independence: “nobody help me”

I now turn to the wider implications for writing in England that led to specific challenges for the participants. The significance of writing for S1 became clear when he emphatically said:

“very important it is ... help a lot coz anything you have to read, you have to write, if you don’t know that is big problem you can’t get a job coz any job you are looking for you have to fill application form and if you don’t know how to fill it you can’t get the job.” (S1.3.95-99). Here it seemed that S1 strongly believed that writing to fill in job application forms was probably a major challenge for him. Completion of job application forms could be difficult for anyone, although, as S1 recounted, “you have to write, if you don’t know that is big problem.” (S1.3.97). I perceived that writing could be a major concern to him and for which he seemed to take full responsibility. However for him the implication seemed to be the necessity for an “expert” intermediary. For S1, writing to complete application forms, he perceived, led to the possibility of him finding work, or not.

In fact, S3 indicated how education and ambition for work intertwined for him, as he said: “start couple of two months ago training for job, I have got ‘C’ [driving] licence category ... for Heavy Goods Vehicle but I need Eco degree Baccalaureate the long one for that [but] nobody help me, nobody help me ... I have to pay one exam and the training period just four day and five day exam and training is £1,000 and if you fail you have to pay again to book.” (S3.1.207). I interpreted this extract as underlining S3’s perception of the importance of intermediary help for him to achieve his work and life aspirations, a perception which he may have drawn from experiences in different cultural situations or countries. I believed that S3 also suggested the severity of his struggle and his desires to take control of his situation so as to bridge the gap between his past and future qualifications through the desired HGV licence test. However, S3’s account suggested considerable difficulty in engaging any “expert” intermediary. It seemed to me that S3’s frustration possibly emerged because of lack of opportunity to encounter an appropriate intermediary with whom he might engage his own process for learning.

These accounts emerged as data revealed participants’ increased confidence to discuss more serious life issues and challenges over time. In turn, their identities seemed to change with changing and fluid contexts of communication in on the spot, moment by moment, encounters. This aspect of my research highlighted a gap in literature that according to Lee and Anderson (2009) and Norton (2000) requires our deeper understanding. I now turn to the participants’ accounts about their desires for independence and the role of intermediaries for engagement with writing as social practice, which again draws attention to their sometimes complex or even fragile construction of identities.

6.4.3 “I want to do by MYSELF! anything you need”

It was noticeable how S3 and S1 drew attention to what I perceived as their aspirations to be independent writers of English.

For example, I unexpectedly rang S3 on his mobile phone and he later referred to me catching him writing to complete a (second) new driving licence application form because the first one, he said, got lost in the post. S3 explained: “Yesterday when you phoned I was in Post Office doing a new application. It cost £20. I already paid £30 – money!” I asked him who filled in the form and he said, “MYSELF! If I want help I can ask children” (S3.FNB.4.14). I was left with no doubt about S3’s desire to write independently and his ability to manage his own writing by calling upon his children if necessary. My attention was also drawn to the additional monetary consequences of S3’s plight for independence. S3 indicated that the first application form might have got lost in the post, but he also stressed the financial impact for him when things went wrong.

Over time, S1 also appeared to have strong aspirations to write independently, as he said; “I want to do by MYSELF! ... anything you need you can’t go look for the people ... something you have to do by yourself. I think that is best way.” (S1.3.100-104). Here, I believe, S1 was indicating that intermediaries might not always be available, or that he was placed negatively by others because of his dependent status for writing. When S1 said, “you can’t go look for people” (S1.3.103), I felt that S1 probably was referring to the time constraints involved in finding others to help, to a yearning to take full control of his own needs, or even both.

In a later interview S1 explained:

“If I continue I will do that [form filling] soon. This moment I can’t complete all the form but I do some, like my name, my address and some things if they not so difficult ... the rest I look for someone to help. I take it to my friends, I go there, if they have time to come and help me at home, they come ... if they don’t I ask them if they are free, may I go to their house?”
(S1.4.16-24).

Here, I thought, that S1 appeared to be more relaxed and positive about his prospects. Nevertheless, although he seemed aware of the drawbacks in terms of intermediaries’ availability, S1 was apparently flexible in the way he fitted in with others to get his writing done. I interpreted S1’s account to imply that the process involved to enlist others could, at times, be a complex struggle.

In addition, for example, when I asked S4 if he felt anxious about using intermediaries, he said: “Yes, of course, because I don’t know what:: I don’t understand, I can’t say.” (S4.2.25). Here, S4 appeared to summarize possible major concerns surround the trust that he placed in intermediaries for writing. I believed that such anxieties and placing trust in others might create varying degrees of difficulty depending on the severity of purpose.

It seemed that intermediaries were necessary for migrants' writing to get things done in the short-term, but participants showed little sign of delusions about their difficulties. The data showed that participants' involvement with other people for writing in English varied, writing that surrounded work, form filling, IT and digital technology were common sources of everyday need. This suggests perhaps complex and recurrent social interplay which Gu (2010) shows is related to identity construction. I will now present specific data extracts that demonstrated participants' successes or problems in respect of specific encounters.

6.4.4 “My job is help for me”

The only case-study participant who had a part-time job as a security guard at the time of my fieldwork was S4. Working for S4 led to specific purposes for writing in English and also appeared to offer him access to intermediary support. This was because S4 referred to writing reports in English at regular intervals, as he recounted here: “Yes my job is help for me. Because my manager, all people is English, they call me [telephone home] three hours after and I will start the duty ... I will write report in English. After one hours, two hours ... this helpful for me.” (S4.2.11). I understood that this was possible for S4 because he continued: “Supervisor is checking always, any writing they are checking after one week ... yes, ok, ok, this report.” (S4.2.32)

From S4's account, I interpreted the role of his supervisor to be that of acting as an intermediary for writing, which was perhaps part of S4's employment induction period. It also seemed that the supervisor's assistance led to a supportive process. In an interview one month later S4 said: “just er:: I see any problem, anything:: I will write in my:: information book ... work book. He [the supervisor] understand! Very well” (S4 int 3.2020-24/16.11.11). When I asked S4 if his supervisor made corrections to his writing, S4 replied in a positive tone of voice by saying: “No, he understand and I:: just I will emm write, he understand anything.” (S4.int3.2028). With the help of an intermediary it seemed that S4 believed that his writing was both legible and comprehensible for his supervisor at that point in time. However, not all encounters with intermediaries might be perceived so successful, as will be shown in the following data extract relating to S2's experience.

6.4.5 “I can't get friend”

Intermediaries may not always be available or obliging and the task of writing in English, especially for form filling, could present challenges. This is an instance where access to a dental service, which most people might take for granted, presented troublesome challenges for S2. In the following extract S2 explained his encounter with a professional:

“Last week, dentist, she said, ‘Fill in form’. I told her, say ‘help me’. She say, ‘No go home’. She said, ‘bring friend’. I can’t get friend ... didn’t, couldn’t go back ... all friends working, at school, don’t have time, friend are [same country] like me some people have British [Citizenship]”
(S2.FNB3.30)

In the above extract it seemed to me that S2’s attempt to enlist the support of a professional intermediary for form filling appeared to become problematic. In S2’s account he apparently implied that having a friend available for form filling was taken for granted by the professional involved. Indeed the professional’s assumption, that S2 might enlist a friend, seemed to place an additional burden on him in that situation. It was unclear from S2’s account whether his friends lived far away, or shared S2’s rudimentary English writing ability, or whether S2’s personal sensitivity and/or the stigma attached to poor literacy skills challenged his self-esteem to the point of simply giving up (Crowther and Tett 2011: 135). Nevertheless, S2 seemingly chose not to complete the form, and thereby may have foregone the dental service on that occasion.

Following the interview relating to S2’s experience at the dental surgery, I found that the form required for dental care was an HC1 Form (Note 1) and in a field note I wrote:

“Following the interview with S2, I decided to find the HC1 Form on the National Health Service (NHS) website myself. It took me approximately 15 minutes to read and understand where a form could be downloaded or where a hard copy was available for collection. There was also a considerable amount of reading while navigating the website to locate relevant web-pages. As a low level learner of English, I believe that it would have been very difficult, or even impossible, for S2 to identify the HC1 form among many other forms shown, which appeared in pdf format. In addition, S2 could have been challenged to print out a form without the help of a mediator. I am also presuming that S2 might not have had access to a computer for personal use because he previously stated this.”
(S2.FN 3.30)

This could suggest that migrants’ early engagement with writing in English for the purpose of form-filling sometimes proves to be stressfully prohibitive, especially if documents need to be downloaded from a website. As shown here, S2 was probably unable to use a necessary service that the majority of people almost certainly take for granted. From S2’s account about dental care, the professional involved may have assumed that for migrants it was normal to rely on friends for form filling and therefore offered no other solution at that time. This section reveals the individual responses of participants to challenges in social and institutional contexts for everyday writing and shows how the reactions of other people at times influenced their identity positioning.

6.4.6 Section summary

Despite the challenges and conflicts discussed in this section, these migrants' desire to write and to continue their learning appeared to remain strong. What is more, in these data, intermediary assistance showed signs of reducing identity conflicts when people were able to make sense of the multi-level influences that often seemed to be related to their 'socio-historical baggage', as Block (2007) shows us. This might be unsurprising as research tells us that positioning is relational, and because of this, people compare themselves against others and against their socio-histories throughout life as the literature tells us (Block 2007; Holliday 2013; Norton and Toohey 2011; Weedon 1997, and others). Of course, as shown above, some writing activities may require handwritten documents, but in recent times online digital texts, to which I now turn, have become more routine.

6.5 Digital texts

In contemporary life it is a common assumption, and indeed it is almost an essential expectation, that people communicate, read and retrieve information by using a personal computer (PC) by connecting to the World Wide Web (www) through the Internet. In turn, there are endless arrays of text and screen literacies, including multimodal social networking, for people to take up in different ways (Ivanič et al. 2007). A computer may therefore link networks of people for work and for social purposes, or for the retrieval and/or printing of information and forms, as Barton and Papen (2010: 4) state, is crucial to modern life. In this section, I present data relating to these participants' PC use before turning to digital SMS text messaging. I begin with data in respect of S1 and S2 as they encounter digital texts.

a) "I don't know how to use a computer"

In the second interview, when S1 was asked if he used a computer outside college he replied, "No, I don't know how to use a computer" (S1.2.82). This was an intriguing answer because when asked if he used a computer in college he replied, "Yeah, once a week" (S1.2.86). The frequently held and common assumption that most people access a computer to connect to the Internet or for social networking might not have matched S1's experience. In another interview four months later (October 2011), S1 hinted at his continued problems: when asked again about using a computer outside college, he said, "No, no ... that is difficult for me at this moment" (S1.3.133- 138). Nevertheless, sometimes an intermediary facilitated web browsing and printing for S1: "They [Job Centre staff] help just to look for the job in the Internet, then if I saw them they print it and photocopy and gave me details." (S1.3.132). This

suggested to me a long process for S1, because even though an intermediary used the internet to locate and print off a job application form, S1 was still left with the problem of finding an intermediary to complete the photocopied version.

Using a computer also seemed to challenge S2, but his difficulties seemed more acute. S2 talked about contact with family and friends in his home country, but when asked if he used social media or the computer, as many people do, he said, “No I don’t have ... that is by phone.” (S2.2.124). The indication that S2 rarely accessed a computer outside college was no surprise. In fact, in this college setting S2 frequently asked me for help to log-on to college computers. A significant problem for S2 was recalling his password. When I assisted S2 to log-on to a computer I observed first-hand how he found it a challenge to use the mouse, keyboard and internet browser, which led me to believe that he was unfamiliar with what many might consider everyday technology. This also suggested to me that S2 probably struggled to access desired wider, or even critical, applications, which limited his possibilities to extend or manage some of his life horizons. Indeed S2’s predicament could on occasions frustrate his efforts, such as those discussed earlier for the retrieval and completion of a dental form. In the next sub-section I present data relating to S3’s natural and everyday use of a PC and digital texts.

b) “... from the internet [laughs] yes, easy way!”

In contrast to the experiences of S1 and S2, S3 explained: “I was in telecommunications office and very important office. I work there long time yeah? More people wasn’t allowed to come in this office because very secure.” (S3.1.99). S3 was recounting his home-country work experience, where technology seemed part of everyday life, as it was also in England. I observed this when S3 made a mobile phone call during an interview. S3’s mobile phone beeped and this drew his attention away from the interview. I waited while he made a call. He spoke in L2 and then spelt out a word and said, “OK, bye”; he then explained, “My daughter. [laughs] I give her my computer password. She want use it. Don’t have password [smiling]” (S3.2.111-114). The personal exchange between S3 and his daughter appeared to illustrate two factors. Firstly, S3 and his daughter showed a probable shared familiarity with technology. Secondly, S3 and his daughter appeared to use English and other languages in everyday conversation about technology. These two factors here apparently led to an example of spontaneous literacy practices. In addition, S3 spelt out his password freely and seemed unconcerned that his conversation was overheard by me as part of the interview process. This was my interpretation because of S3’s immediate explanation to me, about the purpose of his call. The interpretation here could be that for S3 it was normal for English and other conversational repertoires to be used between family members during literacy events and indeed when using and discussing technology. S3’s take-up of an option to include technology in an

instructed learning context also became clear during collaborative year-book writing that will be explained in the next section.

The search for a job appeared to be a major concern for S3 and, when I asked him where he got company names from, he said, “Oh, from the Internet [laughs] yes, easy way!” (S3.2.39and41). Technology for S3 seemed naturally taken up and appeared to facilitate job searches with fewer requests for written applications, as he said, “sometime more they ask for reference ... for experience of somebody and they say send your CV.” (S3.2.125-126). S3 explained how he had had a CV written for him, “A professional office they make me. In [This city] and they work for job centre and he make the CV for people in Job Seeker allowance and he make me CV.” (S3.2.120-125). S3 implied that a professionally prepared CV could have reduced the time involved in locating intermediaries for writing. This experience was in contrast to S1, who appeared to complete application forms more frequently and sought intermediaries.

Perhaps this was because S3’s working history and continuity of technology use in everyday situations reduced potential frustrations for writing digital texts. I now turn to data showing how all four case-study participants used their mobile phones for SMS text messaging and writing in English.

6.5.1 SMS text messages in English: “I received your message”

Text messaging emerged initially out of the necessity to arrange interviews, but became a surprisingly insightful data set that showed the participants’ individual approaches to writing in English over time. As previously discussed, S3 seemed familiar with digital technology, but S4, S1 and S2 showed less secure confidence to engage in writing in English for text messaging in differing degrees. During an interview, when asked about writing generally, S4 stated, “Yes, this very important thing, writing and speaking ... because ... [to] send text message and e-mail and you must spell any words to complete, spells anything, writing very important.” (S4 int 3.2045/16.11.11). S1 added, “I know how to send text message but I have a problem spelling.” (S1 int2.210/25/5/11). “I can’t text because my spelling is a problem.” (S1 int 2.213/25.5.11). “I want to ... my spelling is no correct, if you tell me how to spell ‘beautiful’ if you ask me to spell ‘ugly’ I can’t spell. If I text somebody they can’t read it.” (S1 int2.216/25.5.11).

I gained the impression that S4 and S2 struggled to meet common standard expectations for spelling and S1’s account in particular seemed to imply a possible fear that poor English spelling could lead to negative reader evaluation. I will now present extracts from data that showed some opportunities and challenges relating to SMS text messaging:

I sent the first text message about a research meeting that was received by S3, who replied within an hour.

xx.6.11 14.44	From: S3 (607) Hi leslyit ?s S3, I received your message I can meet you on Wednesday next week after lunch at college tx.
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TM.S3/06.11

Here, as with the reference to S3's use of a computer in Section 6.5(b) above, S3 showed an established use of text messages for everyday social liaison. In contrast to S1, the interpretation here was that S3 not only sent frequent text messages, but also that it could be deduced that S3 was familiar with abbreviated English text words, such as 'tx' for "thanks" or "thank you" that would tend to facilitate a quick reply. There was an appearance of implicit confidence in S3's text response, though he probably sent messages without review or concern for correct spelling, such as 'Lesley' keyed as 'lesly' and 'is' keyed as '?s', or for reader evaluation. During an interview S3 elaborated on text message activities, "in Dutch yeah and in UK with my friends or for example if needed a text message write English but no in [L1]." (S3.2.201). I interpreted S3's explanation here to mean that text messages had probably become part of his everyday communication in Europe because he indicates not texting in his first language. This could suggest that S3 has adapted text messaging for his own purposes, or that it became a common mode of communication for him in Europe which might not have been accessible or widely used in his home country, possibly more than thirteen years earlier. However, S1's and S2's lack of response to my general or procedural text messages was overtaken by rich responses when I sent a personal, social greeting.

a) "Happy New Year"

Even though text messages were sent over a six-month period to S1 and S2, what stimulated a response was a personal greeting that went beyond the previous bland, procedural or informative notes:

01.01.12	To: S1, S2, S4 Happy New Year. May it bring u everything you wish for! Lesley
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TM.S1/01.12

I found that, from this friendly greeting onwards, text messages seemed to change the context of communication. For S2 and S1, text messages seemed to move away from being a

formal way to make arrangements, towards a social context that opened a new mode of occasional and meaningful communication.

b) “I wan next month go to holid”

As shown in the text message activity summary (Appendix 3), S2 wrote three text messages during a five-month period, even though he was sent twelve. This factor suggests that text messaging was particularly challenging for S2. However, the fact that he replied to a personal New Year greeting implied a level of raised confidence or trust to invest in the research relationship. The salient point here was that, even though composing and keying text messages appeared to be challenging for S2, he endeavoured to communicate his movements.

01.01.12 10.47	From: S2 Happy New Year Lesiey Am S2
7.01.12 22.25	From: S2 Hi Lesley I wan next month go to holid Am S2

TM.S2/01.12

And,

06.05.12 22.49	From: S2 Hello Lesley how are am xxx(name) can I phone me now I have time now and timorro
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TM.S2/05.12

The message on 1 January 2012 was very clear, keyed in “standard” English, and S2 also used capital letters, which could be taken as an indication that he wanted to send a “correct” message. On 7 January 2012, S2’s text conveyed a clear message about his intention to go on holiday, and his use of “wan” and “holid” (to mean “want” and “holiday”) could either be his own abbreviations or spelling mistakes. It was perhaps more likely that S2 was including abbreviations for “want” and “holiday”, because many of his “spelling mistakes” seemed to derive from word phonetics, such as “timorro” that resembled the local vernacular pronunciation, rather than the standard form “tomorrow”.

The message sent by S2 on 6 May 2012 indicated an uncertainty about the use of pronouns, which could imply that S2 seldom sent personal text messages, or, indeed, wrote personal notes.

c) “Hi good evening how are you.”

In striking contrast to S3, and to S2, the text messages that S1 sent were noticeably different, as shown in the following conversation:

02.01.12 21.18	From: S1 (new phone number) Hi good evening how are you.I saw your message last time I’m very very happy, happy new year too. God bless you. I’m very happy thank you very much. Have good evening see you later. Is S1 from [city]
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TM.S1/01.12

I believed that S1’s reply on 2 January 2012 looks well written and it was keyed in standard English form, with no abbreviated text words, even though my text included “u” (for “you”), which could have encouraged an abbreviated response. In fact, the SMS text message conversation became extended beyond my expectations:

7.01.12 14.25	From: S1 Hi good afternoon how era you? Happy new year. The message I sent to you I wrote myself, but my number still the same.Ihope you are understanding my writing. This is my number
7.01.12 14.30	To: S1 Yes, I understand your writing very well. Thank you for letting me know your mobile number is the same. When do you go back to college?
	From: S1 Hi good evening is just now I read your message very well, Am going back to College on Monday morning from nine thirty to twelve forty five. Have good evening

TM.S1/01.12

The well written text message sent by S1 on 7 January 2012 hinted to me that when he wrote “Ihope you are understanding my writing.” (TM.S1/01/12) this was probably because he lacked confidence and possibly feared negative evaluation. I wondered if S1 had started to confront his continuing struggle for confidence to write because of the collaborative research relationship being founded on trust over time, which opened this opportunity for S1’s spontaneous experimentation for learning. One interpretation from this exchange, where S1 initiated the conversation, could be that it resembles the scaffolding theory of initiation, response and feedback (IRF). Clarification requests are generally linked to spontaneous verbal interaction, offering an interlocutor space to negotiate meaning for second language learning. Conversely, in instructed learning contexts, teacher-talk often consists of questions to elicit “correct” student answers by directing and controlling students to demonstrate knowledge for

positive or negative feedback. However, the SMS text message conversation that S1 engaged with here changed the balance of power, allowing him to make an initiation and a clarification request that was directly relevant to him, at that time. S1's response to my question, "When do you go back to college?", left S1 choice to affirm his own understanding and to give specific details about returning to college. S1 could have given a one-word answer, such as "Monday". One might speculate that the social nature of the text message exchange presented S1 with an opportunity to exceed the demands of the direct question, "When do you go back to college?" (7.01.12: 19.10), that could simply be answered by writing "Monday", for example. An additional observation here was that in such a short text message S1 chose to write the time in words, "nine thirty to twelve forty five", rather than in numbers. S1 might have wanted to emphasize the time by writing it as words but a likely alternative reason was that he chose to practise spelling. I perceived that S1's more elaborate response emerged as part of a social text in a context that afforded him agency to write as he pleased. It was striking that S1 chose not to use abbreviated text words in favour of what resembled carefully constructed in standard English language formation.

In fact, over time S1 showed increased confidence for text message writing:

12.02.12 10.03	From: S1 Dear Lesly good morning how are you? I have a good news, last Friday I have received my British passport. Am very very happy thank you very much.
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TM.S1/02.12

S1's text message proclamation, "I have received my British passport." was quite extraordinary, when consideration is given to his initial cautious approach to writing freely and possible fear of poor spelling that arose earlier. The significance of this message for S1 probably signalled a long-awaited life change and identity positioning that will be discussed in Sub-Section 6.7.5.

d) "I can't attend ur appointment"

Over a period of 21 months, 18 text messages were received from S4. Many text messages from S4 were to confirm or to rearrange meetings:

(8) 13.7.11 16.26	From: S4 Dear Lasley! Sorry to say that today I can't attend ur appointment as I m sick and have an appointment with physician at 2'o clock. If next time possible pls inform me than. Thanks. S4.
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TM.S4/07.11

This was the first text message that was received from S4. The SMS text message was clearly communicated and was composed using a mixture of using standard English and a couple of text abbreviations, “ur” and “pls” (for “your” and “please”). However, I was left with the distinct impression that S4 had taken time to structure the message and to spell key words, such as “physician”, “appointment”, and even “2 o’clock” that was written in full and in standard English. In fact it was curious to me that S1 also wrote time in words rather than numbers, as noted previously. Over time, it was not unusual for S4 to send messages apologizing for not being able to meet because of his work and to rearrange meetings. However S4 also chose to communicate complex events by text message:

(14) 10.10.11 18.23	From: S4 Dear Lesley. Thanx for that’s. I went to the Essolcenture for edmation of this year. [Admin] said your visa expiree in march 2012 u cann’t study. After that I went to [college] city centure they are made same problem. My new visa is coming of next year jan or feb.then I am coming back to college.take care. S4.
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TM.S4/10.11

In this extract, S4 seemed to write this message with urgency as he explained his plight in trying to enrol at college that would enable him to continue ESOL (Entry Level 2) studies in the second year of the research. This message was quite different in composition and structure from the previous one. The message came across to me as though it was almost written in the moment of frustration, as though it were spoken “spontaneously” by S4 about his problem.

At our next meeting, in a church café, S4 immediately referred to the text message, explaining his circumstances with vigour, but struggled to express his feelings. I volunteered a word and S4 said, “Disappointed! Yes, that one! Because missing three or four months, now for me is important for study continue. Now just try to speak English and watch English TV news.” (S4.2.4). S4 left me with the impression that he perceived that delayed enrolment on an English course was a very unwelcome setback indeed for him. There was no doubt in my mind about S4 being a serious student. When asked what writing meant to him in his life, S4 said, “Yes, this very important thing speaking and writing as well because you can send text message and email and you must spell any words to ... complete spells anything. Writing very important.” (S4.3.33). Here S4 foregrounded spelling once again, and that suggested to me a reason for S4’s attention to the detail of spelling in some of his carefully composed texts, as shown above.

6.5.2 Section summary

In contemporary times the use of technology, digital texts and the internet is often taken for granted as a means for people to access and use the world-wide-web in their everyday lives. However, these migrants' complex needs and different levels of experience in using technology seemed to present additional challenges for them which they seemed to reduce by enlisting intermediaries, where learning is unplanned as Golding, Brown and Foley (2009) show. What is more, SMS text messaging seemed to significantly reduce identity conflicts by providing these migrants with some control over their written English for transformative learning as they built on their existing knowledge with confidence. This seemed to increase their self-esteem, as others tell us (Tusting and Barton 2003; Attewell 2005) in Chapter 3. Furthermore, as Hull and Schultz (2001) note, when context boundaries are not limited there are greater opportunities for communication. This opens access to wider discourses through social and informal basis of contact, which for these migrants appeared to encourage their identity negotiation and sometimes enabled their positive positioning. These factors are part of identity construction to which I turn in the next section in relation to these migrants' processes for negotiation.

6.6 Identity construction: “in my language, his language, and English!”

The following sub-sections consider how engagement with writing is intertwined with the construction of identity and I begin by considering the role of identity negotiation.

6.6.1 Identity negotiation: communicating with “an open heart”

In this sub-section, I present a field-note extract that related to my classroom experience with migrants who attended a lesson that I taught for the usual teacher, who was indisposed. A particularity about this class was that the migrant students included what teachers described as: “the different types of students ... “ (Tm. int2.299/28.6.11 and Tmb.1/8.11.11) from what they were used to, “as well as different [literacy] issues” (Tmb.1/8.11.11). These comments, I thought, suggested an increased diversity of people and Tmb indicated that teachers were in the process “of getting familiar ... with what will work best ... with people that have been in the country for thirty years” (Tmb.1/8.11.11). Indeed, the class that I taught included migrants who had lived in England for over twenty years alongside more recent arrivals. In view of such a “new” mix of personalities and the fact that I was meeting these students for the first time, I asked everyone to tell me something about their lives. I later wrote the following field-note about the lesson warm-up:

“There were eight students. One man said that he had been in England for many years, more than twenty years, and a woman too, said that she arrived in 1986 and she said, as she glanced at the first man, that they were from Pakistan. The other students in the class were newer arrivals (so they told me) from African countries. Different students explained that in their home countries they had various jobs; an electrician, a hairdresser, a barber, a shop wholesaler. The migrants who said that they were an electrician and a hairdresser recounted that they did not expect to do the same jobs in England, and other students nodded their heads in agreement. When I asked why, students said that it was because of their low [English] language [ability].”

(FNB 5 extract 1 Classroom Obs 16.02.12)

I was immediately struck by the students’ willingness to talk about their previous livelihoods, as though some status was implied and added to their identity positioning within the classroom community. Yet these migrants also perceived that low-level English language ability equated to lower status jobs in England than they had previously enjoyed. Nonetheless, these students seemed optimistic as I recorded the following field-note about communicating with different people:

“They told me that they met people from many countries. I asked: ‘How do you communicate?’. The students laughed and talked amongst themselves until one student said: ‘in my language, [smiling and pointing to another student] his language, and English! But our English no good so we speak many languages – body language and an open heart [with tilted head and both hands on heart] help us to be friends’ [exaggerated miming and facial expressions of several students made the point here]”

(FNB 5 extract 2 Classroom Obs 16.02.12)

It seemed to me that from the reaction of these students and their explanation about meeting people and making friends, as they “negotiated culture”, showed a willingness to connect socially across difference as Hull and Nelson (2009: 200) claim. This suggested that their communicative resources were perhaps more extensive and complex than my perception of their own negative identity positioning indicated.

The lesson continued with a writing exercise to review the previous lesson focus on vocabulary used to describe the geographical features of different countries. As seen in Chapter 5, lexical development, in terms of spelling and vocabulary study skills, seemed to be a particular pedagogical focus in this setting. I then encouraged students to work together, to write down and then to talk about a particular geographical feature in a country of interest to them, now or at some point in their lives and I wrote an example in my field-notes:

“... living near the desert ... the weather is very unpredictable [teacher’s support vocabulary] ... silent winds, rain and sand can easily kill you if you don’t know and prepare. It is hard to know where you are going and you need a compass, but after six months or more you begin to learn. If your car breaks down in the desert you might die!”

(FNB 5 Classroom Obs 16.02.12: Extract 3)

I thought that perhaps these students chose a desert to shock me as a novice to desert experiences, or perhaps it was an opportunity to recount something that shaped their own lives. I believed that this was an example of how these migrants wanted to represent themselves as knowledgeable and to construct a positive identity. Through participation with others in the classroom community, what seemed important to these people was the desert and that enabled them to display their “reified” experience, and this has been recognised in research cited in Chapter 3 (Wenger 1998; Barton and Hamilton 2005; Holliday 2013). In addition, as Davies and Harré (1990) noted, the processes involved these migrants jointly developing a story in conversation as they negotiated meaning. Therefore, I believe that these students’ identity construction involved more than merely presenting an image; it was about the process of negotiation that this group of people experienced together.

I believed that the desert scenario explained by these students drew on their past or imagined experiences and contexts, of which I had limited knowledge, but their explanations, as part of our negotiated experience, made sense to me. In the next sub-section I present data that showed the complexity between my informants S3 and T1 as opportunities for engagement with writing and identity construction was negotiated during a lesson.

6.6.2 Classroom identity challenges: “in my country not allowed”

First of all, this sub-section shows an interplay of cultural practices in the classroom that emerged between S3, who had recently moved into the class, and T1, who was a mature and experienced teacher. The interplay of cultural classroom practices was recorded in the following field-note. However, this lengthy field-note goes further by showing how “statements about culture” (Holliday 2013: 20) become reified markers. During the process of identity negotiation and engagement with writing, such markers revealed the differing items on which the greatest value seemed to be set by S3 on the one hand and by T1 on the other:

“There was nothing unusual about the lesson organization. In most of the writing lessons that I observed, students sat around an expanse of desk area resembling a ‘boardroom’ style layout. The teacher was usually located at the front of the classroom or circulating among students to answer questions or to give feedback. During writing tasks, students often worked on their individual piece of writing or exercise silently but asked questions freely. This lesson continued a little differently because at the end of the task students were invited to complete the course book questions by taking turns to write the answers with a marker directly onto the exercise that was projected from a computer, digitally, onto the whiteboard. At this point, one student’s mobile phone rang loudly. Quickly, S3 demanded, “Silent your phone!”. This was followed up by T1 saying [to the student whose mobile phone rang], “You can’t speak in here; please tell whoever it is not to call you when you are in class”.

The incident appeared to somehow decentre the lesson. S3 appeared to have attracted attention by speaking over, or before, the teacher. T1 glanced at S3 [gestured to the textbook] then continued, “Look at the photographs on page 28 and the words in Box 1 (Appendix 11). Can you find any of these in the pictures?” S3 offered an idea, pointing out, “That one picture is a school not a college.” T1 asked, “Why would it be a school and not a college?”. S3 went on, “Because the people are wearing uniforms and at a college people don’t”. S3 then moved from his observation to give an unsolicited opinion, “*In my country they don’t wear uniforms [at school]. Good because everybody is the same*”. S3’s remark opened the possibilities for discussion with other students, but the lesson continued. When it came to a picture of an English pub, S3 said, “In my country not allowed”. T1 on this occasion offered an alternative and softer response, as she looked at S3 and said, “In my country, it doesn’t look like this because these are very English, they are bars in my country”.

The lesson progressed to consider the geographical features of a country. S3 seemed to almost intrude again, in a sarcastic or even slightly provocative tone, when he brought up his homeland. S3 said, “Twenty-five per cent mountains but now a store; long range rockets at the moment”. T1 looked directly at S3 and said, “We don’t think about war”. T1 looked down at the course-book and continued referring to geographical features as she said, “... big earthquake in Turkey, by the border. In Iran [which was not S3’s home country] some people died”. She looked at S3 again, and continued, “There are some but not many strong earthquakes ...”.

(T1 Field-note/Obs.2.11.11)

In the long field-note above, it seemed to me that on several occasions S3 was going back to his “domestic” beginnings to find ground on which to build connections and to make sense of the lesson by trying to link points to situations in his home country. These situations related to S3’s reference to school uniforms, to pub culture and to the geo-political landscape to stress which factors that were important to him. It was the case that S3’s life outside college seemed challenging, as he explained to me before we entered this classroom observation, shown in the following field-note extract:

“... as we walked together, a window was offered for S3 to explain how he seemed to believe that his life was becoming more complex, as he said, ‘I have no job, it is very hard for me I am confused’.”

(S3.FNB4.14/2.11.11)

Initially, I wondered if it was S3’s personal life circumstances that pushed him to draw on his known, easily accessible, cultural prejudices and his trend to “othering” ” which gave “easy answers” to imply some form of deficiency in another’s situation at that time (see Holliday 2013: 19). On the other hand, S3 was perhaps struggling for an opportunity to make more sense of his life, which pushed him to make comparisons with his past, from which his most accessible “values” emerged. These perspectives seemed to be raised by S3 as statements about his life and cultural experiences, as also discussed by Holliday (2013), and upon which S3 appeared to draw so as to create and bolster his own identity as he was making sense of his present situation.

I interpreted from these factors that S3's values emerged as comments that could relate to any point in his life trajectory on a moment-by-moment basis. Therefore, "statements about culture" (Holliday 2013: 20) in a process of social negotiation to construct meaning can be seen to arise in the lesson observation detailed above. In other words, S3 appeared to render his own experiences more solid by making a statement about his culture, for example, when he said, "*in my country not allowed*"(T1 Field-note/Obs.2.11.11). It seemed to me that S3 felt it was important to explore his basic beliefs so as to make sense of that moment and possibly to prepare himself for his future.

I was left with the impression that T1 took up the challenge of S3's "statements about culture" by pointing out problems in other countries (in this case, earthquakes) to offer him an alternative viewpoint. This was perhaps T1's attempt to widen the global perspective. On the other hand, T1 might have been merely controlling the lesson and bringing S3 back to the planned content. Nonetheless, T1 chose not to open the points that S3 raised for general discussion with other students in the classroom in that instance. In this way, T1 definitely controlled the lesson and also brought S3 onto the lines of that particular classroom culture, which seemed to follow the course-book task quite closely.

I now present students' written compositions which revolved around a common topic "their country".

6.6.3 Writing examination conventions and positioning: "Go to city in Africa"

In this sub-section I present a lengthy field-note of a classroom observation. The class was described by T4 as a pre-intermediate ESOL Entry 2 to Entry 3 level JCP class, for students who had to attend fifteen hours per week. This field-note extract is meant to show an episode in a typical lesson in which case-study participant S1 engaged with writing, on the one hand to meet college conventions, but also on the other apparently to be managing his outside life interests at the same time:

As I arrived, S1 came out of his classroom to see me and to confirm the classroom room number. We shook hands and I went into the lesson. ... However, the teacher was in the room opposite to that classroom, with S1. Being confused, I put my head around the door and asked T4 if he was doing personal tutorials. T4 said no, marking written work.

When T4 returned to the classroom he reminded students of the task that he had set, that was to "write 50 to 60 words about a city you like".

S1, looking down at his writing said, "Go to city in Africa". T4 asked him to read it aloud. S1 stumbled over some pronunciation e.g. "lecks" (lakes) which T4 corrected, then smiled and turned to the whiteboard.

T4 began to write and said (it seemed as a reminder) to the class that there would be an “*exam in December*”. T4 then went on to draw attention to improving S1’s writing, as he wrote “S1’s city is a big clean city” on the whiteboard, as follows:

The definite article:
X city is a big city
...a clean city. It is S1’s city.
S1’s city is a big clean city.

(T4 Obs.FNB 3/11.10.11 – whiteboard example 1)

T4 then said: “I need to make sentences Entry 2! ... you will get extra marks for complex sentences ... when we do the exam, I want you to pass the exam.”

At this point in the lesson S1’s mobile phone rang, he stood up and took the call as he was moving towards the door, and went into the corridor, and at that time he was not speaking English. Shortly after, S1 returned as the lesson continued until T4 wrote on the whiteboard [that was situated at the front of the classroom]:

50 words using connectors:
so, but, and, because, also!

(T4 Obs.FNB 3 11.10.11 whiteboard example 2)

There were ten students in the class and the table was covered with files, books and English dictionaries. S1 started the writing task indicated on the whiteboard immediately after returning to the classroom, working alone, as did the rest of the class. One student near to me was keying something into a mobile phone, I thought as a dictionary or for reference, because the student looked at the mobile phone and then wrote something down. It was an impersonal atmosphere with not much interaction or eye contact between students, perhaps because they were concentrating on writing.

At the classroom break, I met S1 for a previously planned interview. However, S1 handed me the writing that he had done during the lesson, but seemed eager to leave college early, so I quickly took a photocopy of his work. ...”

(T4 OBS.FNB 3/11.10.11)

The extract showed how S1 seemed to take opportunities to negotiate his identity. Identity construction for S1 was negotiated as part of choosing the topic for his written composition, and by taking a mobile phone call that he might normally have cancelled (or turned off his phone). However, this seemed possible for S1, because even though T4 set students in the lesson a specific task and drew attention to examination requirements, he also relinquished some control of the lesson. For example, T4 seemed unconcerned about students using their mobile phones for reference or to take calls, and encouraged writing about personal experiences. In fact it seemed that the teacher perhaps encouraged student creativity. A factor that Hyland (2007) in Chapter 3 suggests is part of what it means to teach writing for enabling people to meet their

classroom and wider life needs. It was also possible that the use of mobile phones was valued by the teacher and students for independent classroom literacy learning, as noted by Attewell (2005) in Chapter 3.

As explained above, S1 chose the subject for his written composition. The following is a copy of S1's written composition that he produced during the lesson, edited to remove items that would make it less anonymous. As will be clear, I have edited and annotated S1's original composition by changing the city and country names which are shown in square brackets:

Zenaria = country
 Tokobia = city

11-25-11 251 11/10/11

[Tokobia] is ^{the} Capital city of [Zenaria]
 [Tokobia] is a big city and clean also
 there are many ~~different~~ different long tall
 flats and many trees and some lakes
 Nationally [Tokobia] people are very friendly but
 Zenarians [Zenaria] is too warm in summer, in Autumn
 it is ok. There are many ~~different~~ people from
 different countries

(Sp)

is a big clean city.

Writing Extract (edited): S1 classroom writing 11.10.11

(T4 Obs.FNB3.20-21/11.10.11)

In this written extract, S1's writing met T4's instructions for desirable academic conventions to pass an examination. I interpreted this to be so, because S1 wrote fifty-one words and used three out of the five suggested connecting words ("and", "also", "but"). The topic, "write about a city", was also set by T4. However S1 squeezed in an opportunity for identity construction by asking permission from T4 for the subject of his writing to be "go to city in Africa". Even though S1 used no pronouns in his writing, he was indirectly saying something about himself by bring in aspects of his past life experiences. In effect, S1 builds his own identity into the text which says something about his beliefs and values, whilst at the same

time completing the task set by T4, which shows S1's awareness of the reader's impression of him and the value of assessment attached to his writing. S1 produced this writing alone, and made indirect references to his own life, but the composition was shaped by the pressure to conform to academic conventions. I believe that this demonstrated S1's awareness of the power relations between his writing and reader expectations (T4 and/or an examiner) that were laid down by T4's pedagogical instructions for writing examinations. This shows a way in which students can be socialized into certain textual practices, as stated by Enright (2011) in Chapter 3. Indeed, the classroom culture and social structures seemed mostly taken for granted and were at times hard to detect (see Toohey (1998) in Chapter 3). These factors, however, possibly distanced S1 from his writing, and the fact that he used no pronouns positioned him in the background of the written composition. Thereby, suggesting to me, that there was room for S1 to push his writing further, if opportunities to write freely were open to him.

In the next sub-section, I demonstrate how writing for another student, which began as a classroom task and was then completed as homework, was not based on examination practice, but increased opportunities for writer identity construction.

6.6.4 Identity conflicts: "it was bad story but I remember"

This sub-section presents an extract from a student's homework that was discussed during a classroom observation in T4's lesson. The following field note introduces the purpose of the lesson:

"Students were all busy and T4 was sitting at the far end of the classroom talking to a student - they were looking at a notebook and talking about writing. T4 looked up and welcomed me by saying, 'Please come in'. The students smiled and I sat at the far end of the room. T4 said, 'they [the class] are writing - their homework was to look at a website, to take statistics and to produce a profile of their country which was being checked and corrected in class at that time'."

(T4.Obs.FNB5.7/29.11.11)

The student who provided the following writing extract explained that the subject was about her country, which was inspired by another teachers' lesson. As the student spoke to me, she was pointing to a picture story about a lion and a man that was attached to her notebook and which she claimed inspired her to write about her life experience (T4 Obs.29.11.11). This also suggested that this student had drawn on personal and perhaps creative initiative for the written composition. The following extract was the second draft of the student's written homework. I have divided the writing into two sections because I noticed a marked change in this writer's self-representation:

One day a man took the lion to jungle.
 My grandmother told me that story was
 really but long time ago. It was bad
 story but I remember. When she told me
 I didn't sleep after that my mother she didn't
 want to told me any one again.
 In Africa lots of animals also they are
 attack the peoples. The cheetah is the great
 specialist of the cat world and has developed
 in to a lightning fast hunting machine.
 But life is still pretty hard for cheetahs once
 they could be found throughout Africa,
 the middle East and in India but now
 these sleek speedy animals are an endangered
 species.

<p>(a) The student brings her own cultural experiences into the text. The writer's voice comes through these autobiographical insights. She is saying something about her cultural identity and what may be important to her in her life. The writer also brings in other voices, such as reference to something her mother had said (which was spoken in a different context) but written about here.</p>	<p>(b) From this point the writer becomes distanced from the text. This writing is not personal and she may be writing in the way she thinks other people do. The change in writing style showed that the passage was possibly copied. The student author seemed to identify herself with someone or other people like whom she might aspire to write in the future.</p>
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One student wrote a story (T4 Obs.29.11.11)

Firstly, T4 had accepted this students' interpretation of the written homework task. Secondly, the writing task seemed to have been inspired by a different lesson content to engage with a lion picture story, but it seemed to push this student to remember and to write about a childhood experience, thereby representing the "autobiographical self" and exposing this student's identity construction in writing. Therefore, it seemed to be the connection with a childhood experience that triggered the written composition to meet the classroom task, which was "to write about their [the student's] country. However, the change in tone in the second part of the composition suggested that this student might have supplemented the written

composition by copying from a website [possibly about that student's country]. Therefore, the second part of the written composition may have been an imagined future writer identity for this person, or she may have been afraid of negative reader evaluation, from the teacher or an examiner, or other people. I interpreted matters in this way because the student explained that in a different lesson she had asked T2 to be an intermediary for the writing task to find a webpage about the cheetah. This suggested that this student copied part of the above extract from a webpage on the internet. I believed that the process described here demonstrated the complexity of this student's preparation for the written composition and possibly showed the extent to which she believed that her own writing was perhaps inadequate and needed to be improved for approval by others or for assessment. This seems to show the student's identity position as a feature of the local "moral landscape" at that time, as Harré et al's (2009: 9) show in Chapter 3. I believe this was possibly the case, because the student sample above (T4 Obs.29.11.11) was her second draft and she was reluctant to give me a copy of the first version of her writing.

6.6.5 Section summary

These data showed evidence that in some classroom encounters with writing, when these migrants' had freedom to negotiate meaning with others, as Gu (2010) shows, surprisingly complex accounts at times emerged as they drew on their past life contexts such as work or life in other countries. In turn, critical reflection possibly enabled these migrants to develop their own processes for changing their identity positions, especially through reference to their personal cultural experiences. In this way, reified experiences, such as the desert, geographical landscapes and childhood memories, highlighted what may have been particularly important to each migrant student for learning to write. These migrants' talk about their life stories seemed to help them to deal with some of their vulnerabilities in non-threatening opportunities for reflective practices with others, as shown in Chapter 3 by Wiseman and Wissman (2012). What is more, such reflective discussions seemed essentially to raise their self-worth, as Tett and Maclachlan (2008) studies also show. In other words, these migrants "statements about culture" (Holliday 2013: 20) seemed to be part of their processes for identity negotiation that at times enabled them to reduce conflicts. Thereby, tipping the balance of power towards their favourable positioning, as Moje and Luke (2009) show in relation to ongoing social practice. In turn, opportunities were opened for these migrants to address challenges in the context of learning through their early engagement with writing towards their positive identity construction.

6.7 Complex identities in the process of construction

As shown above and in previous chapters, writing in England for these migrants appeared to be influenced by their milieu of an uncertain life, finances and social circumstances that the case-study participants, and indeed other students, seemed to grapple with at any one time. I therefore begin this section with a challenge to identity construction relating to the beliefs of S3, S1 and S2 in respect of their age and life timelines. However, the data showed no connection with age in relation to S4's future aspirations, which was possibly because he was just twenty years old when the research project ended.

6.7.1 "I just start this the age ... stop me to learn quick"

In this sub-section, I present data relating to factors referred to by S3, S1 and S2 in respect of their age and learning. During the research project these case-study participants' perceptions about their engagement with writing in English seemed to be linked to their deeper concerns for learning.

S3 explained, "I am confused, I don't know what will happen in the future, with my situation, I am very confused. My age is every day go [up] and that is really difficult - more difficult [for] the company [to be] interested for driver" (S3 int 2/13.7.11). Thus, S3 seemed to believe that as he got older there perhaps might be less opportunity for him to meet his aspirations to work as a driver.

When recounting his perception about learning to write, S1 said, "may be because too late for me to [laughs] I didn't start that time I was young, now I just start this the age [and] I think that stop me to learn quick, may be?" (S1 int1/25.5.11). Here, S1 seemed somehow to blame himself for taking a long time to learn to write. I interpreted this as so, because as S1 continued he said, "because teachers are very good to be honest, they really, really help but may be I am old now [laughs] to make learn quick" (S1 int1/25.5.11).

Even though S2 did not refer to his age specifically, he explained that he was in England for nine years before beginning to study when he said, 'I am 2000 I come to England [but] last summer [2010] began to study because, I told you, is not anybody support me. When you no have support college no accept you because who pay for college?' (S2 int1/8.6.11). I interpreted S2's comments here to suggest that studying English in England was possibly tied to his identity construction, practical economic life considerations and the lengthy time it took him to study at a college.

These accounts appeared to show how structures and social practices can place individuals in certain positions, however the challenges for migrants to situate themselves in different contexts may be huge as other research shows (see Sub-Section 3.4.1) (Norton and Toohey 2011; Simpson and Cooke 2010). In the next section I present further data relating to the four case-study migrant participants' life experiences, timelines and life trajectories.

6.7.2 S2: "I am here alone"

The college classroom was shown to offer a meeting place for people and opened some opportunities for social engagement with writing and new life perspectives. This was also recognized by teachers. When commenting on the classroom as a social space, T3 said: "fifteen hours a week [in the classroom] with the same students in the same class [it helps] new lives definitely and for some people it is the only interaction that they have" (T3. int1.16.6.11). Another teacher perceived that: "some [people] may not leave the house [and college learning] is a kind of stability ... a kind of structure to their [the migrants'] day and to keep them going out of that hostel" (T5 int1/28.06.11).

I believe that these teachers' comments seemed to relate to S2's interview account about his life experiences. Firstly, S2 explained the relevance of the timescales in his life when he said: "I am poor I stay [in this country] and I am not working [but] before, 5 years I am working for salad factory in England. Yes! I save a little [money] but now... my money gone ... always I am living in this city [in the beginning with friends] sometimes in share house sometimes no have a house ..." (S2 int 1/8.6.11). However, S2 seemed to perceive a life pathway, because, even though he appeared to joke about his wish to become a United Nations interpreter, as explained previously, he also explained: "for future I am apply for British [citizenship] after I am look for a job I want to make it ... business, yeah, opening a butcher shop" (S2 int1/8.6.11). I interpreted S2's comments here to indicate that he had an idea about his future pathway to build his identity. It seemed to me that a significant part of S2's identity construction in England was his gaining of British Citizenship. I interpreted this as so, because as I helped him, during a lesson that I taught, to read a letter confirming the date of his British Citizenship ceremony, and S2 turned to me, and smiled broadly, then said "I am like you now! British" (FN 19.5.11). However, in academic year two of the research project S2's pathway seemed to present study and life challenges for him.

a) S2: "NOT E2?... but [I] *can't* - two or three years waiting for E1"

In a meeting with S2 in October 2011, he recounted his experience of examinations and the outcome of his attempts to enrol for another year to study ESOL at the same college. Because

of their effects on his construction of his identity and his self-esteem, I particularly noted S2's explanation about his prospects for returning to college in Academic Year Two, in the following field note:

“S2 began by telling me about the outcome of his ESOL Entry Level 1 examinations: ‘Last year [Academic Year 1 of this research study] ESOL test: speaking and listening ‘Pass’, Reading and Writing ‘NOT PASS E1’! Need writing [but I am] not well; [I] have physiotherapy and medicine – pain killer. [but] I come to register at college but when register I need proof: look! [S2 shows me a college appointment card dated August 2011 to enrol for an ESOL course in ... see paper [S2 points at the date]]’.

(S2 FNB 5/11.10.11)

It seemed to me, because of the date on S2's appointment card, that his enrolment prospects may have been thwarted, as it was at the time of Government policy changes and a later U-turn in policy back to what it was before the changes, as explained in more detail in Chapter 4. Therefore, I accompanied S2, as an intermediary, for an appointment with this college administrator about the possibility of being reassessed for enrolment, whereupon I recorded the following field-note:

“... the administrator said that if S2 provided documentary evidence of his welfare benefits, then he could enrol on an ESOL Entry Level 1 course. However, S2 immediately retorted by saying ‘NOT E2?’. This was because S2 seemed to be being offered the possibility of a place on an ESOL Entry Level 1 course, for a further academic year (this means that S2 would have attended the same course twice and each time for the duration of one academic year), to enable him to pass examinations in reading and writing, instead of going up to ESOL Entry Level 2. S2 turned in a brusque manner and he appeared to be cross, to me, as he left the office. I followed him along the corridor as S2 strode quickly on, to ask why he did not agree to enrol. In answer to my question, he shrugged his shoulders, held out both his arms with outstretched hands and without looking back, pushed open the main door then left the building.”

(S2 FNB/11.10.11)

Therefore, as S2 had left the building so quickly, I wondered why he seemed cross. I also wondered why he appeared unable to engage with the administrator's positive response about enrolment on a course, even if it was unsurprising that taking the same ESOL Entry Level 1 course again might seem an unattractive option to him at that time. These factors, for S2, appeared to impact on his identity construction and self-esteem. This was explored in greater depth in a further interview, to which I now turn.

b) “Life is heavy!”

In a subsequent interview with S2 I was able to ask him “Why did you decide not to enrol on an ESOL Entry Level 1 course again?” and I recorded his answer in a field note:

“S2 said: ‘because the ESOL Entry Level Two teacher, she think S2 make trouble. Two or three times [I went to] college [but] no answer [about another course]’. From his comments here, it seemed to me that S2 may have perceived that he was a problem for the college when he said: ‘no like [me], no go back [to college] many people don’t like me, may be?’ S2 went on to talk about his previous ESOL Entry Level One teacher and S2 said: ‘I’m ok [if she was teaching] feel ok [to go] back [but] no good [if] people think S2[is] trouble, no like me? I don’t know? [I] feel bad about that. E1 no good – E2 better but administrator [said] go for E1 but [I] *can’t* - two or three years waiting for E1’. S2 continued to explain something about his life at that time when he said: ‘... now [I am] living temporary [accommodation] with shared room. No [welfare] benefits. No going to job centre. ... Need [to get] married [but] life heavy ... not writing [and I feel] ill [with] back, knee problem... heavy life!’

(S2 FNB5/1.12.11)

This interview and field-note, I believe, helped me to interpret to some extent S2’s brusque manner when we left the administrator’s office previously. Even though the teacher that S2 spoke to about attending another course was probably interpreting college policy at that time, for him, being turned away from enrolment seemed to have a negative personal impact on his identity construction and self-esteem. It seemed perhaps that S2’s manner showed unsurprising disappointment, especially when S2 said that he had been turned away from enrolment several times previously, as indicated above. In addition, S2 seemed to believe that on his visit to college some teachers, he thought, positioned him negatively as “trouble”. Another contributory factor was S2’s apparent disappointment at being offered an ESOL Entry Level 1 course (again). Perhaps this was unsurprising as far as his studies were concerned, as teachers may interpret the writing curriculum against early migrants’ engagement with writing, which may lead to particular outcomes, as one teacher recounted:

“It’s when low level students begin writing their grammar skills become fully apparent. As a teacher I have to take the students back to the basics of sentence structure for one idea. Students often write a sentence on one topic and another sentence about a different topic, often straying away from the writing task. Factors to consider are that the students may feel a little demoralized going back to basics as their skills are all in black and white”

(Teachers’ exit interview 26.11.12)

I believe that the above account suggests that the needs of migrants in their early engagement with writing may be interpreted from a deficit perspective. In other words, the emphasis is put on what people cannot do when compared to the curriculum, or standard English expectations, which may take people back to learning from the beginning, rather than starting from what people can do and building on that. Therefore, it was perhaps unsurprising that S2 may have perceived studying at ESOL Entry Level 2 as a desirable step up, preferable to the possibility of going “back to basics”, especially as he recounted already having waited for up to three years to study at that level by that point in time. It also seemed to me that S2

somehow believed that he was the problem. These factors, I believe, were perceived by S2 as adding to the challenges of building a new life and positive identity construction, as he seemed faced with further difficulties relating to accommodation, welfare benefits, work, health, early engagement with writing and family life aspirations. In other words, in grappling with socio-cultural processes, people are exposed to multi-layered challenges and conflicts for negotiation, as shown by Block (2007: 1-3) in Chapter 3. Perhaps it was unsurprising that S2 believed he had a “heavy life”. In fact, I believe that S2’s account in the following field-note interview extract summarized what may be the perceived effects for him of being seemingly powerless to change his situation or to attend college:

“I am waiting for nothing, sleep and go out for the city ... My English? Very Bad! [laughs]. Yeah but, it’s good when you go to college any college is better than nothing yeah? When I am go to college I am still pain you know? When teach me I have pain; my brain busy you know. Yeah, I have problems, yeah. [in addition] I am here alone, yeah. For long time it’s no good for me. When people alone look like I ‘go mental’? For long time. I have too much friend. But no friend nothing look like your brother...; nothing you know?”
(S2 int 3/6.5.12)

I believe that S2’s choice of a colloquial term, “go mental” seemed to be his attempt to describe what he may have believed was perhaps a summary of the effects of his life predicament at that time. Indeed, S2’s experiences seemed to be reflected by T3 and T5 above when they described the value of classroom social encounters for building a new life and for learning. These data also seemed to indicate that S2 was probably influenced by college procedures that desired students to make upward progression, so as to enable the recording of student and college achievements (as shown in Chapter 5).

However, it could also be that S2 perhaps placed less value on, or struggled to recognize, his own ability to negotiate his engagement with writing (as shown with the administrator above, as S2 made his feelings known), and in terms of enlisting intermediaries for positive identity construction, as shown in Sub-Section 6.7.2.a). Nevertheless, it seemed that S2 chose to resist what this college offered him, by not enrolling on the same course at the same level for a second year, and he seemed to evince a positive (or even determined) identity on that occasion. Indeed, identity construction and learning opportunities might create anxiety and uncertainty because of college policy and macro life (structural) influences, but as S2 demonstrated here, there are sometimes “difficult” choices that lead to alternative positioning. Therefore, these clusters of ‘small cultures’ that happen in short moment by moment encounters out of necessity seem to play a key role in ‘making and remaking’ culture as it emerges in everyday practices. This point is extended by S3 as he challenged circumstances

which appeared to be beyond his control to construct a positive identity and suggested, as indicated in Chapter 3, that identity conflicts may be productive for learning.

6.7.3 S3: “I am confused”

In this sub-section I present data showing S3’s possible processes for managing identity construction. The data set began around the time when S3 said “I’m two years in England, nearly” (S3 int2/13.7.11), and continues up to the point when he left the research project in November 2011. In fact, during the first interview S3 explained how he felt about living in England with his family when he said: “I feel a person doesn’t have any problem and I don’t know the good word in English but erm I am now very happy – I can go where I want [and] my family have [a] future happy ...” (S3 int1/22.6.11), and when S3 talked about his life passage since leaving his home country he said “all my plans was lucky I not confusing with my journey with me everything my friend help me” (S3 int1/22.6.11). Part of his trajectory seemed to be recounted in the poem he wrote in Dutch as shown in Sub-Section 6.3.3 (also see Appendix 9), and S3 recounted, what seemed positive for him in England, as he said: “I can go where I want” (S3 int1/22.6.11) and “my family have future” (S3 int1.22/6/11). Therefore, the data showed that for S3 freedom of movement (perhaps physical travel and life options) for him, and family responsibility seemed to be part of his identity construction. In addition, S3 seemed optimistic about his work aspirations.

a) “if I pass one exam then I can drive the trailer - the bigger longer lorry”

It seemed that S3, as recounted in Sub-Section 6.4.2, anticipated taking a heavy goods vehicle (HGV) driving test to get an HGV driver’s licence and then to apply for driving work. Indeed, S3 recounted in an interview: “I think when I come in UK [the United Kingdom] I call for claim benefits. I told them I have HGV licence, I am able to do that job. If they want can you help me, but nobody help me. There’s recycle [refuse collection] vehicles I can drive them ... if somebody don’t help me I don’t need somebody to push me every day: go to job, go to job, go to job. It is two year nobody give me job” (S3 int2/13.7.11). S3 said “[I need a] new licence just if I pass one exam then I can drive the trailer - the bigger, longer lorry” (S3 int2/13.7.11). I interpreted S3’s account here to suggest that for him the processes involved in finding driving work, recognition of his perceived past working life success and passing an HGV test contributed to his positive identity construction. Therefore, I interpreted S3’s account here to suggest that he perceived that he needed to add to or to translate his past academic and other qualifications, such as the Baccalaureate (in Sub-Section 6.2.3) with an eye towards getting work because of the stress that he laid on them in interviews.

b) “life is different [now] ... everybody look after self”

When I asked S3 about the possibility of friends helping him to get a job, he said: “life is different [now] ... everybody look after self. Look after family. Erm, if I am not here, you don’t think about me. [a friend’s name] was good person, but you don’t care about my problems. Same, this is life!” (S3 int2/13/7/11). As S3 continued, he suggested that this was widely understood, as he said: “Yeah, in any country, everywhere this happen - sometime, somebody really, really good help you [but] that happen, er, not a lot.” [S3 laughed] (S3 int2/13/7/11). I interpreted S3’s comments here to indicate his awareness of contemporary life, where perhaps individuals are pushed into the responsibility of looking after their own best interests (as discussed in Chapter 2). Nevertheless, at times life options may also challenge identity construction and self-esteem. I wrote the following field-note which described the first time that I met him in Academic Year Two of the research project:

“The enrolment room which was very busy; students were spilling over into the packed corridors with people shoulder to shoulder. I could just make out Tma and another teacher sitting at a desk and filling in forms with students. As I turned, near the door was S3. He looked very tired and unusually un-kept for him (unshaven, hair untidy, wearing worn and crumpled clothes). I noticed that his hand was resting on a pram. The room was crowded, with people pushing and shoving to get in and out of the room and holding papers. I peered into the pram and saw a baby (about 6 to 8 months old I guessed) with a woman sitting next to it and presumed she was S3’s wife; she glanced at me and looked away into the room. S3 smiled warmly and we shook hands. The handshake was friendly but he seemed particularly quietly spoken as he talked. S3 said he wanted to enrol on an ESOL Entry Level Two course and wanted his wife to start English classes too (looking towards the woman sitting on the chair as he spoke) and said, ‘she doesn’t speak any English’.”

(FN Obs.19.09.11)

The above extract, I believe, indicates the uneasy college atmosphere surrounding course enrolment at the beginning of Academic Year Two. The possible effects that life and learning challenges seemed to have on S3’s self-esteem was laid bare. I thought that S3’s possible low self-esteem was shown by his appearance and quiet manner, and that his identity was as a father, a husband and a student, which was perhaps influenced by the pushing and shoving of other people too. Finally, S3 seemed to negotiate college enrolment.

c) “we can have a business for pizza or something”

During the study period of Academic Year Two, data showed that S3’s aspirations for work seemed to change, because he said: “I cannot get a job [but] my friend has experience and said we can have a business for pizza or something [because] my friend has experience [of that work]” (S3 FNB 11.10.11). Therefore, it seemed to me that S3 had possibly (re)envisaged his identity during this study, even if he still pursued prospects of being a driver, because he said:

“In the ‘other’ city my friend said I can get a job driving, may be taxi. In ‘this city’ I have to know all the roads, hotels, everything - the other city is smaller, may be it is good. I need a job” (S3 FNB 2.11.11). It appeared to me, from S3’s accounts above that he may have experienced trying to get a taxi-driving job. However, with the help of his friend he was now prepared to consider a pizza business, which suggested that his life circumstances perhaps pushed him to consider alternatives. Often, as these migrants addressed challenges and conflicts in the pursuit of their life aspirations informal and spontaneous developmental opportunities arose, although those instances seemed to be unrecognised by them as learning, as raised in Chapter 3 by Golding, Brown and Foley (2009). Indeed, the encounters presented above, seemed to have bolstered S3’s positive identity construction, as he envisaged meeting his perceived life goals, perhaps in a new town, to which S3’s text message related:

09.11.11	From: S3
10.03	Hi Lesky I’m not in [local city] I’m in [another city] I need to doesamthing.

(Text message transcript 09.11.11)

Hence, S3’s life aspirations seemed to have changed over time. In Academic Year One of the research project, S3 stated that he was happy and that his goal was to obtain an HGV licence. Finally, in November 2011, S3 left the study by writing and sending me an SMS text message (shown in Sub-Section 4.5.1c) which said he had “a lot of responsibilities”. Meeting life challenges for S3 appeared to relate to relocating in a different city, taxi driving or even starting a pizza business with a friend.

6.7.4 S4: “I want to study English very well my English writing everything”

In this sub-section I present data relating to S4. He was the youngest case-study, the only one with a part-time job and had been in England for the shortest period of time, when he said: “I came [to England] in 2010 ... January and I start ESOL course in September 2010.” (S4 Int3/16.11.11). When I asked S4 about the difficulty of learning to write and if he might consider giving up, he replied: “No, I can’t think something like I finished ... I will try ... try again ... may be after that ... get better.” (S4 int1/22.6.11). Indeed, in Academic Year Two of the research project, S4 anticipated enrolling in college.

a) “My new visa is coming”

It seemed that S4 remained optimistic when he wrote a text message which said, “My new visa is coming of next year jan or feb.then I am coming back to college” (S4 TMR at 18.23 on

10 October 2011). Therefore, it seemed that S4 would enrol in college by February 2012, as the text message data record showed:

07.12.11 08.53	From: S4 Good morning teacher. Sorry to say that I can't to meet u cause I m going to work I'll be start to the college next month or feb.thank u. Have u a good day
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(S4 TMR December 2011)

This text message record, I believe, indicated S4's dedication to his work and also his anticipated enrolment at the research project college in 2012. However, when I asked S4 about his writing outside college, in the last interview of the research project, he said: "not well [he laughs, in fact we both laughed] but it's ok ... it get better because when I started college my writing is nothing" (S4 telint 4/6.5.12). It seemed to me that S4 was encouraged to write in social situations, rather than writing alone, for instance at college or at work when his supervisor acted as an intermediary. Indeed, as shown in Sub-Section 6.3.1, language learning and engagement with writing seemed an important part of S4's identity construction, which comprised attending college as one major facet.

b) "Yeah, you know I missed [college] after September [2011]"

The following seemed to be a positive text message from S4 about enrolling on a college course. His change in plan was perhaps because S4 appeared to be put off by being told that he could not enrol on an ESOL Entry Level 2 course at the college where this research was done (because of a visa problem). Nevertheless, the tone of this text message is positive:

08.10.12 19.19	From: S4 Hello Lesley ,.... Long time this way I Deeside to text you, I joined the college south city XY [name] entry 2 esol. Hoping to hear from you as soon as possible take care.
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(S4 TMR October 2012)

It was clear to me from this text message that S4 had decided to move to a different college and his perceptions about being unable to continue his studies were revealed when he said: "Yeah, you know I missed [college] after September [2011] ... I was very upset you know [laughs] ..." (S4 int 4/6.5.12). In terms of writing at home or using the internet for writing alone, S4 said: "Yes, sometime. When I am at work you know I am writing report" (S4 int 4/6.5.12). Perhaps this was S4's response to his life circumstances when he recounted waiting for college enrolment when for one year, from October 2011 until October 2012, he was not attending a course to study English. Here, perhaps in spite of being directly affected by

structures, S4 built his own coping strategies and processes for writing, as Anthias (2006) tells us in Chapter 3. It seemed to me that when he was not attending a college course he drew on his work experience for writing with intermediaries, such as his supervisor. Indeed, S4's ability to manage his own process seemed to be a significant aspect of his identity construction.

c) "I want to go another country for some good job"

There were indications in the data of S4's perceptions about his desire to study English when he said: "Yes, I want to study English because in this country anywhere is very difficult and you need English ... I will be find a job ... A good job ... for example working in office ... company manager like." (S4 int 4/6.5.12). When referring to his future ambitions, S4 said that: "I want to go another country for some good job Saudi Arabia - if I speak English very well and I have experience you know lots of companies ... [want people]" (S4 int 4/6.5.12). It also seemed possible that S4 perceived learning English as a holistic experience (rather than as individual skills production). This was because when he talked about learning he said: "...speaking [first] then writing but more difficult you can't speak English then it's difficult more than writing ... you speaking good, you understanding anything, so you can read the books anything and you speak well you understanding the book writing is ok" (S4 int 4.2158/6.5.12).

It seemed to me that S4's perception resembled writing as social practice but, as shown in Sub-Section 5.3.4 above, the meaning of "literacy" was yet to be grasped by him. This was revealed in S4's language learning ambitions that seemed related to several life contexts, rather than one static context (such as learning in a classroom), to generate his positive identity in a process of creative problem-solving for language learning and identity construction, as Sharkey (2004) in Chapter 3 states. Therefore, this suggested to me that on the one hand S4's processes relating to his engagement with writing may not have been understood by him in a fully conscious way, but on the other, his learning seemed to be closely tied to his processes for identity negotiation in everyday social encounters.

6.7.5 S1 "I used to live with friends because at that time I have English problem"

This final sub-section comprises data relating to S1 in terms of his perceptions of his engagement with writing, his life changes over time and identity negotiation in respect of his future. As shown in Sub-Section 6.3.2, as S1 explained: "... I used to write in my language, English just last year I started [2010]" (S1 int 1/25.5.11). Therefore, S1 seemed to perceive that his learning to write in English began in 2010, and showing similarities with data relating to S2 above, S1 recounted his early life in England and said:

“It was very difficult, no money, no English, no paper, no support. Nothing it was really difficult, that time I usually at home my friends go to work and leave me at home [I was] yeah, [depressed] of course, it was difficult just stay at home nothing to do all day, all night really [but] no I didn’t scared”
(S1 int 2.167-76/8.6.11)

Indeed, S1 went on in that interview to say: “I was thinking going to be changed, I see some people before in the beginning difficult, but after that life changed, I was thinking going to happen to me” (S1 int 2.182/8.6.11). These data seemed to indicate that S1 remained optimistic about his life prospects and appeared to be diligent about writing in English. This was also shown in Sub-Section 6.3.2, when he practised writing drills at home, but a particular aspect of his engagement with writing was shown in the SMS text message record data. When writing SMS text messages, S1 seemed to take some control of learning to write and to practise “standard English” writing, as shown in Section 6.5.1.(c). The use of “standard English” writing for S1 seemed to be a choice made in preference to abbreviating words, which is now widely accepted, as was evident in SMS text messages from S2, S3 and S4.

However, even though S1’s accounts above indicate enlisting friends as intermediaries for communication in English, he also said: “[I] want to do by MYSELF! ... anything you need you can’t go look for the people ... something you have to do by yourself. I think that is best way.” (S1.3.100-104). This statement suggested to me that S1’s new identities often involved exhilarating or painful processes along with identity conflicts, as argued by Menard-Warwick (2005) in Chapter 3. Therefore, in view of the data presented in Sub-Section 6.4.3 and the points referred to above, I believe that part of S1’s processes for identity negotiation related to the extent to which he perceived engaging with writing in English independently (without intermediary support). Indeed, S1’s desire for independence seemed to feature in data relating to his future life pathway, to which I now turn.

a) “Future?”

When I asked S1 about his future pathway in the last interview with him, he said: “Future? If I am getting better how to read write no problem. I have to look for my own business. How to work first, if I have a good job I work, I save money then I will do my own business; like shop - before I used to do my own business – [it was selling] cosmetics.” (S1 int1/25.5.11). Moreover, towards the end of the research project, S1 stated: “now I have a flat ... I was on the ... council [waiting list] now I am in council property I was living in the hostel, waiting for the house for eight months then give me a flat now I have my own flat I am very happy now.... it is good thing it took very long time nearly one year but ... [life] it’s ok.” (S1.4.26-40). In reality, having a flat for S1 appeared to increase his opportunities, as he said:

“Internet – at home got laptop after three or four months being in the flat [now] manage go to website and [see] job available” (S1 telint 6/16.4.12). Previously, as shown in Section 6.5(a), when he was asked if he used a computer outside college, S1 said: “No, I don’t know how to use a computer.” (S1 int2.82). It appeared to me that this data set showed S1’s increased confidence and how the changes in his life circumstances seemed to generate optimism. Therefore, for S1 it seemed that social practices and technologies came together for problem solving in response to his socio-economic demands, as stated by Holme (2004) in Chapter 3. This seemed apparent when S1’s life pathway meant moving from a hostel to his “own” flat, and gaining confidence to use the Internet for accessing job web-pages. Therefore, S1 appeared to believe that his engagement with writing might continue by using a laptop at home and was another aspect of his identity construction.

b) “in Africa [to see family] no problem now I can go any time”

Additional opportunities for identity construction seemed evident in data relating to S1’s perception about getting a British passport, as shown at the end of Sub-Section 6.5.1(c), because he said, “really, really happy - last time in Africa [to see family] no problem now I can go any time. Really happy. [I went to] Africa [early] March – back [early] April [2012]!” (S1 int6/16.4.12). Moreover, the data showed that S1 talked about what the changes in his life after gaining British Citizenship had seemed to mean to him, when he said: “... before British Citizenship ... no passport – can’t travel – [now] more freedom. Now looking for money – if I have [more money I am] seeing the future in a good way.” (S1 int 6/16.4.12). I thought that S1 may conceptualize freedom to travel as he pleased as a significant part of his positive identity construction along with learning. What is more, as Yuval-Davis et al. (2005) tell us in Chapter 3, it seemed possible that S1’s sense of belonging may have increased by being part of political practice, which seemed possibly related to factors surrounding his British Citizenship.

c) “[I] need to go [to college] 3 to 4 years [more]”

The opportunity to learn seemed significant to S1 when he said:

“I think if I keep like that learning I think will be better very good - you can’t stay in English country without English - you must read, you must write, you must speak, if no, that going to be difficult. I know in my country I can read, I can write, I can speak that make more easy life.”

(S1 int 5/6.12.11)

However, S1 also said: “don’t go back [to college] this year because cut [social benefits] support, but enjoy college – English bit by bit not easy to learn something - just read and

writing.” (S1 telint 6/16.4.12). Therefore, S1 said: “just read and writing - I need to prove my English.” (S1 int 6/16.4.12). Indeed, in addition to S1’s perceived need to improve his English, in a previous interview S1 said that:

“I don’t know if my teacher going to understand [me] because my English not really good – may be I can’t explain I want to tell him something but [he cannot] try to understand all the different thing because my English problem may be”
(S1 int 5.737/6.12.11)

I interpreted this to mean that S1 conceptualized English as being his problem and something for him to fix when he referred to his teacher as not understanding his English. It also struck me that S1’s perception of learning may relate to “learning in college”, which he seemed to believe was also influenced by his teacher’s perception of him.

However, S1 explained: “forms manage but not easy [I] need to go [to college] 3 to 4 years. Not easy to do application, to write. [I] look for friend to help ... some friend from my country they can help then it [is] easy [I] call on phone and ... arrange to meet.” (S1 int 6/16.4.12). Additionally, S1 said: “go out to meet friend, new friends meet in city centre or college ... different nationality – speak in English, talk. [it] help go to college [it makes a] difference ... [then] good everything, you have to read and write [I] put my mind to read and write.” (S1 telint 6/16.4.12). Therefore, S1 seemed to believe that learning to read and write at college may take a further three to four years attendance, in spite of his life changes and positive identity construction. Therefore, it seemed unsurprising to me that S1 still appeared to associate “improving” his engagement with writing and college attendance. This suggested to me that S1 might struggle to conceptualize fully the opportunities for engagement with writing in everyday life outside college.

6.7.6 Section summary

The research material presented in this section showed that identity conflicts were revealed in different ways. For example, age seemed to raise negative perspectives about learning and work, as did timescales for learning and early engagement with writing which also gave insights into identity challenges and conflicts. All four case study participants communicated aspects of their life trajectories, their learning journey and their processes for early engagement with writing as social practice as they negotiated meaning and identity construction. Therefore, the data presented in this section reveals these migrants’ individual identity negotiation processes for their early engagement with writing as social practice. However, their processes for writing may not always have been fully recognised by them as “literacy”, in a fully conscious way, in relation to their learning and identity construction.

6.8 Chapter Conclusion

Finally, I conclude Chapter 6 with my understanding of the processes that enabled these adult migrants to engage with writing in different contexts. Indeed, by examining “literacy practices” my research revealed deep insights into these migrants’ actions that also reflect power positions and structures, as previously recognised by research (Street 1984; Barton and Hamilton 1998; Clarke and Ivanič 1997; Norton 2000; Hull and Schultz 2001 and others). The research material in this chapter showed that these migrants seemed to draw on past experiences to minimise identity challenges and to make sense of their identity conflicts in everyday activities, and social practices for engagement with writing inside and outside the classroom. Thus far, they did as anyone else might. However, these migrants’ aspirations seemed to be strongly linked to their imagined future work, learning and freedom of movement. Thus, their processes of negotiation provided particular points for deeper understand and these were sometimes revealed in “statements about culture” (Holliday 2013: 20). Indeed, these migrants’ processes for engagement with writing appeared at times to enhance their identity negotiation which added to their independence and positive identity construction. What is more, many of the instances of their early engagement with writing in their everyday lives was with other people and happened in real time, in the moment, rather than learning to write in a particular place for designated period of time, as one might in a classroom. Indeed, their writing and learning often seemed informal and unplanned in creative problem solving activities. In addition, there appeared to be specific identity conflicts for these four migrants, such as their perceptions about their age, life circumstances, their ability or inability to attend college and the conceptualisation of literacy.

In the classroom, where identity negotiation for making sense of writing included talk about personal interests and experiences there were opportunities for these migrants to take some control away from the teacher for learning and to negotiate changes in their identity positions, as Wallace (2005) tells us. Indeed, even though these migrants were powerless to influence college policy structure and the effects of Government changes at that time, their decisions led to alternative life and learning pathways that seemed to increase possibilities for positive identity work. Thereby, revealing how these migrants’ dealt with their circumstances as they arose, along with the multi levels of institutional and social structural influences that emerged along the way. In other words, meeting the ‘identity card metaphor’ head-on by making the most of what they were dealt, as Holliday, Hyde and Kullman (2010) tell us. Moreover, as Holme (2004) shows, these migrants’ socio-economic situations seemed to push them to engage with technology and social practices to advance their identity construction and early engagement with writing. Therefore, these migrants demonstrated that they appeared to cope with “difficult”

choices and made their own decisions creatively from options available to them for writing in English and identity construction at a particular time.

I will now turn to the final chapter where I discuss the thesis conclusions.

Chapter 7: Thesis Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

In this concluding Chapter 7, I present my interpretation of the research material and my thesis findings so as to address the research questions. The outcomes of my analysis are presented, following Ivanič et al (2007: 707), as “illuminative and capable of inference rather than quantifiable and capable of generalization”. Following this introduction I present my research outcomes, in five sections:

In Section 7.2 I outline my interpretation of the research material aimed at addressing the research questions and finding an answer to them.

In Section 7.3, I turn to the importance of this thesis and my contribution to knowledge and literature.

In Section 7.4, I detail the implications relating to pedagogy and policy for migrants’ early engagement with writing in a new language. The implications relate to migrants, teachers and teacher managers, and other stakeholders. This is followed by an indication of the limitations of the study.

In Section 7.5, I turn to further research, challenges and possibilities for extending my research perspectives.

Lastly, Section 7.6 concludes the thesis with my final comments.

In the next section I outline the findings in relation to each research question.

7.2 Answering the research questions

In this section I summarize my interpretation of the research material that responds to each of the four research questions in turn.

7.2.1 How do migrants in this study engage with writing?

Migrants in this study were shown to have diverse backgrounds and experiences of engagement with writing and learning to write. The case-study migrants participated in social practices that often relied on intermediaries for writing to accomplish everyday tasks. These migrants’ everyday social practices provided significant tools for them to draw on holistically

and creatively for writing in print or digital texts which signified successes or challenges for them.

1. These migrants' self-perceived "needs" appeared to lead them to engage with different processes for writing with varying levels of success in spontaneous social encounters, including other languages when needed;
2. Intermediaries seemed to be confidently enlisted, but the processes for engagement with writing differed widely. Successful strategies often assisted spontaneous or experiential learning, but exploiting intermediary support on a moment-by-moment basis was also shown at times to lead to a lack of confidence or low self-esteem, especially as an adult learnt to write for the first time in any language;
3. The lack of intermediaries at times prevented engagement with writing and access to macro-structural services, such as dental treatment and the completion of work-related forms, or internet access;
4. When writing weaknesses were identified in the classroom as possible "deficiencies", this often led to repetitive vocabulary drills and phrases, sometimes practised at home, and fear of making mistakes;
5. Access to digital texts often differed, and use was shown to range from frequent use through intermittent use to fear of using a computer, this changing over time;
6. SMS text messaging facilitated writing and seemed to encourage language experimentation with spelling, abbreviated words, and standard English phrases or sentences in social communications or to convey news that indicated emotional responses to life circumstances and processes for identity construction.

7.2.2 How do opportunities for writing occur and develop in a college context in England?

In the classroom context the intricacies of migrants' engagement with writing occurred and were taken up in the lesson, and beyond it as homework. There was evidence in observations that:

1. Teachers mostly transferred the lesson aims and objectives from their lesson plans and ILP records onto the whiteboard, for students to view and to assist the setting of writing tasks.
2. Writing pedagogy appeared to be guided by official classroom inspection feedback, college conventions, the curriculum and in some cases teachers' personal beliefs about learning to write;
3. Frequently a course book, worksheets and examination practice generated writing opportunities, with preferences for the distinction between four individual skills in the classroom;
4. Writing was usually shown to be perceived as individual technical skills to meet pre-set tasks. Although literacy as social practice was sometimes evident, it was mostly directed by the requirement to complete prescribed tasks.

7.2.3 What are teachers' perceptions of migrants' writing and learning aspirations?

The research material showed evidence that these teachers and teacher managers perceived the following:

1. Pedagogy was shown at times to be encouraged to focus on speaking and listening for examination passes that were often perceived as being easier for migrant students and led to college funding;
2. Impending policy changes at the time of the research (as explained in Chapter 4), appeared to increase teachers' and teacher managers' focus on "identifying literacy needs", although the meaning of literacy in the ESOL context seemed to be perceived as linked to basic skills, for individual learning for skills production;
3. Writing was perceived as taking longer for migrants to develop than speaking, and this college seemed to have less confidence in students passing writing examinations for funding purposes;
4. Mostly, policy, official observation feedback and training guided writing pedagogy that encouraged the meeting of pre-set aims and objectives. These procedures were shown at times to challenge teachers' beliefs about meeting targets on the one hand, and what they thought might really support their students' writing needs, on the other.
5. Writing targets seemed to be agreed in ILP interviews but often appeared to focus on migrant students' weaknesses, such as spelling and basic sentence structures, despite these sometimes being counter-productive for learning to write;
6. Preparation time for writing pedagogy was perceived at times as limited, because of paperwork that surrounded planning and targets;
7. Classroom organization, although often informal, was shown mostly to resemble a traditional layout with the teacher at the front of the lesson, but workshop-style lessons were perceived as less helpful for learning to write and was perhaps unwelcomed by migrant students.

7.2.4 How does engagement with writing impact on these migrants' identity construction?

The processes for these migrants' early engagement with writing were demonstrated often to be influenced by their background experiences and other life contexts, as noted in Chapters 5 and 6. The migrants were shown to draw on their past experiences for problem-solving in everyday activities and social practices for engagement with writing inside and outside the classroom. However, there were specific challenges and facilitators for these migrants' identity construction:

1. These migrants' perceptions about their age, life circumstances, engagement with writing and their ability to attend college or not, seemed to present identity challenges, but identity conflicts appeared to push them to consider alternative action in terms of their options for different life pathways, engagement with writing, learning, and identity construction;
2. One-to-one teaching for writing development in the classroom was sometimes used for differentiated activities to address migrants' "spiky" learning profiles, but at times opened up possibilities for negative identity positioning by other students and teachers in respect of some students;
3. Classroom writing composition showed possibilities for greater learning when autobiographical experiences were included for these migrants. This was because reference to their life experiences at times opened opportunities for their identity construction during their negotiation of meaning or when they talked about perceived personal successes or challenges;
4. The negotiation of meaning seemed to enhance written composition and identity construction by drawing on everyday social practices for problem solving;
5. These migrants' references to their personal experiences during lessons at times proved to facilitate a change in the balance of power and their identity positioning away from the teacher and led to positive identity construction;
6. Teacher talk was shown sometimes to control and direct lessons for meeting prescribed tasks or examination preparation. Teacher talk was demonstrated on occasion to reduce social practices that might have encouraged these migrants' identities to shine through or their questions to be taken up for possibly more prolonged negotiation of meaning.

Taking into consideration this outline of my interpretations of this research project, I now turn to the significance of this study in the light of current literature.

7.3 The importance of this thesis and its contribution to knowledge and literature

In this section, having outlined the main points arising from this study, I discuss the importance of these findings for research and practice, and my contribution to knowledge in relation to current literature (see Chapters 2 and 3 above), in respect of migrants' early engagement with writing and identity construction. My comments in the next four sub-sections relate to my methodology, global diversity, national English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) policy, the statutory Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages Core Curriculum (AECC) in England, college pedagogy, and identity construction, as follows:

In Sub-Section 7.3.1, I discuss my flexible research methodology for exploring the perspectives of migrants and of teachers and teacher managers from the bottom upwards, relating to the inclusion of communities of practice, reification and reflexivity.

In Sub-Section 7.3.2, in the light of global diversity and national ESOL policy, I reflect on the influences of statutory AECC in England upon further education college policy. I then discuss how AECC and college policy shape educators' and administrators' perspectives for identifying migrants' writing needs, which filter into writing curricula and pedagogy, along with the beliefs of these decision-makers. I conclude from my research that college procedures often interfere with migrants' processes for negotiating early writing and identity construction.

In Sub-Section 7.3.3., my discussion turns to migrants' hidden processes. I argue that migrants' individual processes for early writing and identity construction are inseparable as they draw on and across past life contexts by comparing their known experiences and future aspirations. I next reflect on migrants' hidden, tacit and negotiated approaches for increasing independence. Finally, I discuss the unexpected conclusion that SMS text messaging makes visible hidden processes in migrants' early attempts at writing and their identity negotiation.

Lastly, in Sub-Section 7.3.4., I discuss my final thoughts before moving on to the implications and future research.

In the next sub-section I will discuss findings in relation to my research methodology.

7.3.1 Methodology: NLS with communities of practice, reification and reflexivity

There were distinct methodological advantages in approaching this thesis from my personal and professional auto-biographical experiences of early writing in a new language (see Chapters 1 and 4). This was because talking about my experiences of early writing in a new language triggered deeper exploration by these migrants, and by teachers and teacher managers, of their early writing in different contexts over the course of their lives, thus adding an ESOL perspective to other research (Miller and Satchwell 2006; Lincoln and Denzin 2003; Vagle, Hughes and Durbin 2009: 2; Holliday 2013). In addition, by opening up to reflexivity I harnessed a serendipitous chain of events that might otherwise have impeded the study (see Chapter 4). Therefore, reflexivity increased the possibilities of observing and recording participants' naturally occurring practices and deeper cultural values, as reflected in the work of others (Blommaert and Jie 2010; Holliday 2007; Watson-Gegeo 1998). In fact, I argue that being a participant researcher strengthened my reflexive inductive analysis and led to my co-constructed 'observation research cycle and holistic inductive analysis' (see Chapter 4), which also encompassed ethical responsibilities (Kubanyiova 2008; Richards 2003; Van Leir 1997).

Most significantly, my methodological approach captured 'on the spot' writing processes from an often hard-to-research 'marginally positioned' migrant's perspective, as an alternative

to investigating pre-specified categories or issues advocated from the top downwards (Holliday 2007: 5; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 234; Gildersleeve 2010: 408; Roberts 2006b; Simpson 2011). My research thereby presents an alternative way of understanding migrants' early writing opportunities and processes, which according to Roberts (2006a: 69-70) are under-theorized for future inclusion in curricula. In other words, my reflexive methodology is especially important because it presents a flexible "bottom-up" approach for investigating and analysing migrants' early engagement with writing by collaborating with all participants, in spite of a changing and uncertain context.

7.3.2 Global diversity, national ESOL policy, the statutory AECC and college pedagogy

In England, over the last two decades research has acknowledged the increasing movement of people globally and the diversity of migrants' backgrounds (Roberts and Baynham 2006). Therefore, my research responds to literature reporting that there are signs of unprecedented ongoing and future demand, especially in the light of refugee crises, for migrants' early writing and this study contributes to the calls for deeper understanding in this area (Ward 2008: 3; Kings and Casey 2013). In line with other research (Jarvis 2000 cited in Trantalidi 2004; Roberts 2006b) my findings show that increased diversity in this setting, perhaps as a result of globalisation, has created a subtle tension between top-down policy expectations and bottom-up teacher managers' and teachers' pedagogy. The latter strove to identify and to meet migrant students' needs for early writing and identity construction in English whilst also maintaining their own professional identities in the setting. Therefore, my research adds significantly to contemporary knowledge, such as Vertovec's (2010: 94) vision of super-diversity, by highlighting the tensions surrounding the conceptualisation of writing as a basic skill rather than as social practice in relation to literacy assessment. Nevertheless, I acknowledge the fact that this small-scale research project does not allow wide generalisations to be made or necessarily suggest that identical circumstances would be found in other situations in ESOL related settings to which I now turn.

a) National ESOL policy in England

My research provides a snapshot of one further education college's response to the strategies for ESOL of the then newly elected British coalition government (2009/10), and the anticipated implementation of revised ESOL qualifications and funding policies that were proposed in England from 2014, in a context of reportedly frequent change (Phillimore 2011; Kings and Casey 2013). Indeed, I found a context of change as I encountered my research which is explained in Chapter 4 of this thesis. Therefore, my research also captured the ever-shifting

nature of the ESOL student population, noted by others (Simpson, Sunderland and Cooke 2007: 199). Its findings provide more detail of the characteristic uncertainty that surrounded migrants' eligibility for free enrolment on an ESOL course, supporting and extending what was reported by Simpson (2007: 210). Most significantly, my research helps to bridge a striking gap in literature for understanding migrants' early engagement with writing in English in England (Scottish policy differs) and identity construction, because many previous ESOL studies in this country have focused on migrants' spoken language development, as Baynham et al (2007) noted. Moreover, my research contributes to our understanding of a gap between policy, particularly in relation to identifying literacy needs, and what really happens to migrant students as they learn to write. Deeper knowledge of early writing progress is stated by Kelly et al (2004: 11) to have challenged previous large-scale studies that gave most priority to reading, and this is where my small-scale study adds new insights. I now turn to the statutory Adult ESOL Core Curriculum (AECC) in England.

b) The statutory AECC

My research shows, as does other ESOL literature, (Baynham et al 2007; Roberts et al 2004), an impact of a possible ambiguity surrounding the interpretation of the statutory AECC in this setting. Traditionally the AECC fell under SfL (DfES 2001), but because of its roots in the adult basic skills agenda (Moser 1999), what is termed 'literacy' has at times been seen only as a part of general 'basic skills' for adults. This has led to the distinction between first and second language pedagogy sometimes appearing blurred, as other research has noted (Murray 2005 cited in Roberts 2006a: 67; Brooks et al 2001). Therefore, college discourse at times appeared to conflate literacy and adult basic skills and the distinction between first and second language pedagogy also seemed unclear. This is perhaps unsurprising when literature implications such as Grief et al (2007:10) present effective classroom teaching strategies for writing, calling for pedagogy to link students' outside lives, but mentioning only the 'Core Curriculum for Adult Literacy' and having no reference to the 'Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages Core Curriculum' (AECC). An additional factor is that both curricula are incorporated in the overarching National Literacy Strategy (DfES 2001: 6), which may leave the distinction between the two sometimes unclear in respect of the teaching of writing. Indeed, in my research, college policy, procedures and discourses mostly seemed to perceive literacy as a general basic skill for adults, which led to a pedagogic approach that had an impact on migrants' early engagement with writing and identity construction.

c) College policy and procedures

In view of the foregoing, and as Simpson (2011) has shown, in this context writing pedagogy was mostly policy driven. These migrants' initial enrolment on their ESOL Entry Level 1 or ESOL Entry Level 2 course was determined by their handwritten assessment tasks (see Appendix 7) and was followed by writing pedagogy that educators and administrators delivered in line with the AECC pre-specified stages of text level skills (DfES 2001). This was supplemented with a standard EFL textbook entitled 'New Cutting Edge. *Elementary*' (Comys-Carr, Cunningham, Eales, and Moor 2005), and supporting materials in practices that were reinforced in policy documents and CPD, as also noted by Hamilton, Hillier, Tett (2006: 7). These factors pointed to the way in which policy and curricula were given primacy in the setting. In turn, procedures became reified through the endeavours of teachers and managers to meet 'top-down' policy demands, as shown in other literature (Hamilton 2009; Tusting and Barton 2006; Wenger 1998; Holliday 2013). Therefore, college conventions seemed to place teacher managers and teachers in the position of a buffer between 'top-down' policy and migrants' 'bottom-up' writing practices. This was because they had no choice but to design pedagogy within prescribed teaching and learning boundaries that fed into auditable documents, such as the ILPs, as other research has shown (Hamilton 2009; Roberts and Campbell 2007). This led to tension when teachers and managers were making decisions about what was of value for their migrant students' writing, which resonates with the research of others (Clark and Ivanič 1997; Hamilton 2009). My own research also revealed similar tensions in respect of identifying migrants' early writing needs, to which I now turn.

d) Identifying migrants' early writing needs

My research highlights tension that arose when, in anticipation of Government policy changes, this college proposed an alternative literacy course for ESOL to assist some people ineligible for free mainstream courses. In turn, the proposed literacy course focused the attention of teachers and teacher managers on the assessment of migrants' early writing and increased college debate about 'identifying literacy needs' (see Appendix 7). However, despite these discussions teachers and teacher managers seemed to be attempting to define 'literacy' for ESOL, but policy and procedures guided them towards perceiving 'literacy' as a 'basic skill'. Therefore, teachers and teacher managers appeared to perceive migrant students' early writing ability from a 'deficit' perspective and increased discourses about labels, such as 'literacy issues', which fed into writing evaluation procedures.

As a consequence, noted also in research by Baynham and Simpson (2011: 422), the identification of migrants' early writing needs encouraged basic curricula that favoured

particular ‘low level’ course materials and teaching and learning strategies. Hence, lesson plan design for meeting text level targets included pre-set tasks that did not always fit migrants’ learning and life contexts. This was also reflected in a study by Blommaert, Creve and Willaert (2006: 43) that showed how in judging a Sierra Leonean student’s successful everyday literacy as basic, the teacher perceived him as a ‘a novice to the field of writing’ and set low-level exercises for him to start writing from scratch. My own research illustrates how reified labels and categories relating to migrants’ writing competence can become cemented in college discourses and elsewhere, a phenomenon noted by others (Powell 2014; Hamilton 2009; Blommaert 2013).

My work expands on Duveen’s study (2001), because it clearly showed how labels matter to migrants, teachers and teacher managers alike, and were especially problematic when they became symbols of negative representation. A specific instance from my research was how the question of being identified as an ESOL Entry Level 1 or an ESOL Entry Level 2 student mattered so greatly to S2 that he chose not to enrol at this college for his second academic year of study rather than to repeat a lower level course. This vindicates Simpson’s (2011) criticisms of policy oriented mainly towards rapid upward progression. It also confirms Wenger’s (1998) cautions that ‘non-participation’ may also create potential minority groups. Indeed, what appeared most valuable to S2 was negotiating his identity position with an administrator and making his own independent decision. These steps appeared essential for S2 to counteract a negative categorisation of his learning to write and for him to bolster his identity construction which was a huge part of his imagined future progress. This is also seen in cases described by Crowther, Maclachlan and Tett’s (2010) discussion. Finally, college procedures and documentation for identifying migrants’ early writing needs feed into college conventions, impact on migrants’ identity construction, and are translated by teachers and teacher managers into pedagogy and classroom practices, to which I now turn.

e) Pedagogy and classroom practices

My research crucially identified that, despite these teachers’ professionalism, their adherence to college conventions and the demands of top-down policy left them little time to question, let alone theorise about, their everyday pedagogy, to consider relationships with students, the writing curriculum, or the socio-economic impact of what they were doing. Therefore, migrant students were often taken ‘back to basic writing’ in practices that seemed magnified by teachers’ beliefs arising from their own experiences of learning to write in a second or other language, which emphasised repetitive drills and the recording of vocabulary, as noted also by Atkinson (2003: 51). In turn, pedagogy focused on text level skills and these migrants were at times socialised into repetitive writing practices in traditional teacher-directed

classroom cultures (Enright 2011; Toohey 1998). For instance, throughout this study S1 appeared to believe that his writing needed improvement, so he copied a lot of material directly from the whiteboard into his vocabulary book and seemed to spend much time outside the classroom on spelling drills, a phenomenon seen in other research (Shan and Guo 2013; Simpson and Cooke 2010). Similar effects, surrounding low self-esteem, have been found in the field of adult education, for example, Tett and Maclachlan (2008: 659) and Ladson-Billings (1995: 483). Therefore, migrants' unconscious formal skills-related writing may constrain, rather than support their social practices, as Rogers (2008: 133) cautions. Moreover, these migrants sometimes took classroom practices, such as spelling drills, away from a college context to do as homework which seemed contrary to Baynham's (2004) perspective of "bringing the outside in" for classroom learning. Therefore, identifying migrants' writing as "basic" apparently led teachers and teacher managers towards curricula and pedagogy for "basic skills" that seemed to interfere with these migrants social-cultural learning (Holliday 1996; Atkinson 2003; Blommaert, Creve and Willaert 2006). In turn, migrant students appeared to be encouraged in lessons to learn writing alongside peers (and teachers) rather than to explore their practices socially, as was seen in work by Byrnes (2006). Overall, my research exemplifies the tendency of pedagogy to 'fix' these migrants' identities against policy standards for writing which gave primacy to teacher-oriented activities and reified college procedures and structures. Thereby, adding a perspective for ESOL in England to studies such as that by Block (2006; 2007). However, with time to reflect, teachers and teacher managers showed that they had ideas about alternative pedagogy, as I shall now discuss.

f) Teachers' and teacher managers' perceptions

My research findings indicate that when teachers and teacher managers had time to theorise about procedures, curricula, pedagogy, and college discourses their discussions turned to more sophisticated descriptions of their migrant students' writing practices. Accordingly, their perceptions went beyond "basic" skills towards writing being perceived as integral to migrants' identity construction. Indeed, my research demonstrates how wider perspectives of early writing are fostered in an ESOL context to meet Kings and Casey's (2013) calls for deeper understanding of literacy. Furthermore, reflexive collaboration enabled teachers and teacher managers to acquire the flexibility to (re)envisage options that could take them beyond the belief that policy was outside their control in the future, which adds an adult early writing ESOL perspective to Borg's (2006: 40) optimism in respect of reflective practices. Most significantly, interviews with teachers and teacher managers in which they thought over these matters enabled them to (re)consider these migrants' processes for engagement with early writing and to (re)conceptualise their vision of democratic pedagogy. Other researchers have found similar effects (Crowther, Hamilton and Tett 2001; Cooke and Roberts 2007; Roberts and Cooke 2009;

Wallace 2008; Norton and Toohey 2011). I therefore argue that reflexive collaboration offers teachers and teacher managers space to work with migrants and to (re)interpret students' real life experiences and their writing progress, in a reflective democratic fashion, which reinforces Tett and Maclachlan's (2008: 659) arguments for collective practices. It is clear that migrants' hidden processes contribute to their early writing and learning progress and warrant closer attention, which I discuss in the next sub-section.

7.3.3 Migrants' 'hidden processes' for writing and identity construction

My research demonstrates that in the ESOL context there are complex challenges for policy and pedagogy when teachers, teacher managers and others come to evaluate, categorise and monitor progress in relation to migrants' early writing and identity construction. In fact, my research shows that the (re)conceptualisation of literacy is essential because, as also stressed by Golding, Brown and Foley (2009: 43), these migrants' writing processes frequently emerge in encounters with intermediaries as a by-product of other unorganised and unsystematic social practices. However, these hidden processes often went unnoticed by migrants, or by their teachers and teacher managers, because, as Livingstone (2006: 4) shows, social encounters were rarely perceived as 'writing' or as learning opportunities.

Accordingly, these migrants' hidden processes emerged as they compared different life contexts and engaged socially for writing, and were visible as they talked about, or reified, what was important to them. This provides an adult migrant early writing example from ESOL in England that can be extended to other research perspectives on communities of practice (Barton and Hamilton 2005; Wenger 1998; Holliday 2013). Overall, these migrants' processes for writing in English often pushed them to take agency in spite of structural influences, or involvement with the dominant language community. This extends Block's (2013: 144) perspective by illuminating the processes that shaped these migrants' actions for early writing in different circumstances, in England. Indeed, these migrants' hidden processes often led to practices that facilitated changes in their lives rather than counteracting 'struggles' for engagement, which adds an early writing perspective to other research about identity (Siegal 1996; Norton 2000; Ivanič et al. 2007). I now turn to the significance of migrants' blending of life contexts for early writing and identity construction.

a) Drawing on life contexts

I conclude that by orchestrating their life contexts migrants take some control over the socio-economic and socio-cultural structures that they meet outside formal college learning, and consideration of these hidden processes adds to existing studies of literacy and context crossing

(Clark and Ivanič 1997; Crossan et al 2003: 58; Satchwell and Ivanič 2007). The processes initiated by these migrants drew on features from all across their life experiences which offer a 'testing ground', as noted by Blommaert (2013: 620), for reconfiguring their identities in new situations so as to gain independence. For example, from an intermediary's perspective, my research shows how the poem that S3 wrote in Dutch emerged from his past life experiences, and as he translated the poem into English he was also making sense of writing in the context of a new language. This is in agreement with work by Holliday (2013) that illuminates how people draw on multi-level contexts throughout their lives from across their 'life trajectories' to create identities. My research extends that perspective into migrants' early writing processes in an adult further education ESOL context in England.

Most significantly, these migrants' unfolding processes enabled their own reality to take on meaning in different contexts, as others have shown (Ferdman 1990: 187; Bartlett 2007b: 229; Barton and Hamilton's 2005: 25-27; Blommaert 2013; Holliday 2013; Block 2007; Norton 2000). However, it was evident in my research that as these migrants made sense of writing in various areas of their lives, they also negotiated their way through identity conflicts. One of the conclusions from my work was that some aspects of ESOL teaching and learning increased challenges to migrants' identities, raising conflicts affecting their early engagement with writing in England. Hence, my research makes an original contribution to knowledge by showing aspects of these migrants' processes that enabled them, consciously and reflexively, to shape their identities, which is an area that Block (2007: 26) believes is underexplored in the literature. What is more, as was also seen by Weedon (2004: 4), when the migrants in my research compared and contrasted life contexts they also negotiated difference, to which my next sub-section relates.

b) Building identities from comparison

My findings showed, in agreement with other research (Block 2007; Holliday 2013; Norton and Toohey 2011; Weedon 1997, 2004), that migrants' hidden processes were often relational, as they compared themselves against others and against their socio-historical life contexts. In this way, everyday situations push migrants into managing identity conflicts and seeking alternative writing strategies by comparing new experiences with prior socio-historical contacts. What is more, as these migrants sought independence, which was important to them, the social and economic structures that they encountered encouraged them to make life changes, as findings from research by Bauman (2001:15) revealed as well. Moreover, Cooke and Hunter's (1999:6) work also suggests, in looking after themselves these migrants orchestrated their individual life pathways in ways that were particular to them. For example, it was their individual decisions that enabled them to change college (or not to participate on a college

course), to relocate, and to invest in technology. In fact, these migrants' life changes increased their opportunities for writing and identity construction, but also stimulated them to juggle their language and cultural processes to their advantage, or as a way of counteracting disadvantages in their lives. This finding adds an ESOL migrants' early writing perspective to the outcomes of research by Holliday, Hyde and Kullman (2010: 18) in the context of an adult college of further education in England. Most importantly, it is through the negotiation of meaning and making comparisons that these migrants could redefine who they are, or who they aspire to be, in different circumstances. These conclusions offer a broader appreciation of these migrants' complex identity construction, which according to Vertovec (2010: 94), adds to our basic understanding of the new diversity among super-diverse populations. These findings are strengthened through migrants' negotiation of writing and identity construction.

c) Negotiating processes for early writing and identity construction

In view of the above, my research indicates that sufficient opportunity to negotiate difference is crucial in supporting migrants' struggles to make sense of their life circumstances and early writing processes. Indeed, without opportunities to negotiate difference migrants may easily perceive deficiency in their own lives, or in those of others. In my research the dilemmas of juggling different identities (student, job seeker, father, and so on) and maintaining independent lives supported their writing development and adds a perspective from ESOL in England to other research (Weedon 1987; Baumeister, Shapiero and Tice 1985). Moreover, these migrants' moment-by-moment actions often responded to challenges from a collection of small cultures, or networks, for writing rather than relying intensively on a classroom culture or a particular learning community. Thus, on the one hand, as Menard-Warwick (2005: 267) shows, drawing on life background and comparison with others leads migrants' identity conflicts to increase and can involve exhilarating or painful experiences, especially when participating in new social practices. However, my research demonstrated that hidden processes for identity construction, especially identity conflicts and ambivalence, were of considerable use in supporting migrants as they made sense of early writing in a new language, which is a finding going beyond other literature (Holliday 2013; Block 2007, 2013; Holliday, Hyde and Kullman 2010). In fact, SMS text messaging proved to be a powerful tool for showing the workings of these migrants' hidden processes for their engagement with early writing and identity negotiation.

d) SMS text messaging

My research demonstrated that social SMS text messaging revealed migrants' hidden processes which brought together their classroom practices and experiential learning. SMS text

messaging took these migrants beyond static classroom learning, such as text level drills, into informal creative problem-solving across various contexts in their lives. This experimentation encompassed checking English grammar and making sense of life issues such as college enrolment, and maximised their independent decision making, offering evidence of interactive networking perspectives in the ESOL context (Sharkey 2004: 297; Barton 2011:59). In addition, my research complements other literature (Attewell 2005; Barton and Papen 2010) by highlighting how SMS text making practices revealed these migrants' emotions, surrounding disappointment and challenge, giving deeper insights into their identity conflicts. Indeed, a broader understanding of migrants' identity conflicts is especially significant for mitigating migrants' struggles, as shown by S2 in my research, when writing for the first time. What is more, these migrants' literacy practices enabled them to produce SMS text messages without formally learning to write digital texts, a finding which constitutes a response to Lee's (2007:298) call for deeper understanding in this area. I now turn to my final reflections.

7.3.4 Concluding reflections

My essential conclusion was that migrants' early writing emerges from the negotiation of social processes from various life contexts as they compare and contrast experiences to build positive identities in any given situation. However, because migrants early writing emerges from their individual 'hidden processes', it is challenging for traditional policies and procedures to identify their needs for inclusion in teaching and learning practices. Accordingly, my conclusions add significantly to our understanding of alternative perspectives. This is especially where two-way experiences between migrants and teachers or teacher managers alike collaborate flexibly towards shaping contemporary early writing curricula and pedagogy. Attention to these findings may help to counter the challenges of institutional impacts on migrants' early writing and identity construction in the ESOL context, and beyond, that arise from an increased policy focus on AECC, standards and national tests (Hamilton and Hillier 2007: 591). In the light of these significant points there are specific implications relating to migrants, teachers, teacher managers, and other stakeholders which I present in the next section.

7.4 The implications of this research

In this section, I present the implications for pedagogy in respect of early engagement with writing in a new language. There are implications relating to migrants, teachers, teacher managers, and other stakeholders. The major implication for policy is to reconfigure existing knowledge by taking a "bottom-up" perspective for the investigation of migrants' early engagement with writing in a new language, and adding to what is already known through studies from the ground up, as shown in this study.

7.4.1 The balance of power: “bottom-up” versus “top-down”

The tension suggested in my research between top-down policy expectations and bottom-up teachers’ and teacher managers’ perceptions of their student’s needs is an area for deeper consideration in terms of everyday teaching and learning to write. This is because such a tension has been identified as relating to an impact of globalization on educational institutions (Jarvis 2000 cited in Trantalidi 2004). However, global influences are believed to “reconfigure” rather than to replace diversity, which seems to suggest that there is room for the alternative perspectives that my research addresses (Moss 2014; Edwards and Usher 1998: 162). Indeed, the interpretations in this thesis would be relevant in any country for migrants’ early engagement with writing and literacy practices in a new language to meet the demands of increasingly inter-connected and diverse global populations.

In this study the top-down requirements for target setting appeared to drive pedagogy, this seeming to be reinforced by classroom observations and college conventions in teachers’ training meetings. Therefore, the policy desire for target setting encouraged a pedagogical focus on technical skills development which suggested a static perspective of learning through pre-specified stages of development. Ultimately, college conventions for target setting determined boundaries for migrants’ early engagement with writing. Therefore, the implication is that migrants generally have no choice but to fit into the college culture and norms for engagement with writing, in spite of their life ambitions. These factors, I believe, foreground the role of the educator, and policy, in shaping migrants’ learning experiences from the top downwards (Phillimore 2011: 327). Even though teachers may see their migrant students as creative people with complex life experiences, these factors are often secondary to their obligation to conform to college conventions and to meet set targets. Nevertheless, as adult education is considered to be a strategic tool for economic performance and survival in an increasingly competitive global economy, continuing professional development (CPD) for adult educators is a key issue in second language learning policies.

These points are supported by major National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC) reports in England, for example, *Effective Teaching and Learning: ESOL* (Baynham et al. 2007), *Effective Teaching and Learning: Writing* (Grief et al. 2007) and many more. There are also projects such as *Literacies for Learning in Further Education* (Satchwell and Ivanič 2007) in England and studies taking a European Union perspective such as Trantalidi (2004), to name but a few. The major implication for policy is to reconfigure existing knowledge by taking a “bottom-up” perspective for the investigation of migrants’ early engagement with writing in a new language, and adding to what is already known through studies from the ground up, as shown in this study.

7.4.2 Identifying migrants' processes for negotiating their engagement with writing and identity construction

A further and significant implication of the foregoing is that it cannot be taken for granted by policy makers and institutions that migrants' real needs are pinpointed in administrative or formal assessment procedures, such as the ILP and "identifying literacy needs" guidelines (Appendix 7). In addition, people know what the "system" expects, they are aware of the need to look after themselves, and are likely to provide the information necessary for enrolment or for ILP targets. This is because, as this research shows, it takes time for migrant adults to reveal their true literacy needs and the processes for engagement with writing. What is more, the details recorded in official documents, such as ILPs are also affected by the extent to which migrants and teachers conceptualize writing as a skill or as literacy practices. There is an implication in respect of the time that it takes for such new knowledge to surface. In this thesis generally hidden subtleties were essentially uncovered through my patient interpretive methodology, which provides a basis on which to found future studies.

In addition, pre-set curriculum targets may not coincide with migrants' everyday writing tasks, or may be too simplistic to support their life needs at a specific point in time. Therefore, when migrants learn in stages of progression, such as "ESOL Entry Level 1" grammatical structures in the classroom over a term or academic year, they are disadvantaged in external contexts that require more complex language structures. This is because migrants' early writing tasks in everyday life, as explained in the introduction and in Chapter 6, may be concerned with catching a bus at one moment, buying a car the next, or indeed dealing with the bureaucracy for moving to a new country or finding accommodation. This also raises questions about the extent to which stakeholders and academic curriculum material developers acknowledge migrants as capable organizers of their own lives, from a bottom-up perspective, in learning and inspection policies.

Thus, it is essential that policy recognize that migrants' "new" language needs for everyday writing vary and may include basic and advanced vocabulary or grammatical structures in one task. This raises not only implications for the re-contextualization of migrants' writing inside and outside the classroom, but dealing with changes from one context to another as their immediate circumstances demand. Fundamentally, pedagogy needs to be capable of a deeper focus on migrants' processes for orchestrating their negotiation of meaning in writing tasks as

they happen on a moment-by-moment basis (which includes classroom learning). The implication of the mismatch in these data suggests that if teachers are encouraged to work towards pre-set targets they may only skim the surface of migrants' needs. Therefore, a major implication for all stakeholders is to consider how migrants organize their own lives and accommodate their eclectic learning processes for writing, which happen on a need-to-know basis and may not easily fit into procedures or a pre-set curriculum.

7.4.3 Writing: (re)conceptualization

The significance of the foregoing implications increases my belief that there is an urgent requirement for pedagogy to reduce the emphasis on skills production, for migrants' early engagement with writing, and the urgency to do so is supported by the following quotation:

“In terms of skills, producing a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing is probably the most difficult thing there is to do in language. It is something most native speakers never master. For second language learners the challenges are enormous...”

(Nunan 1999: 271)

Therefore, as Nunan (1999) emphasizes, learning to write is a challenge for anyone, but writing is especially difficult for second language learners. This raises further, particularly significant, implications if people cannot participate in on-going college enrolment, as shown in these data, and it is perhaps timely to consider alternative possibilities for migrants' early engagement with writing for flexible learning in any context as need demands. I believe that an alternative curriculum may run alongside college courses or in place of them. However, the development of writing as social practice also depends upon peoples' perception of what “literacy” means to them.

7.4.4 Social practices: “What is literacy?”

As evidenced in these data, the life circumstances of these migrants showed that they were away from college learning for long periods of time or were coping with frequent life changes. These migrants' response for early engagement with writing in their everyday lives mostly resembled literacy as social practice and involved intermediaries. A major implication is that these migrants' early writing as social practices in literacy events were not always fully exploited or recognized by them as being “writing”. Therefore, there is a major implication for urgently raising the awareness of the requirement for policy and pedagogy to conceptualize “literacy as social practice” clearly for ESOL writing. A deeper conceptualization of literacy as social practice in college is essential for teachers, teacher managers and migrants, especially for identifying learning needs and agreeing ILP targets to enable students to talk about their actual

practices, and for teachers to help them to do so. Moreover, wider knowledge about literacy as social practice is paramount in reducing migrants' anxiety about making mistakes and fear of failure or negative evaluation by others. A wider perspective of writing and literacy as social practice is also crucial for supporting people to reduce and negotiate the challenges that may affect their access to essential services. These implications are supported by Street (1999) in that literacy may be poorly understood or recognized because it relates to people's social processes that are not only educational. Therefore, it essential that practitioners and other stakeholders, consider wider perspectives of literacy as social practice to enable them to recognize and assist migrants' processes for early engagement with writing.

These are striking implications, especially when migrants are building a new life, because social practices were shown to be essential for their engagement with writing and more influential and paramount for learning and identity construction than "skills production".

7.4.5 Time to learn; too much information

This research showed that when teachers reflected on their own practices and pedagogy they identified migrants' possible cognitive struggles with written composition over long lesson periods that limited opportunities for life experiences and social processes to assist learning. This raises an urgent implication for teachers and teacher managers to learn from migrants to enable practitioners to conceptualize the processes for early writing negotiation that impact on identity construction. There are major implications here also for reflective practices which define the ability of teachers and teacher managers to explore migrant students' past achievements and everyday social processes with people over time for positive identity construction. This would enable teachers to explore their own and new theories of practice for assisting migrants to recognize and organize additional learning opportunities for writing in their lives.

Essentially, learning to write standard English, or any new language, takes a long time. Therefore, practitioners' and all stakeholders' awareness of the impact of learning timelines on migrants' processes for negotiating identities and learning to write is a crucial area for further investigation. Increased knowledge of migrants' processes may be gathered from SMS text messaging practices.

7.4.6 SMS Text Messaging; an under-utilized bottom-up resource

Overall text messaging for migrants' early engagement with writing showed promise as a powerful tool for investigating learning and identity construction. There is an urgent implication for understanding what text messaging can offer ESOL classroom early writing

pedagogy and for linking different contexts. Moreover, SMS text messaging can show how writing in English “works” for migrants and offers considerable potential for investigating future flexible, “blended” writing curricula. In fact, text messaging in this research was shown to:

- enable exploration of language in different ways
- include standard English writing conventions
- include language deviance
- include abbreviations
- accept misspellings without impeding communication (including functions or keying-in errors)
- communicate what is important on a moment-by-moment basis
- communicate in formal or informal written language
- cross the boundaries between inside and outside a college setting
- create small cultures (as shown in this research)

Further investigation in this area would increase all stakeholders’ understanding of the processes for migrants’ early engagement with writing and identity construction towards an alternative pedagogy.

7.4.7 Wider impact

The foregoing implications identify particular gaps in knowledge that raise further questions about (re)conceptualizing adult migrants as creative managers of their own lives. This research has shown how these migrants’ processes for early engagement with writing as social practice can be observed and pinpoints specific areas for deeper investigation in future studies to inform pedagogy and policy. In addition, these implications draw policy makers’ and educators’ attention to the pressing need for teachers and teacher managers to be given time and freedom to explore migrants’ early engagement with writing, with students, in a variety of ways. Only then can teachers and teacher managers have space to advance their own theories to envisage an alternative early writing pedagogy from a “bottom-up” perspective, from which links to academic research can be made.

a) Teachers

My research shows the possibilities for reflecting on one’s own experiences for developing theories from the “bottom-up”, with students. Teachers need freedom from policy requirements and time to encourage practitioners to explore their own theories for learning in respect of migrants’ early engagement with writing to advance understandings of what pedagogy works well and what impacts negatively on identity construction for students. An example would be the exploration of SMS text messaging for learning. Most significantly, teachers’ own experiences may provide new ways of thinking about teaching and learning for early migrant

writers to advance them as professionals and to increase their “global” thinking. Such practices might be built into teachers’ CPD for collaboration with other teachers.

b) Teacher managers

Teacher managers might also engage with their own theories and draw on their own experiences with teachers in reflective CPD training. My research provides an example of how using personal experiences and knowledge of students’ life experiences offers possibilities for enhancing pedagogy. Teacher managers might reconsider possibilities for using the AECC in a different ways to integrate skills from across levels to build holistic pedagogy with teachers. This would enable teacher managers to inform policy and funding bodies about the effects of frequent policy change on migrant students, teaching and learning. However, it is essential for teacher managers to explore CPD training that begins from the “bottom-up” perspective rather than training to meet macro-policy.

c) Classroom observations

These case studies, and future studies, may inform official inspection bodies and in-house peer observers, about the benefits of taking a “bottom-up” perspective to understand migrants’ processes for learning to write in English to develop a model for observing literacy. My perspective here is supported by a similar call for the development of criteria for observers to show a deeper understanding of the processes of talk in classrooms (Baynham et al 2007). A deeper understanding of migrants’ processes by educators and inspectors would enable them to “see” migrants’ processes for engagement with writing from a different, “early” writing perspective during classroom observations. This would mean reconfiguring observation feedback interviews into an interactive space for observers to listen to teachers’ and teacher managers’ own theories about migrants’ early engagement with writing, and why they do what they do, in order to inform educators about future alternative policy.

d) Government policy, funding bodies and other stakeholders

This study raises fundamental questions about the impact of policy change on people on the receiving end. Contemporary times illuminate the need for multi-skilling and flexibility to meet economic global demands and migration continues to generate much Government policy debate, which includes the need to “speak” English in England. The impact of globalization, therefore, raises questions about how academic institutions (re)conceptualize the effects of the movement of people on learning to write in a new language. This requires fundamental thought about “flexible” rather than “static” perceptions of people and their learning habits. Therefore, detailed “bottom-up” perspectives of migrants’ practices are essential to show a contemporary vision of an alternative holistic pedagogy that may provide the basis for cost-effective redistribution of funding. A new vision for future teaching and learning policies, and qualifications, in respect of migrants’ early engagement with writing may potentially alter the

dominant discourses about migrants' ability to "speak" English, towards an holistic view of practice for "writing, reading, listening and speaking", English. Overall, it is essential that Government bodies and funding providers should recognize an alternative pedagogical route for the growing population of migrants who are at the early stages of learning to write. This is because writing is a major facilitator for access to privileges in any country and is essential for meeting future global demographic changes.

7.4.8 Limitations

This research is a limited snapshot of a particular learning context at a significant "political" point in time for colleges of Further Education and ESOL writing pedagogy in England (Kings and Casey 2013). The setting presented particular challenges for recruiting migrant participants who could be involved for the duration of the project because of changes in college policy and in their life circumstances. In addition, teachers' everyday working lives were disrupted by immediate and impending policy changes, which created an unsettled atmosphere and were particular to this study. There were increased official inspections which meant that my research project initially added a perceived unwelcome burden of additional classroom observations and delayed my access to this college for field-work. However, my methodological approach to encourage professional collaborative and supportive two-way reflective conversations reduced these impacts. I was also initially aware that in building relationships with migrant participants I sometimes asked leading questions during interviews. However, this influence was reduced as my confidence grew out of the flexible and eclectic methodological approach and reflections on my own actions to reduce subjectivity. Nonetheless, sometimes the chaotic atmosphere in the setting, and my close involvement with participants, meant that it was difficult for me to write minutely detailed notes in my field notebook. Nevertheless, the effects of a busy setting were reduced by my on-going inductive analysis which helped me to pinpoint manageable avenues of investigation to pursue as they emerged during my field-work. The themes that arose out of my observation research cycle and inductive procedures enabled me to use my field notebook accounts and comments to write subsequent detailed field-note descriptions and ultimately to produce this thesis. Finally, because the number of participants on which to base my interpretations was small, I believe that wider exploration of the implications discussed above is essential in future research studies.

7.5 Further research

First, and foremost, I believe that a wider interpretation of literacy in relation to writing pedagogy is paramount. There is an urgent need for educators to draw on the expertise and professionalism of ESOL teachers and teacher managers and to enable them freedom to build knowledge from their own theories about literacy and migrants' early engagement with writing.

This would increase stakeholders' understanding of what literacy means for migrant students and their real "needs" for writing. In addition, it is essential for practitioners to investigate migrants' processes for negotiating their early engagement with writing to enable pedagogy to support people towards meeting their life aspirations and increase their opportunities for identity construction in any context. Many of the implications for pedagogy that are discussed in this thesis add to, or re-conceptualize, those identified in NRCD studies, such as Roberts et al (2004), Baynham et al (2007) and Grief et al (2007). However, there are clear gaps in literature that my research identifies and on which my calls for further investigation are based.

Further studies are needed to investigate the global impacts on ESOL education that influence the role of migrants' engagement with writing and literacy as social practices. I particularly suggest that all ESOL stakeholders should have a comprehensive understanding of migrants' processes for negotiating their engagement with writing and identity construction, and the assistance that SMS text messaging might afford in encouraging their early writing interests. I believe that these suggested objectives could be achieved by using my research methodology. It is also a significant and timely moment in ESOL history for these factors to be realized, because stakeholders themselves have identified urgent areas for investigation in respect of migrants' writing and literacy practices. Therefore, stakeholders might invite a research proposal that aims to provide detailed knowledge for policy makers to consider in terms of reducing the gaps in knowledge surrounding migrants' early engagement with writing, literacy, and identity construction.

7.5.1 Challenges

The design of my research project may be extended to provide a realistic proposal in response to the recent findings that were published in a report that was carried out for the Association of Colleges (AoC) from the National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy (NRDC), entitled *ESOL Qualifications and Funding in 2014: Issues for Consideration* (Kings and Casey 2013). This report shows that the numbers of migrants studying, or needing, ESOL Entry Level 1 and ESOL Entry Level 2 qualifications in England is increasing rapidly.

Therefore, my research falls at a timely moment in the history of ESOL in England by offering cost effective perspectives for pedagogy and a different way of identifying the needs for migrants' early engagement with writing, literacy and identity construction. The Kings and Casey (2013) report calls for "smaller" and "slower" stages in learning for alternative qualifications recognition relating to ESOL Entry Level 1 and the transition to Entry Level 2, and small intensive programmes that may connect with employers. In the longer term, my

research methodology could contribute towards an anticipated full review of the national literacy standards (Kings and Casey 2013). Indeed, these areas are where I believe that my thesis has most relevance with future potential for speeding up migrants' engagement with writing and literacy in English or any other new language in countries where it is necessary to learn the dominant language.

7.5.2 Extending research perspectives

Future research projects or small scale studies might be invited to enable a deeper investigation towards redefining what being literate means for migrants who are involved in the early stages of learning to write in a new language, in a new country.

My suggestions for a future research project would maximize the possibilities for blended and flexible learning by drawing on what students already do with print and digital texts. At the same time this would enable people to explore their processes for engagement with writing and enlisting intermediaries to increase potential for identity construction. The purpose of this would be to free people to take maximum control of their own learning. This would mean opening opportunities for teachers and students to explore individual and cultural differences (to reduce stereotyping) through increased knowledge of the processes for negotiation of meaning. This would inform national, local and college policy towards (re)envisaging migrants as masters of their own destiny who are involved in early engagement with writing and literacy in a new language. This would also raise the profile of ESOL practitioners as flexible managers of their own expertise and professionalism.

Future evaluation procedures might include workshops that envision "performance appraisal", focus groups, personal portfolios and redefined qualifications to encompass teachers' reflective practices from which suggestions for further research might emerge, as briefly outlined below.

a) Workshops

Workshop learning would mean that teachers would have to be prepared to shift their thinking away from technical skills production to more holistic possibilities for learning. The technical aspects, such as spelling and grammar, would emerge in a more "natural" way for the students. The negotiation of meaning may involve migrants' social practices with teachers as they engage with everyday writing tasks brought into the classroom from outside. Teachers would be guided by the adult students' past experiences, whatever they are, from learning in a more orally based "story-telling" environment or through experiencing EFL in primary school, for example.

b) “Performance appraisal”

I see that initial and on-going assessment of migrants would involve students’ own “performance appraisal” for learning. This would involve talking to a teacher “as a friend” to explain what they have done in the past and how they can build on that for the future, over time.

c) Focus groups

I believe that special focus groups or “genres of interest” may form over time between students and involve teachers as facilitators. This may lead to groups for official form-filling, poetry-writing, story-telling or letter-writing, for example, thereby developing a recycling culture of experiential learning. This may open ways for students to become tutors for peers and teachers, thereby investigating through collaborative relationships

d) Personal portfolios and redefined qualifications

In agreement with migrant students, a personal learning portfolio of writing exemplars for their own use might be developed, such as personal poetry, e-mails or letters – their own learning achievements. This would supersede pre-set learning aims or objectives, and would emerge from language learning experiences in areas that individual students want to develop themselves. A route to an officially recognized qualification could be developed, possibly on a “points” basis.

e) Teachers’ reflective practice

I suggest that teachers are given freedom to learn collaboratively from, and with, students, thereby, providing identity work for migrants and teachers. The AECC might be re-conceptualized as a reference document, from which classes could be prepared by merging different units, at different levels if needed, to meet the language-learning needs of each student. Future research might investigate how making use of the AECC in alternative ways could meet changing pedagogical literacy needs. The curriculum could be supported by grammar textbooks where necessary.

f) Deeper investigation

I would propose an initial pilot study to be conducted outside a major metropolitan borough so as to attract a manageable number of students for involvement in a research project. In addition, I believe that developing a collaborative association with a local university for a “special project focus group” to be set up by teachers to explore their theories with other teachers and academics may increase scholarship.

Ultimately, an alternative pedagogical approach presents the opportunity to (re)envision migrants as creative facilitators of their own processes for engagement with writing and identity

construction, whilst challenging overly narrow views of social practices. In addition, these implications envisage practices to free ESOL teachers and teaching managers to become innovative facilitators, or “co-learners” for reflective practices with migrants for early engagement with writing.

7.6 Final comments

I hope that my interpretation of the research material has in some way increased the reader’s understanding of these migrants’ early engagement with writing and their processes of negotiation for positive identity construction. My work provides one example of how reflective research and practice can contribute to the understanding of migrants’ early writing and show the implications for college procedures and especially for the identification of literacy needs. This research has shown teachers as willing to collaborate in reflective practices to explore their own theories about migrants’ early engagement with writing and identity construction. In fact, this research project would not have been possible without the collaborative support of the teachers and teacher managers involved in this project, to whom I am eternally grateful.

I believe that this research showed these migrants’ lives as evolving. They were open to travel within England or in other countries, which seemed to show indications of contemporary global identities. Data collection was made possible because of the opportunity to develop friendly research relationships with the four case-study migrant participants and others involved in this study. I was privileged to be able to explore these peoples’ lives, their processes for early writing and identity construction, during the research period.

Finally, I hope that this research is a further step towards future alternative perspectives of migrants’ early engagement with writing and identity construction. In addition, I hope that my research demonstrates how freedom for teachers and teacher managers’ engagement in reflective practices may facilitate migrants’ early writing journey and their own professional development.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Key Codes and Data Collection Activity

Key code reference	Data collection activity
AR (10min)	Audio recording (in this case indicating 10 minutes' duration)
CCC	City centre cafe
FG1	Focus Group One
FG2	Focus Group Two
FN	Field-note
Int (1)	Interview on a pre-set date (number one, number two, etc.)
Obs	Classroom observation or participant observation
R	Researcher (researcher undertaking teaching duty to cover for absent class teacher)
RRW	Research Recruitment Workshop
S1 etc.	Student (number one, two, etc.)
T1 etc.	Teacher (number one, two, etc.)
Tm, Tma or Tmb	Teaching manager, 'a' and 'b'
Ts Train	Teachers' training session
TMR	Text message record

The key codes and their description are followed by a table of data collection activities and a summary of SMS text message activity.

Appendix 2 - Programme of data collection activities 2011 to 2012

PERIOD	2011																								2012															
College Year (36 days)	ACADEMIC YEAR ONE (2010/2011)												ACADEMIC YEAR TWO (2011/2012)																											
	Fieldwork Prep																																							
Date and activity Page 1	31Mar	26 Apr	18 May	19May	25 May	26 May	08 June	09 June	15 June	16 June	22 June	23 June	28 June	29 June	30 June	13 July	02 Sept	19 Sept	11 Oct	12 Oct	13 Oct	01 Nov	02 Nov	08 Nov	09 Nov	15 Nov	16 Nov	29 Nov	01 Dec	06 Dec	07 Dec	16 Feb	16 Apr	06 May	12 May	26 Nov				
S1					Int 1: AR 8 min		Int 2: 1530 AR 16 min						FN 1300 - S1 re Exam chat						Int 3: AR 13 min										FN int 0840 - 0950	Int 5: AR 9 min										
S2					Int: AR 8 secs Abor ted for FN		Int1: 19 min	Int: FN					FN 1300 S2 re Exam chat							Int: FN Obs 12.4 5 – 2pm																		Int: FN 29 min	Obs FN Librar y 3- 5pm	
S3											Int 1: 1215 AR 72 mins									Int 2: 1300 AR 55 min																				
S4											Int 1: 1510 AR 15 min										Int 2: AR 13 min CCC 1230						Int 3: AR 19 min CCC 1300												Int 4: FN 14 min	

Date and activity	31Mar	26 Apr	18 May	19 May	25 May	26 May	08 June	09 June	15 June June	16 June	22 June	23 June	28 June	29 June	30 June	13 July	02 Sept	19 Sept	11 Oct	12 Oct	13 Oct	01 Nov	02 Nov	08 Nov	09 Nov	15 Nov	16 Nov	29 Nov	01 Dec	06 Dec	07 Dec	16 Feb	16 Apr	06 May	12 May	26 Nov			
Page 2																																							
T1	Obs 0930 - 1100		Int 1: AR 18 min Obs 113 0- 124 5		Obs 1120 - 1215					Int 2: AR 34 min Obs 1145 - 1230		Int 3: AR 18 min									Obs 0945 - 1030		Obs FN (S3) 1010 - 1230		Obs 0930 - 1100	Int 4: AR 8 min s AR 26 min	Int 5: &Ob s						Obs 1030 - 1035						FN Exit Int.
T2			Obs 101 5 - 111 5 RRW		Int 1: 6 min Obs 1015 - 1105		Obs 1015 - 1115		Obs 1.05 - 1230		Obs 1130 - 1200																												FN Exit Int.
T3					Obs 1005 - 1115			FN Staff room chat	Int 1: AR 16 min	Obs 1020 - 1115 RRW																													Int 2: FN 30 min
T4																				Obs 1015 - 1130 & 1140 - 1230		Obs 1000 - 1100		Int 1: AR 11 min Obs FN RRW	Obs 1020 - 1215	Int 2: AR 2 min Obs FN (S1) FG1: AR 5 min		Obs FG2: AR 10 min											FN Exit email Int.
T5													Int 1: 48 min &T3 last 15																									FN Exit email Int.	

Date and activity	31Mar	26 Apr	18 May	19 May	25 May	26 May	08 June	09 June	15 June	16 June	22 June	23 June	28 June	29 June	30 June	13 July	02 Sept	19 Sept	11 Oct	12 Oct	13 Oct	01 Nov	02 Nov	08 Nov	09 Nov	15 Nov	16 Nov	29 Nov	01 Dec	06 Dec	07 Dec	16 Feb	16 Apr	06 May	12 May	26 Nov						
Page 3												min																														
Tm	Obs 1115 - 1245 + RRW					Obs 1125 - 1225	Int 1: AR 14 min		Obs 1020 - 1130	Obs 1020 - 1115			Int 2: AR 31 min	Obs FN 1600 - 1900			Obs. FN 1300 - 1500																									FN Exit email Int.
Tma																			Int: FN 1015 - 1300																					FN Exit email Int		
Tmb																										Int: AR 44 min 1315 - 1400																FN Exit email Int.
LW Teacher Class Cover Work			Obs 0930 - 1245 RRW				Obs FN 1000 - 1230 (E1: (S1& S2 class)		Obs FN 1330 - 1530 (Leve l 1)					Obs FN E1- E2 Exam Invigi lator												Obs FN E1 1330 - 1530	Obs FN E1 1330 - 1530	Obs FN E1 1330 - 1530	Obs FN E1 0930 - 1245													

Appendix 3 - SMS Text Message Record

Summary of text messages sent to, and received from, four case-study participants

SMS text messages to and from case-study participants: data collection summary					
Activity and time period from June 2011 to March 2013					
Case Study Participant	S1	S2	S3	S4	TOTAL SMS TEXTS
Number of texts sent by case-study participants to LW	5	3	10	18	36
Number of texts sent from LW to case-study participants	7	12	17	25	61
Month Started and Finished (tailing off period)					
Month of start of text message data collection	January 2012	January 2012	June 2011	July 2011	
Month of last text message	January 2013	May 2012	November 2011	March 2013	
Total number of months of data collection using SMS text messages	13	5	6	21	11.25 average months of data collected

Appendix 4 – Adult ESOL Core Curriculum extracts

These extracts and further details may be seen in:

Department for Education and Skills. (2001). Adult ESOL core curriculum. London: Basic Skills Agency/DfES) (ISBN 1-84185-640-1)

(<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100210151716/http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/bank.cfm?section=301>)

AECC: The National Qualifications Framework (extract from page 4)

Table 1. The national qualifications framework

		Key skills Level 5	National qualifications framework Level 5
		Key skills Level 4	National qualifications framework Level 4
		Key skills Level 3	National qualifications framework Level 3 (e.g. A level)
	Literacy/Numeracy Level 2	Key skills Level 2	National qualifications framework Level 2 (e.g. GCSE A*–C)
National Curriculum Level 5	Literacy/Numeracy Level 1	Key skills Level 1	National qualifications framework Level 1 (e.g. NVQ level)
National Curriculum Level 4			
National Curriculum Level 3	Literacy/Numeracy Entry 3		Entry Level
National Curriculum Level 2	Literacy/Numeracy Entry 2		
National Curriculum Level 1	Literacy/Numeracy Entry 1		

AECC: Referencing and Cross-reference to key skills (extracts from pages 7, 8)

Curriculum referencing

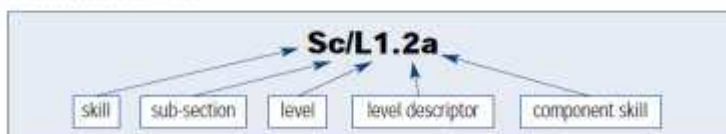
The curriculum has been given a referencing system to help teachers plan their learning programmes and schemes of work. The curriculum is divided into four skill areas, each

Skill	Skill sub-section	Component skills and knowledge and understanding	Cross-reference to key skills	Examples of application and level	Sample activities	Level
Speaking	Speak to communicate	Component skill and knowledge and understanding Identify the main message of a text or audio recording Identify the main message of a text or audio recording Identify the main message of a text or audio recording	Examples of application and level Can you give the answer? Can you give the answer? Can you give the answer?	Examples of application and level Can you give the answer? Can you give the answer? Can you give the answer?	Sample activities To examine the importance of identifying systems in the context of social interaction between people in working systems, looking at a list of problems, explaining your solution to a problem (10 minutes) To examine the importance of identifying systems in the context of social interaction between people in working systems, looking at a list of problems, explaining your solution to a problem (10 minutes)	Level 1
						National standards
						Curriculum reference number
						Cross-reference between speaking and listening
						Level descriptor

with its own identifying abbreviation (S, L, R, W). The skill areas are divided into the sub-sections identified in the national standards. The elements of this system are illustrated in the table below:

Skill	Sub-section	Component skill
Speaking	S	Speak to communicate
		Engage in discussion
Listening	L	Listen and respond
	R	Text focus: reading comprehension
		Sentence focus: grammar and punctuation
Writing	W	Text focus: writing composition
		Sentence focus: grammar and punctuation
		Word focus: vocabulary, spelling and handwriting

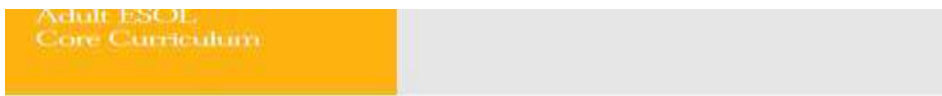
The curriculum has a detailed referencing system which enables individual component skills to be identified, as shown here:



Cross-reference to key skills

At Level 1 and Level 2, a cross-reference indicates the alignment of the Adult ESOL core curriculum with the key skill of communication.

AECC: The National Standards and Level Descriptors (extracts from pages 26, 28)
 ESOL Entry Level 1 & ESOL Entry Level 2



The national standards and level descriptors

WRITING					
ENTRY 1			ENTRY 2		
<i>At this level, adults can</i>			<i>At this level, adults can</i>		
write to communicate information to an intended audience			write to communicate information with some awareness of the intended audience		
Ref	An adult will be expected to:	page	Ref	An adult will be expected to:	page
Wt/E1.1	use written words and phrases to record or present information	80	Wt/E2.1	use written words and phrases to record or present information	156
Ws/E1.1	construct a simple sentence	82	Ws/E2.1	construct simple and compound sentences using common conjunctions to connect two clauses, e.g. <i>as, and, but</i>	158
			Ws/E2.2	use adjectives	160
Ws/E1.2	punctuate a simple sentence with a capital letter and a full stop	82	Ws/E2.3	use punctuation correctly, e.g. <i>capital letters, full stops and question marks</i>	160
Ws/E1.3	use a capital letter for personal pronoun 'I'	84	Ws/E2.4	use a capital letter for proper nouns	160



Page 28

WRITING					
ENTRY 1			ENTRY 2		
Ref	An adult will be expected to:	page	Ref	An adult will be expected to:	page
Ww/E1.1	spell correctly some personal key words and familiar words	84	Ww/E2.1	spell correctly the majority of personal details and familiar common words	162
Ww/E1.2	write the letters of the alphabet using upper and lower case	88	Ww/E2.2	produce legible text	164
in documents such as forms, lists, messages, notes, records			in documents such as forms, lists, messages, notes, records, e-mails, simple narratives		

AECC: Key Grammatical Structures (extracts from pages 30, 32, 34, 36)
for ESOL Entry Level 1 & ESOL Entry Level 2



Adult ESOL
Core Curriculum



Key grammatical structures at each level of the ESOL core curriculum

	
Simple sentences	Simple and compound sentences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> word order in simple statements, subject–verb–object e.g.: <i>She likes apples</i> subject–verb–adverb e.g.: <i>He speaks slowly</i> subject–verb–adjective e.g.: <i>My bag is heavy</i> subject–verb–prepositional phrase e.g.: <i>He lives in London</i> word order in instructions e.g.: <i>Keep left</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> word order in compound sentences, e.g.: subject–verb–(object) + <i>and/but</i> + subject–verb–(object) <i>I work in a shop but my friend works in an office</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>there is/are</i> + noun (+ prepositional phrase) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>there was/were/there is going to be</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clauses joined with conjunctions <i>and/but/or</i> a limited range of common verbs + <i>-ing</i> form verb + infinitive with and without <i>to</i>, e.g.: <i>We went shopping yesterday.</i> <i>I want to buy some fruit</i> <i>I heard him come in</i>

	
<p>Simple sentences</p>	<p>Simple and compound sentences</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>yes/no</i> questions <i>Do you know the address?</i> • <i>wh-</i> questions <i>What time is it?</i> • question words <i>what/who/where/how much/how many</i> • contracted form of auxiliary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>wh-</i> questions • comparative questions • alternative questions • question words <i>when, what time, how often, why, how</i> and expressions, e.g. <i>Can you tell me ...</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • statements with question tags, using Entry 1 and Entry 2 tenses, e.g.: <i>You arrived last year, didn't you?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • imperatives and negative imperatives, e.g.: <i>Stop! Don't touch!</i> 	
<p>Noun phrase</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular and common irregular plurals of nouns, e.g. <i>days, books, men, women</i> • very common uncountable nouns, e.g. <i>weather, traffic</i> • personal pronouns • demonstratives, e.g. <i>this/that/these/those</i> • determiners of quantity, e.g. <i>some/a lot of</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • countable and uncountable nouns, e.g. <i>roads, trees, houses; happiness, water, information</i> • simple noun phrases, e.g. <i>a large red box</i> • object and reflexive pronouns, e.g.: <i>I gave him my book</i> <i>We enjoyed ourselves very much</i> • determiners of quantity – <i>any, many</i>, e.g.: <i>Have you any oranges? We haven't many left.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • indefinite article <i>a/an</i> with singular countable nouns, e.g. <i>an apple, a pen</i> • definite article <i>the</i>, e.g. <i>the floor, the door</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of articles including: definite article and zero article with uncountable nouns, e.g.: <i>Water is important for life</i> <i>The traffic is bad today</i> definite article with superlatives, e.g. <i>the best example</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possessives: <i>my/your/his/her, etc.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possessive <i>s</i> and possessive pronouns, e.g. <i>mine, yours</i>

AECC Page 34 Key Grammatical Structures
 ESOL Entry Level 1 & ESOL Entry Level 2

	
Simple sentences	Simple and compound sentences
Verb forms and time markers in statements, interrogatives, negatives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple present tense of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>be/have/do</i> – common regular verbs <i>I am from Zaire</i> <i>He works in the evening</i> <i>Do you like music?</i> • <i>have got</i> – indicating possession <i>I've got a car</i> • present continuous <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – of common regular verbs <i>He's watching TV</i> • contracted forms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – subject and auxiliary – auxiliary and negative <i>We don't eat meat</i> <i>They're having lunch</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple present tense of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – regular transitive and intransitive verbs with frequency adverbs and phrases, e.g.: <i>The children often eat apples</i> <i>They always go to school</i> <i>I see her every day</i> • simple past tense of regular and common irregular verbs with time markers such as <i>ago</i>, e.g.: <i>We went to the cinema yesterday</i> <i>I saw her two weeks ago</i> • future time using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – present continuous, e.g. <i>going to, will</i> – use of time markers, e.g. <i>next week, in two days' time</i> <i>We are meeting him at 6 o'clock. I'm going to wash my hair tonight.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>can</i> + bare infinitive to express ability, e.g.: <i>He can drive</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>would + like</i> for requests, e.g.: <i>She'd like some tea</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modals and forms with similar meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>must</i> to express obligation – <i>mustn't</i> to express prohibition – <i>have to, had to</i> to express need – <i>could</i> to make requests, e.g. <i>Could you?</i> – <i>couldn't</i> to express impossibility • use of simple modal adverbs: <i>possibly, probably, perhaps</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of <i>on, off, in, out</i>, e.g.: <i>Switch the light off</i> <i>Way out</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very common phrasal verbs, e.g. <i>get on/off/up/down</i>
Adjectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • common adjectives after <i>be</i>, e.g. <i>hot/cold/young/new/old/good/bad</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adjectives and adjective word order, e.g.: <i>a large black horse, a new red coat</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comparatives, regular and common irregular forms, e.g. <i>good, better, wet, wetter, dark, darker</i>

	
Simple sentences	Simple and compound sentences
Adverbs and prepositional phrases	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • common prepositions and prepositional phrases of place, e.g. <i>at home, on the left, on the table</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepositions and prepositional phrases of place and time, e.g. <i>until tomorrow, by next week, by the river, at midnight, at once</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple adverbs of place, manner and time, e.g. <i>here, there, now, slowly</i> • use of intensifier <i>very</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adverbs and simple adverbial phrases including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – sequencing: <i>after that</i> – of time and place: <i>in the morning, at the bus stop</i> – of frequency: <i>always, sometimes</i> – of manner: <i>carefully, quickly</i> • word order with adverbs and adverbial phrases, e.g. <i>he always brought food to our house early in the morning</i> • use of intensifiers, e.g. <i>really, quite, so</i>
Discourse	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sentence connectives – <i>then, next</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adverbs to indicate sequence – <i>first, finally</i> • use of substitution, e.g. <i>I think so, I hope so</i> • markers to structure spoken discourse, e.g. <i>Right. Well.</i>

Appendix 5 - Writing approaches; “product-centred”, “process”, “genre” and “functional”.

A key element of each approach is shown in the activity column and the possible lost opportunity for writing as social practice:

Writing approach	Activity (during or following learner writing practice)	Lost opportunity for writing as social practice
Product-centred	The teacher immediately corrects learner composition, grammar and language form.	No opportunity for learners to deal with their own weaknesses; ignores how meaning is developed (Hyland cited in Gordon 2008: 245).
Process	Addresses cognitive stages; to plan, compose and revise for peer or teacher feedback.	Unless careful feedback is given, learners may become teacher-dependent, leaving no opportunity for the writing process to improve or for social involvement to shape the text, leading to cognitive pressure (Swales cited in Gordon 2008: 245).
Genre	Text is put into context, such as a postcard. The teacher models and analyses the task showing learners what to do, building confidence for composition and structure.	This is most useful if supported by the process approach to bring in social elements, but here too there are risks of excessive dependence on the teacher.
Functional	The practice of a particular language form or function enables learners to use language for communicative purposes.	Chunks of language are learned for specific functions which may lead to “cut and paste” composition without exploration of meaning or purpose (Hyland cited in Gordon 2008: 247).

Extract adapted from Gordon (2008: 244-247)

Appendix 6 – Skills for Life (2007): Teacher roles, responsibilities, qualifications and training chart



Skills for Life Support Programme

Roles, responsibilities, qualifications and training chart

Roles	Responsibilities	Professional Status	Qualifications and training required by regulation or contract qualification*	Additional qualifications and training to support good practice
English/Literacy/ESOL or Maths/Numeracy teacher/trainer/tutor/lecturer	English/Literacy/ESOL and Maths/Numeracy teaching	Full teacher Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS)	Full teaching and subject qualification* Diploma in teaching (Numeracy) in the lifelong learning sector; Diploma in teaching (ESOL) in the lifelong learning sector; Diploma in teaching (Literacy) in the lifelong learning sector; or equivalent.	CPD in Embedding LLN, for example, Level 5 Award in Developing Embedded Approaches to Literacy, Language and Numeracy (Skills for Life teacher pathway), or other accredited or non-accredited CPD for teachers. CPD relating to Family Learning, Offender learning, Train to Gain, Employability, or subject e.g. Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities, a second Skills for Life subject and other
Vocational or other subject area teacher/trainer/assessor-trainer/tutor/lecturer/instructor in the full teaching role	Teaching vocational or other subject area with the full range of teaching responsibilities and responsibility for designing and developing learning programmes and materials to support learning programmes.	Full teacher Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS)	Full teaching qualification* Diploma in teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector or equivalent Relevant subject, vocational or occupational qualification or equivalent at minimum Level 3.	Professional/industrial updating and CPD If working with numeracy/literacy/ESOL teacher to embed LLN into vocational courses - ITT prog. or CPD - Level 5 Award in Developing Embedded Approaches to Literacy, Language and Numeracy (vocational pathway)

The Skills for Life Support Programme is delivered on behalf of the Learning and Skills Improvement Service by CEBT Education Trust and partners

CEBT Education Trust
80 Queens Road
Reading
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T: 0118 902 1900
F: 0145 539 1207
E: enquiries@cbt.com
W: www.excellencepathway.org.uk/lsip

Skills for Life Support Programme

Roles	Responsibilities	Professional Status	Qualifications and training required by regulation or contract	Additional qualifications and training to support good practice
Vocational or other subject area teacher/trainer/ assessor-trainer /tutor/instructor/ lecturer in the associate teaching role	Teaching the vocational or subject area with a limited range of teaching responsibilities and no responsibility for designing and developing learning programmes and materials to support learning. N.B. Teachers/trainers in the associate role are not currently expected to take responsibility for embedding LLN. Assessing	Associate teacher Associate teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS)	Associate teaching qualification* Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector	CPD in inclusive approaches to LLN and ICT - new Level 3 Award for teachers in understanding learners and their literacy, language, numeracy and ICT needs (lifelong learning). N.B. The CTLLS covers the personal Maths and English skills from the 'minimum core', but not the application of these skills. This new award covers the application of personal Maths and English skills. Assessor and Verifier awards
Assessor		Under review - new standards in development (2009/2010)	Standards are currently being revised (2009/10)	Non-teaching assessors who support, encourage and signpost learners with numeracy, literacy and ESOL needs might consider training related to other roles: the non-teaching adviser or other roles (see page 4) or the learning support practitioner role (see page 3 below).

*The 2007 statutory regulations apply to teachers who started teaching from September 2007. See the Institute for Learning website www.ifl.ac.uk for more details.

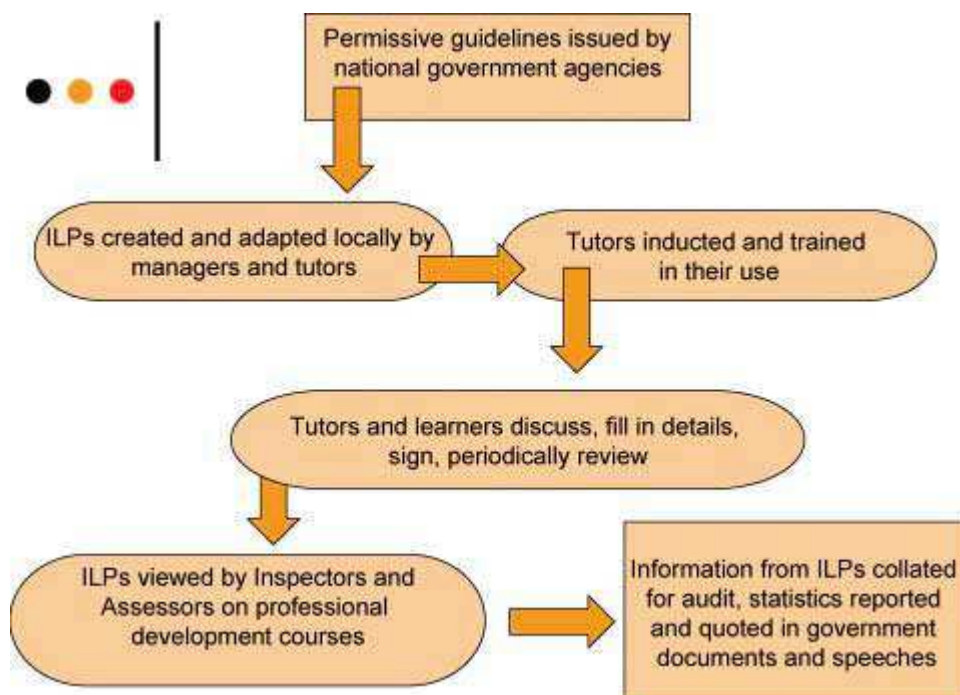
Skills for Life Support Programme

Roles	Responsibilities	Professional Status	Qualifications and training required by regulation or contract requirements, but contractual requirements possible.	Additional qualifications and training to support good practice
Learning Support practitioner/ assistant/ classroom or workshop assistant	Supporting learners in a range of settings - generalist role Working with direction from the main teacher/tutor/trainer for the learner(s).	Learning Support Practitioner New standards developed (2008).	No statutory, regulatory requirements, but contractual requirements possible.	Certificate in Learning Support (Level 3 with some units at L2) or Award in preparing to support learning (Level 3 or Level 2)
Adviser or other non-teaching role	Supporting learners with numeracy, English/Literacy/ESOL or Maths/Numeracy needs. Working with direction from the main teacher/tutor/trainer for the learner(s) and a numeracy/literacy/ESOL subject teacher.	Learning support practitioner (numeracy/ literacy/ ESOL) New standards in development (2009/10)	No statutory, regulatory requirements, but contractual requirements possible.	There is currently a range of useful accredited and non-accredited programmes - at the level of awareness-raising: e.g. Level 2 Award in Literacy, Language, Numeracy and ICT awareness or Level 2 Certificate in Learning Support or at the level of providing subject support, e.g. Certificate for Numeracy (or Literacy) (or ESOL) Subject Support (Level 3). Or other regional variants. Level 2 Award in Literacy, Language, Numeracy and ICT awareness or Level 2 Certificate in Learning Support Or non-accredited variants.
Manager	Signposting, referring, advising, encouraging learners or potential learners with English/Literacy/ESOL or Maths/Numeracy needs Managing vocational teachers and English/Literacy/ESOL and Maths/Numeracy teachers	Specialist status for role e.g. IAG qualifications or other Under review (LLUK 2009/10)	None yet. Contractual requirements may include teaching and training qualifications along with relevant subject qualifications	Leadership and management awards relating to literacy, language and numeracy, for example the Skills for Life Support Programme modules of CPD.

Appendix 7- ILP Flow Chart and procedure extracts

This extract is taken from Hamilton 2009: 235 which summarises the typical trajectory of the ILP from its production through to its final destination as an element of administrative record and evidence. The chart makes visible the range of sponsors involved in ILP literacy practice.

All the bits of paper



Downloaded by [Canterbury Christ Church University] at 04:01 07 August 2014

'Identifying Literacy Needs' guidance form

27/6/11 ~~teacher learning~~
 Meeting about
 Literacy (B)

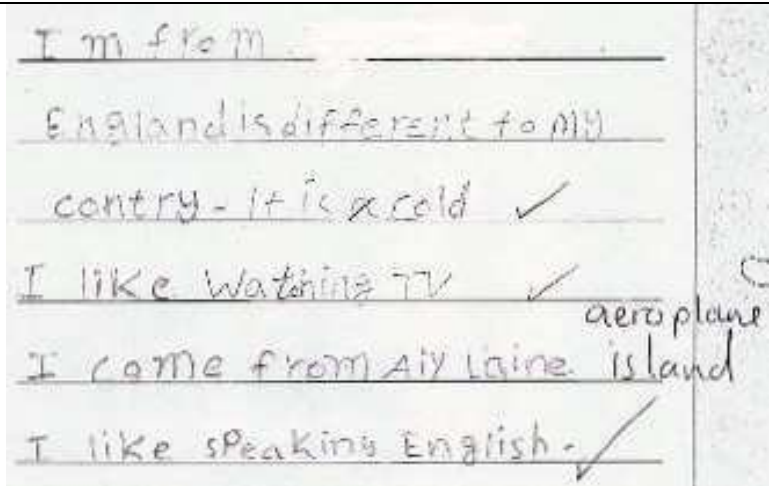
Identifying Literacy Needs

Read the description of the student's language/background and tick the best answer

Student's initial assessment shows the following:	More likely to be appropriate for a Literacy class	Less likely to be appropriate for a Literacy class	Not sure
Student is literate in first language			
Student is illiterate in first language			
Student had no schooling/ limited schooling in home country			
Student finished high school in home country			
Student is a university graduate			
Student's first language uses the Roman alphabet			
Student's first language uses a non-Roman script			
Student has lived in the UK for more than 5 years			
Student needs to improve their writing in English			
Student's writing shows problems with letter formation			
Student shows confusion with letter sounds/symbols			
Student cannot differentiate between upper and lower case letters			
Student makes spelling mistakes			
Student writes incomplete sentences			
Student tells you they are unable to write at all			
Student's spoken English contains many fossilised errors			
Student's spoken and written English are at approximately the same level			
Student's written English is better than spoken English			
Student's spoken English is better than written English			

Extracts from diagnostic, baseline and ILP assessment documents for S1, S2, S3 and S4

<p>S1 S1 Oct 2010 Diagnostic Assessment</p> <p>http://rwp.excellencegateway.org.uk/Diagnostic%20Assessment/ESOL/ (accessed 02.07.13)</p> <p>Task 7</p>	
<p>S2 Oct 2010 Diagnostic Assessment</p> <p>http://rwp.excellencegateway.org.uk/Diagnostic%20Assessment/ESOL/ (accessed 02.07.13)</p>	
<p>S3 Oct 2010 Diagnostic Assessment</p> <p>http://rwp.excellencegateway.org.uk/Diagnostic%20Assessment/ESOL/ (accessed 02.07.13)</p> <p>Task 7</p>	

<p>S4 Oct 2010 – Diagnostic Assessment</p> <p>http://rwp.excellencegateway.org.uk/Diagnostic%20Assessment/ESOL/ (accessed 02.07.13)</p> <p>Task 7</p>	
<p>S1 Baseline Assessment</p> <p>‘Writing’ strengths and weaknesses</p> <p>4.11.10</p>	<p>Work on spelling, handwriting and sentence structure. Letter formation.</p>
<p>S1 ILP</p> <p>4.11.10</p>	<p>Core Curriculum Reference: Ww/E1.2a</p> <p>Write 10 sentences with good handwriting especially e, s and n.</p> <p>Core Curriculum Reference: WW/E1.1a</p> <p>Write 10 sentences with good spelling.</p> <p>Other comments:</p> <p>Feels spelling is more important and when spelling improves will be able to write longer sentences. Understanding new words is a smaller issue; S1 doesn’t feel we need to make it a target at the moment.</p>
<p>S2 Baseline Assessment</p> <p>‘Writing’ strengths and weaknesses</p>	<p>Weakest area – needs to work on spelling in particular and making complete sentences.</p>
<p>S2 ILP</p> <p>4.11.10</p>	<p>Core Curriculum Reference: Ww/E1.1a and 1c</p> <p>Get 10/10 on 1 spelling test by February. Think about syllables and ‘cut-up’ the words.</p> <p>Core Curriculum Reference: Ww/E1.1a</p> <p>Write 10 complete sentences with a verb/noun</p>
<p>S3 Baseline Assessment</p> <p>‘Writing’ strengths and weaknesses</p>	<p>Quite neat handwriting. Very good writing, good use of punctuation.</p>
<p>S3 ILP</p> <p>3.11.10</p>	<p>Core Curriculum Reference: Ws/E1.1</p> <p>Write 10 full sentences (SVO) every week > The teacher to check and give feedback.</p>

<p>S4 Baseline Assessment 'Writing' strengths and weaknesses</p>	<p>S4 is a very slow writer. He takes longer than others in class to write sentences. He also needs to work on spelling.</p>
<p>S4 ILP 08.10.2010</p>	<p>Core Curriculum Reference: Ww/E1/1 To learn the spelling of 10 words every week. These are to be written in his vocabulary book. Teacher to do a spelling test every Tuesday morning.</p> <p>Core Curriculum Reference: Ws/E1.1/2 To write at least 5 sentences in his writing book every week with the correct use of punctuation (capital and small letters, question marks and commas)</p>

Appendix 8 - Consent Forms

Student Consent Form



CONSENT FORM

Title of Project:

Researching an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course - student voices for writing opportunity; a case for learner needs

Name of Researcher: Lesley Wheway

Contact details:

Address:

Room Eg18
The Graduate School
Canterbury Christ Church University
North Holmes Road
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 1QU

Tel:

01227 767 700 ask for room Eg18 in the Graduate School

Email:

Lesley.teacher@xxx

Please initial box:

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential.
4. I agree to the audio recording of conversations in interviews and during classroom observations.
5. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Person taking consent
(if different from researcher)

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

Copies: 1 for participant; 1 for researcher

**TITLE: Researching an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course -
student voices for writing opportunity; a case for learner needs**

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Lesley Wheway.
Background

When teaching ESOL I help students with speaking, listening, reading and writing. A lot of ESOL study is about speaking so now I want to find out about student writing. I want to understand what ESOL students need to write, using the English alphabet, in the classroom and outside.

The study is about your needs for writing at college and your personal writing at home or in the community. I want to understand why you write, when you write, how you write (which might be using a computer or mobile phone or pen and paper).

Set out the background to your study, taking care to use plain language and avoid using technical terms and acronyms.

What will you be required to do?

Participants in this study will be required to:-

1. Attend a workshop at the start and at the end of the study to talk about what you need to do and the study finish.
2. Talk to me (the researcher) about your life history and needs for writing in England. Sometimes in college and sometimes outside college.
3. Take photographs of things about writing that is important to you.
4. Give me (the researcher) examples of your writing that you think is good or bad or important to you. This can be anything, for example, classroom work, homework, personal writing or official letters.

What is good or difficult about writing and why. The things to think about are:-

- How important is writing for you in your life?
- Do you think writing helps you in your life in England, or not?
- What do you think about your writing? Is being a good writer important to you?
- Does being a good writer help you to make decisions about what you want to do in the future?
- What do you think about writing in the ESOL classroom?
- What do you think about writing outside the ESOL classroom, at home or in the community?

To participate in this research you must:

An adult (over 18 years old) studying an ESOL Entry Level 1 or Entry Level 2 course.

Have the time to meet me (the researcher) outside ESOL classes. This can be sometimes in college or in a social place where you like to go.

Procedures

You will be asked to let me (the researcher):-

Observe ESOL lessons (lesson observations):

This will mean me sitting in your classroom when you have lessons.

Write about what happens in a notebook (Field Notes):

I will write in a notebook what students say about their lives and writing.

Audio recordings

I will audio record classroom observations and meetings or interviews with you. I will ask you when we meet if I can audio record and you can say 'no' if you don't want me to record.

Take photographs

Students will be asked to take photographs of things important to them inside or outside the classroom. Using a mobile phone camera or, if students don't have a mobile phone camera, a disposable camera for may be given to you. I will ask if I want to take photographs for the study.

Other things (Artefacts)

I will ask you to give me (the researcher) examples or copies of writing from inside and outside the classroom.

Feedback

I will give verbal feedback at any time throughout the study if asked and will give a workshop at the end of the study. Participants can ask to see my notes at any time during the study.

Confidentiality

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data can only be accessed by Lesley Wheway.

After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed).

Dissemination of results

The information collected by me (the researcher) will be kept confidential and all participants involved will be made anonymous when written about in the thesis (book) for personnel of CCCU and other educational people or the public to see. The college and students participating can see the report. The report and/or parts of the report may be published in journals and go to Educational or public committees. The study will be presented at conferences.

It is important to understand that the findings of research are appropriately and effectively disseminated and that there is full public access to information regarding research and its findings.

Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason. Please tell me (the researcher) what you don't like at the workshop or in a private meeting.

Any questions?

Please contact Lesley Wheway on email: Lesley.teacher@xxxx.com or the University telephone number and mailing address is:-

Room Eg18
The Graduate School
Canterbury Christ Church University
North Holmes Road
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 1QU
Telephone: 01227 767 700

Lesley Wheway 17 May 11; STUDENT

Ethics Rev Checklist ver4_nov 09

Teacher Consent Form



CONSENT FORM

Title of Project:

Researching an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course - student voices for writing opportunity; a case for learner needs

Name of Researcher: Lesley Wheway

Contact details:

Address:

Room Eg18
The Graduate School
Canterbury Christ Church University
North Holmes Road
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 1QU

Tel:

01227 767 700 ask for room Eg18 in the Graduate School

Email:

Lesley.teacher@xxxx.com

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential.
4. I agree to the audio recording of conversations in interviews and during classroom observations.
5. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Person taking consent
(if different from researcher)

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

Copies: 1 for participant
1 for researcher

**TITLE: Researching an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course -
student voices for writing opportunity; a case for learner needs**

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Lesley Wheway.

Background

When teaching ESOL I help students with speaking, listening, reading and writing. A lot of ESOL study is about speaking so now I want to find out about student writing. I want to understand what ESOL students need to write, using the English alphabet, in the classroom and outside.

The study is about student needs for writing at college and their personal writing at home or in the community. I want to understand why they write, when they write, how they write (which might be using a computer or mobile phone or pen and paper).

What will you be required to do?

Participants in this study will be required to:-

5. For your information, attend a workshop for participant students at the start and at the end of the study. The purpose is, at the start, to talk about what participant students need to do and at the end what happens when the study finishes.
6. Talk to me (the researcher) about students and their writing in lessons. I have suggested to students that they might think about the following which might help you too:-

What is good or difficult about writing and why.

- How important is writing for you in your life?
- Do you think writing helps you in your life in England, or not?
- What do you think about your writing? Is being a good writer important to you?
- Does being a good writer help you to make decisions about what you want to do in the future?
- What do you think about writing in the ESOL classroom?
- What do you think about writing outside the ESOL classroom, at home or in the community?

To participate in this research you must:

Teach ESOL Entry Level 1 or Entry Level 2 courses at a college of further education.

Have the time to meet me (the researcher) outside ESOL classes. This can be sometimes in college or in a social place.

Procedures

You will be asked to let me (the researcher):-

Observe lessons:

This means observing your lesson at times and dates mutually agreed. Notes will be made of 'opportunities' presented to students for writing and their response towards general pedagogy which may vary by student/class/level/teacher/subject covered etc.

Field Notes:

I will make notes about significant points talked about during meeting relating to teaching and learning writing in the ESOL Entry level 1 and 2 classroom.

Audio recordings

I anticipate audio recording during classroom observations, and sometimes teacher and student conversations to gain deeper insights into the learning experience. I will ask permission of participants involved prior to the start of audio recording.

Photographs

Sometimes I might ask to take photographs during the study. I will also ask students to take photographs, of things important to them inside or outside the classroom, to help them write about and talk about their lives and the importance of writing. I will ask students if they can use a mobile phone camera or for participants with no mobile phone camera, possibly disposable cameras for use during the study.

Artefacts

I will ask students for examples or copies of their writing from inside or outside the classroom.

Feedback

I will give verbal feedback at any time throughout the study if asked and will give a workshop at the end of the study. Participants can ask to see my notes at any time during the study. I will give a presentation to college staff if it is agreed by management at that time.

Confidentiality

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data can only be accessed by Lesley Wheway.

After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed).

Dissemination of results

The information collected will be kept confidential and all participants involved will be made anonymous when written about in the thesis for personnel of CCCU and other educational people or the public to see. The college and students participating can see the report. The report and/or parts of the report may be published in journals and go to Educational or public committees. The study will be presented at conferences.

It is important to understand that the findings of research are appropriately and effectively disseminated and that there is full public access to information regarding research and its findings.

Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason. If there is anything you are unclear about please talk to me about it either at the workshop or in a private meeting.

Any questions?

Please contact Lesley Wheway on email: Lesley.teacher@xxxx.com or the University telephone number and mailing address is:-

Room Eg18
The Graduate School
Canterbury Christ Church University
North Holmes Road
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 1QU
Telephone: 01227 767 700

Lesley Wheway 17 May 11; TEACHERS
Ethics Rev Checklist ver4_nov 09

Manager Consent Form



CONSENT FORM

Title of Project:

Researching an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course - student voices for writing opportunity; a case for learner needs

Name of Researcher: Lesley Wheway

Contact details:

Address:

Room Eg18
The Graduate School
Canterbury Christ Church University
North Holmes Road
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 1QU

Tel:

01227 767 700 ask for room Eg18 in the Graduate School

Email:

Lesley.teacher@xxxxl.com

Please initial

box

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Date

Signature

Name of Person taking consent
(if different from researcher)

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature



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The study is about student needs for writing at college and their personal writing at home or in the community. I want to understand why they write, when they write, how they write (which might be using a computer or mobile phone or pen and paper).

What will you be required to do?

Management participants in this study will be required to:-

Participate in an unstructured interview which will take place in the first and last term of data collection and will be audio recorded with prior agreement.

To participate in this research you must:

- 1 Be a leader in a college of Further Education and responsible for ESOL Entry Level 1 or Entry Level 2 courses.
- 2 Have the time for an unstructured interview in the first and last term of the study.

Procedures

You will be asked to let me (the researcher):-

Take Field Notes:

I will make notes about significant points talked about during our meetings relating to teaching and learning writing in the ESOL Entry level 1 and 2 curriculums.

Audio recordings

If permission is given I will audio record meetings.

Artefacts

Artefacts may be examples or copies of documents which might support what is discussed in relation to student writing needs and the curriculum at the meetings.

Feedback

I will give verbal feedback at any time throughout the study if asked and will give a workshop at the end of the study. Participants can ask to see my notes at any time during the study. I will give a presentation to college staff at the end of the study if it is agreed as appropriate by management at that time.

Confidentiality

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Lesley Wheway 17 May 11: MANAGERS
Ethics Rev Checklist ver4_nov 09

Appendix 9 –Methods extracts: interviews and observation audio transcripts and an observation field-note.

Case Study S1, interview 3, audio transcription extract

226.	S1.3 – Interview number 3 held in a college meeting room on 11th October 2011 (duration 12.48 minutes)
227.	R (conversation as we were entering the room) Did you see S2?
228.	S1 Err long time I didn't see him.
229.	R So how was he getting on?
230.	S1 He just told me he is not going to study here and he has some problems.
231.	R I am going to ring him later to see if he can meet me. But how about you S1.. I havn't seen you for a while, so what's been happening for you? Have you had some difficulties?
232.	S1 No it's ok. I'm here sometime but this year the class is from Monday to Friday every day's sometime I don't come in 5 days a week sometime I sometime 3 days sometime 4 days.
233.	R Mmm. Why is that?
234.	S1 mm?
235.	R Why is that?
236.	S1 I don't know. Last year it was 3 days a week but this year every day.
237.	R mm, so is that difficult for you?
238.	S1 Yeah sometime difficult about bus pass sometime, no working, no money. Everyday sometime a bit difficult.
239.	R So don't you get support for your bus?
240.	S1 No yet.
241.	R I see, so how far do you live away?
242.	S1 I live err err
243.	R Do you have to get one or two buses?
244.	S1 mm 2 buses.
245.	R But it adds up doesn't it?
246.	R: ... and how do you feel about what has been happening to you? Are you still in the same place?

247.	S1	same?
248.	R	Where are you living?
249.	S1	Mmm the same place yeah.
250.	R	The same place yeah?
251.	S1	yea.
252.	R	And what about your err, your writing seems to have improved. Do you feel good about that?
253.	S1	(mood raises) Yeah good. Bit better. Bit by bit.
254.	R	mmm fantastic. And have you had any other problems that made it difficult for you to study?
255.	S1	No it's ok to continue like that ?? yeah.
256.	R	mmm?
257.	S1	Just bit by bit, yeah.
258.	R	And what about citizenship? Is anything happening there?
259.	S1	Err I still waiting I don't know anything yet. Im waiting.
260.	R	How did you feel about your writing today, you seemed to do a lot?
261.	S1	Yeah (smiling) bit by bit it will be all right.
262.	R	Did you feel good about what you did?
263.	S1	Yeah yeah.
264.	R	Do you want to give me a copy of it?
265.	S1	A copy for?
266.	R	For me a copy of your writing. Yes if you think it's good you can give me a copy.
267.	S1	Laughs (R laughs too) ?? OK.
268.	R	Yes, I'm interested in your writing.
269.	S1	[Gets book out of his bag and hands book to R]
270.	R.	OK.
271.	S1	I keep working on this but not very good err
272.	R	No it looks like its err compared to mmm you think that you have only been writing since err last year.
273.	S1	Yes its better than last year yeah.
274.	R	Yes! It's, err: it's great. If you are happy for me to have a copy of that I'd like a copy.
275.	S1	OK.

276.	R	And may be if you have got something from last year so you can see how last years writing was.
277.	S1	No here
278.	R	Well next time, next time
279.	S1	Yeah yeah
280.	R	:: I see you that would be great.
281.	S1	Yeah yeah.
282.	R	And have you, because I noticed you went out of class (because of mobile phone call), that interrupted err stopped you from continuing your writing – is that a very big problem for you? Is it family
283.	S1	Just a family problem ok. no, no (awkward moment)
284.	R.	Is it in this country, your problem or in [Country]?
285.	S1	[Country], it's my country yeah.
286.	R	Right. So you have problem there.
287.	S1	What it is is err no big problem no country problem, family problem. Sometime calling sometime mm.
288.	R	It is hard isn't it. Living away?
289.	S1	Yea yeah
290.	R	because you said before, you showed me your picture.
291.	S1	Yep.
292.	R	So it's because you can't, well I suppose can you go back to visit?
293.	S1	Mm yeah, may be ?? But this moment no yet ready. Mmm May be ?? not yet.
294.	R	Do you have to go to the job centre now, it's changed from last year to now for you? What changes in your life to now? Last academic year, last year when you were studying in May, summer school and May, June, July this year? And now is a new academic year. Erm whats different?
295.	S1	Mm now is much better. Much better.
296.	R	For your writing?
297.	S1	(Smiling) Yeah.
298.	R	But what about your circumstances outside? The job centre has that changed?
299.	S1	Mm now is better than before now.
300.	R	Better in what way?
301.	S1	Before 2010 like that before and 2011 is now is different 2011. Living better than before.
302.	R	Can you say in what way? How is it better?

303.	S1	To reading and writing that two things is better than before.
304.	R	That's great and outside do you have a bank account and things that you have to do outside?
305.	S1	Mmm I already done that. I have bank account.
306.	R	Do you have any problems outside?
307.	S1	No no. It's ok its ok.
308.	R	And what do you do after college?
309.	S1	After break go home practice reading writing
310.	R	Still in your room?
311.	S1	Yea now I, yeah, in my room yeah. Sometime when I'm tired I go to bed or sometime I go to my friends or sometime come back .
312.	R	Where are your friends?
313.	S1	Some local town one some local town two.
314.	R	Right, Ok so you met S2 in town.
315.	S1	S2 is in town yea.
316.	S1	I don't know exactly I met in city centre he just told me he lives in the Hostel. I don't know hostel.
317.	R	Right. May be if. Can you think of anything else that you want to tell me?
318.	R	About how you are doing or what you are thinking?
319.	S1	Mmm my think is just continue coz I need to prove my English.
320.	R	Why do you need to improve it?
321.	S1	Very important. Very important. It is.
322.	R	what will it help you with?
323.	S1	Err help a lot coz anything you have to read you have to write if you don't know that is big problem.
324.	R	What are the big problems? Biggest problems for you? For not writing?
325.	S1	You can't get a job coz any job you are looking for you have to fill application form and if you don't know how to fill it you can't get the job.
326.	R	And do you erm have someone to help you with that?
327.	R	You do?
328.	S1	Yeah yeah but look like I want to do by MYSELF!
329.	R	Right.
330.	S1	Anything you can't look anything you need you can't go look for the people something you have to do by yourself. I think that is best way. Yeah.

331.	R	That's great, and have you been for some job interviews or talking to the job centre -you have to talk to the job centre do you? Every week?
332.	S1	No I am going to sign on every weeks now every week.
333.	R	What do they say to you?
334.	S1	Look for a job. I'm still look I am looking for a job.
335.	R	Do you explain your problems with writing and needing to
336.	S1	Yeah I told them I am doing ESOL because my English is not good ?? They know about it.
337.	R	And what do they, do they support you? (9.39)
338.	S1	Mm a little them I am doing ESOL. Them told me my da my day signing on, tell my teacher Im leave early so that I can go my sign.
339.	R	Oh so you have to leave college early?
340.	S1	Yeah my signing on day.
341.	R	Oh I see, right. What time do you have to sign on?
342.	S1	Mm 11 o'clock.
343.	R	And what time do you have to leave here?
344.	S1	Sometime, like it mm No No my signing day I have to finish signing before I come here.
345.	R	I see, so you are late.
346.	S1	Mm late really.
347.	R	So what time do you get to college?
348.	S1	Sometime half eleven, something like that.
349.	R	Mm ok. And erm what err. What do you think err signing on is err doesn't help your learning? It makes you, you have to take that time do you feel bad about not being at college?
350.	S1	Mm they you have, you must sign on and if you cant sign like this you might have ?? I must sign.
351.	R	You have to yeah. And do they suggest jobs that you could apply for?
352.	S1	Again.
353.	R	Does the job centre suggest jobs you can apply for? Do they sort of say, well this is a good job for you?
354.	S1	Mm yeah yeah.
355.	R	And then what do you do?
356.	S1	They help me for look for it yeah.
357.	R	So do they fill the application form in for you?

358.	S1	They help just to look for the job in the internet then help me for that. Then if I saw them they print what I am printing. Then print it and photocopy and gave me details.
359.	R	Can you use the computer now?
360.	S1	No no
361.	R	Do you think that is difficult, that you cant write on the computer?
362.	S1	Mm this moment no.
363.	R	Is it difficult for you, does it make life difficult sometimes?
364.	S1	Yea that is difficult for me at this moment, yeah.
365.	R	There is a lot to do, isn't there? Anyway, shall we stop because it is time to go back to your lesson and I don't want to disturb you. Thank you S1.
		INTERVIEW END

Case Study S4, interview 3, audio transcription extract

2012.	S4.3 - Interview number 3 Meeting at Church Café 11.45am Wed 16th November 2011 (19 minutes)
2013.	R: I just wondered if you could tell me how you are doing with your writing. Is it more difficult now, you are working and your Manager helps you? How do you feel you are doing with your writing? Are you getting better and how are you getting better? What is helping you to get better? Are you practicing? Are you writing at home?
2014.	S4: Just a little bit not so:: everyday, not::
2015.	R: Not every day?
2016.	S4: No.
2017.	R: Is it working that is helping you?
2018.	S4: Yeah, yeah.
2019.	R: So, what kind of things do you write now, at work?
2020.	S4: Just err::: I see any problem, anything:: I will write in my:: information book.
2021.	R: Right. Is that a personal one (notebook) or is it work book?
2022.	S4: Work book.
2023.	R: Oh, right, that's ok, so you have to err:: when you see something in your security area? Ahh, that's good, isn't it and can your manager understand it?
2024.	S4: Yeah, he understand! Very well.
2025.	R: That's great, does he correct very much?
2026.	S4: Ahh:: yeah...
2027.	R: He does make corrections? He changes what you say or does he understand it?
2028.	S4: No he understand and I:: just I will emm write, he understand anything.
2029.	R: That's great! I want to ask you a question that may seem odd, but what is literacy?
2030.	S4: Literacy? R: literacy
2031.	What does literacy mean to you?
2032.	S4: Literacy? What err
2033.	R: You don't know what it is?
2034.	S4: No.
2035.	R: OK.
2036.	R: So, what does writing mean to you? Writing what does it mean to you? What do you think of? When someone says writing?
2037.	

2038.	S4: OK
2039.	R: How do you do it and what do you think about?
2040.	S4: Writing? Arr:: just I am patrolling and outside, I come back, no problem nothing I will write this. I patrolling the site this time and no problem, nothing.
2041.	R: Ok, what I mean is, not at work now, but when someone talks about writing
2042.	R: When you think about writing, what do you think is writing, using your email, computer, text messaging, writing forms?
2043.	S4: Yeah yeah,
2044.	R: What does writing mean to you, in your life?
2045.	S4: Yes, this very important thing, writing and speaking, and writing as well. Because you can arr:: send text message and email and you must be ah to spell any words to;; complete spells anything. Writing very important.
2046.	R: How do you find your spellings.If you don't know a word, what do you do?
2047.	S4: I can use the dictionary
2048.	R: Do you use a paper dictionary or do you use the internet.
2049.	S4: Some time internet sometime books dictionary yeah. Any words difficult for me, difficult spelling I will write in my book this word and this spelling spells yeah.
2050.	S4: When I came to this country I don't know about anything because I write my language writing. I lived in Saudi Arabia and there is Arabic.
2051.	R: So do you write in Arabic as well?
2052.	S4: Yeah.
2053.	R: What is your first language then?
2054.	S4: My first language is Pashtu and then Urdu as well. I speak 3, 4, 5 languages! Arabic as well.
2055.	R: I want to ask you about your learning.L1 Pashtu, L2 Urdu
2056.	3 rd –I can understand and speak Punjabi as well 4 th language Arabic [laughs]
2057.	5 th Language – little bit English... Write in all 5 languages!
2058.	20 years old single..
2059.	R: When you started school. Where did you start and how old?
2060.	May be I am 6-7 year old. When I start school.
2061.	May be I think 13 when I finish.
2062.	I went to school may be 6 years after that I finish school. My father my mother tell me you can do study, I say OK after that I have been to Saudi Arabia then for 3-4 years.
2063.	So were you working in Saudi Arabia or were you studying. Just a little bit studying
2064.	In Saudi Arabia, my father was there and we have business.

2065.	After that my father came to this country and after that he have British passport, after that my mother, father, family all come. We all came here, 2010.
2066.	R: So when you were in Saudi Arabia how old were you?
2067.	S4: May be 15 years. When I was study (English) I was 6, 8 years, parts of the body and just little bit things about English, what book start from first class. Teacher teach me one book about English, as well, parts of the body about school, school rules – all of in the book, English. They are teaching to all the school student. Write as well.
2068.	R: So you did the alphabet?
2069.	S4: Yeah, but now is very good, English. Now change to English, all things. And after that I have been to Saudi Arabia, there is no English, nothing, I forgot all English:: just I write my name. That's it.
2070.	R: When did you start your ESOL in England, because you came 2 years ago, so when did you start?
2071.	S4: I came in 2010 1 st January and I start ESOL course err:: in September 2010.
2072.	R: Did you start with pre-entry? The class before entry 1? I met you when you were doing Entry one didn't I?
2073.	S4: No that was the first class.
2074.	R: So that means that the test that you did when you started college meant that you were a little step up. Not very very basic, so you didn't start right at the beginning with abc.
2075.	S4: Its ok, I knew alphabet and all things, just a little bit English.
2076.	R: OK.
2077.	S4: I studied in my area as well English but parts of the body, good English but after then I forgot.
2078.	R: You must have remembered a little bit because you are E1 [not pre-entry].
2079.
2080.	
2081.	S4: I study in the xxx xx my teacher is very good teacher T3 and T2 is there as well, but J is very::: now I miss her.
2082.	R: Ah, that's nice. Why was T3 very good?
2083.	S4: Because she understand every student. Anything, and [another] as well, T2 as well. And T3 she understand and she err:: that is good for me because every day, she teach me 3 days, and every day in the morning she is err:: if you study 2 or 3 months you know student, this problem, this problem. I know T3 my teacher is:: she tell me and teacher know student. This problem, ?? this writing:: then she teach me one year.
2084.	R: did you think your outside life, your personal life, did you do things in the classroom that helped you outside? In your life?
2085.	R: When you were in the classroom and with T3s class and you thought that was really good, did you do things in the classroom that related to, that connected with outside? So when you were at home on your own, you:: what you did in the classroom helped you when you were at home or in town or doing things outside the classroom? Outside the

	college? Do you understand that? A little bit difficult?
2086.	
2087.	S4: Err.
2088.	R: You liked the lesson T3 did. In that lesson, what did you do that helps you outside? In the classroom, why did you think that was more helpful. Did you do things in the classroom that helped you at home, to get work, outside college?
2089.	S4: Err I don't know. T3 is now not in the Language annex
2090.	R: Do you think studying at E1 helped you to do what you are doing now? So you were in college learning, now, you are not in college. How did studying E1 help you, to do what you are doing now?
2091.	S4: I am just try to speak English and just practice English.
2092.	So did doing your ESOL course, particularly with writing, did it teach you how to study writing? Did you ESOL course help you to understand how to get better at writing?
2093.	S4: Err:: I can practice the writing and speaking, that's it.
2094.	R: do you think your course helped you?
2095.	S4: Yes, my course has helped me because before I don't know:: anything.
2096.	I am understand now writing is reading and just a little bit 30-40% speaking .(Laughs)
2097.	R: Great you have done so well and because you have a supportive manager as well you seem to have come a long way and do you think because you can speak and writing in 4 languages it helps you to learn a new language?
2098.	S4: Yeah. I will mostly try.
2099.	When I went to SA I know just one speak Arabic, just one work. After that three or four years I speak very well Arabic too, all business to Arabic people I listening, listening I speak Arabic I understand and speak like my language. When I came to this country.
2100.	When I came to Saudi Arabia I didn't know counting.
2101.	R: When did you start to writing in Arabic.
2102.	S4: I can understand just similar my language and Arabic, just similar little bit. I write till receipt we supply things for shop and market after that we are writing by hand, what we are selling and after that I can start Arabic writing.
2103.	R: Moving from Arabic writing from you own first language, to abc, is that a little confusing, or difficult at first?
2104.	S4: I can err::
2105.	R: In the beginning because you write in Arabic, it is very different to English abc.
2106.	S4: That is very different, no:: I can write Arabic but never understand this word very different.
2107.	R: And in English? Moving from Arabic to English?
2108.	S4: Not for me is not difficult because I can understand English and Arabic as well.

2109.	R: that is fantastic, so you learn the signs – you learn to recognise the alphabet. [recorder turned off] INTERVIEW END
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Focus group extract: “What is Literacy?” audio transcription.

728.	Focus Group - 15 November 2011 – “What is Literacy?” (FG1/15.11.11 – following T4 classroom observation)
729.	R: What’s the date today, its Tuesday the err 15 th is it?
730.	S: Yeah
731.	T: Job Centre Plus class
732.	R: Yeah, ok so there are 7 students [smiling], OK. Would you, first of all, would you each just like to say, not your name I don’t want you name [because of anonymity], but what country are you from? Where did you live before England [turns to student on left]
733.	R: What country are you from?
734.	S1 My country, Somalia
735.	S2 I come from Hong Kong
736.	S3 I come from Iran
737.	S4 I’m from Somalia
738.	S5 I come from Sudan
739.	S6 [very quiet not audible]
740.	S7 I come from Somalia
741.	R: Ok so that’s good, you come from a very diverse mix of countries, so do you know [pointing to the sentence written on the whiteboard]. Do you know “What is literacy?”. What do you think literacy is?
742.	S7: yes, I know.
743.	R: can you tell me?
744.	S4: English and maths.
745.	S7: no no its just English how to improve when you get good listening English you good speak English you are good at English.
746.	R: So is it about speaking is it?..
747.	S6: yeah.
748.	S1: and listening and writing
749.	S7: and writing, writing
750.	R: Is it about everything?
751.	S3: Yeah
752.	S7: no no
753.	R: Is it about maths?
754.	S7: no maths is call numeracy

755.	R: What about writing, where does writing come?
756.	S7: erm
757.	Ss: [Long class silence]
758.	R: is writing literacy?
759.	Ss: [No answer]
760.	R: ok did you all write in Arabic or Fharsi, or another
761.	S3: yeah
762.	R: Did you all write?
763.	S5: Arabic.
764.	S3: Fharsi OK
765.	S2: [shaking his head] didn't
766.	R: You didn't write. No? that's fine, many people don't.
767.	R: another student? Did you write? What did you write?
768.	S4: English in Somalia.
769.	R: Do you think your English writing is good?
770.	Ss: Err... OK... [different students answered]
771.	S7: I like to do it.
772.	R: You like to do it, ok. Who thinks writing is important?
773.	Ss. [slow response] ... yes...
774.	R: Why is it important?
775.	S6: [inaudible] because you need it everything, form yes, you go to work, health
776.	S3: I love the UK.
777.	R: you love the UK yeah?
778.	S5: Important for your life here.
779.	S3: Writing for Education when you want college or higher education you have to know how to write.
780.	R: Right, so it means that you can go step by step, where you want to go?
781.	Ss: [general reply] yes.
782.	R: Even if you don't want to go to college what else might you do? That is good for you what do you think? Why do you need to write?
783.	S5: to go to college to go for job, for form for health my son.
784.	R: to help your son, yeah?
785.	Ss: Yeah

786.	Ss: [inaudible, talking to each other]
787.	R: Writing is writing? It isn't important to you?
788.	S3: Speaking and writing is important...
789.	R: How do you think writing will help you?
790.	S6: Fill for write application form and erm letter.
791.	R: Do you all have problems with forms now?
792.	S5: Yes, sometimes it is OK.
793.	R: And who helps you with them? A friend or...?
794.	Ss: Yeah a friend or [inaudible]
795.	R: Mainly friends, are your friends English or are they err...same culture, same country?
796.	S7: yes, and also I use the dictionary.
797.	R: That's really good yeah, so do you all use the dictionary?
798.	Ss: yeah yeah yeah sometime [I got the impression that not many did]
799.	R: Sometimes may be.
800.	R: Who practices writing at home? Outside the classroom?
801.	S4: sometime
802.	R: You do?
803.	Ss: sometimes.
804.	R: What kind of things do you do? Do do you write sentences do you did in class?
805.	S3: Writing spelling
806.	R: Do you think literacy is just writing with a pen or do you think there are different kinds of literacy?
807.	Ss: [Long silence]
808.	R: Literacy for writing? Do you think of it as just something written down, like you did today? Or do you think of anything else?
809.	Ss: computer, notebook,
810.	R: Does anyone use their telephone?
811.	Ss: Yeah!
812.	R: What do you do with your telephone?
813.	Ss: Text message, text
814.	R: Do you use that a lot? Is it important to you text message?
815.	R: So you all write
816.	Ss: Yeah, writing [various response some inaudible]

817.	R: in your country before you came to England did you use text message then?
818.	S3: YEAH! My language yeah.
819.	R: [Turning to man from Hong Kong] Did you use text messages?
820.	S3: [smiles and nods]
821.	R: Yeah, so you did write then! In Chinese? [turning to S3] Did you all use text messages in your country before?
822.	S3: Yeah, OK [Smiling] Yes
823.	S6: [shaking head to say no]
824.	R: No you didn't so it's new to you? Yeah?
825.	R: Ok, so do you all read road signs, so you if you see or if you take directions does anyone write down where they are going if they don't know?
826.	Ss: Yeah, myself
827.	R: Is life very different, so you are starting again?
828.	S: Yeah May be at the college speaking and writing and err use computer.
829.	R: does anyone else want to use writing in England tdo do something? Special? Like you want to further your education?
830.	S4: I want to err study for two years computer and take a job 20 odd years building and electrician in my coutry.
831.	R: so you want to be an electrician?
832.	S4: Yeah and err
833.	R: anyone else want to err Ok so you are starting again here so you have to go step by step? Is anyone else, does anyone else have a job in their first country? Did any of you work?
834.	S5: Sales assistant,
835.	R: OK anyone else?

S3 Poem; interview audio transcription extract

Interview and observation on 22nd June 2011	
S3 Poem written in Dutch and translated into English	
(a photocopy of the original is available upon request from this thesis author)	
Dutch language	English Language
1) Title: vluchten in mijn eigen land	That mean Escape from where you born – I escape
2) Met mijn gezin, mijn vrouw, Mijn moeder en mijn kinderen.	with my children and my wife, my mother and my children ...again
3) Ik kan zelf niet meer lopen.	I can err not walk.
4) Geen eten, geen medicijnjen	[laughs as speaks] err the medicine is the same er English. That mean no medicine and no eat
5) De hele dag gereisd.	That mean all day we are in journey [3]to get somewhere
6) Om zes uur een kleine kamer gehuurd.	At six o'clock in the evening we err take a small house share. House to err for rent [6]
7) Alleen twee dekbedden voor acht personen.	Only 2 blankets for 8 persons. It is winter it is cold it is 'donker'
8) Het is winter, het is koud, het is donker.	..you understand [laughs gently]? R: "it is a cold winter and:: S3: it was winter, was cold. [2] It was dark. R: Dark, yeah?
9) Op de harde grond ligt een oud tapijt.	Of err of the floor we erm very very old and err carpet.[5]
10) Geen kaarsen om het licht aan te doen.	No erm [6] I forgot erm the word erm. No candle erm no light. Nothing and it was dark.It was nothing to get light. In the house. It is dark. R: so it is a dark old house?
11) Ik slaap niet van de pijn in mijn been.	S3: yeah [sigh] arr I sleep err I can't sleep off the pain in my leg err my knee pain. S3: err is something about my daughter [name]
12) Mijn dochter [name] wordt wakker.	S3: you understand? My daughter [name] wakes up.
13) Zij kan mij niet zien.	She can't see me because it is dark.[5]
14) Maar ze geeft haar dekbed aan mij.	But she give me her blanket to me.[3]

15) Omdat ze voelt dat ik pijn heb.	[sniffle] because err she feel err that I have pain.[6] and erm she cried
16) Ze huilt.	[15] R: its very S3: I err I lost my glasses [laughs] R: you lost your glasses [joke] you want mine? [laughs softly] (handing over glasses) S3 and R [laugh loudly] R: may be you can see with those? S3: thank you may be different size may be? [smiling]
17) 'Maar jij hebt het toch ook koud?' zeg ik	Err I say "you are cold if you give blanket to me" [5] when I say that err she answered me [6]
18) 'Maar ik heb geen pijn papa!'	She say err "I don't have pain" [tearful] [tearful] [sniff]
19) Met dit antwoord moet ik ook huilen.	With this err answer I err[4] I err I can't stay happy. I cried. R: it made you sad. S3: yeah. The pain.
20) De pijn in mijn been ben ik vergeten.	[sniffs] the knee pain [2] I forgot the knee pain. But but the pain in my heart
21) De pijn in mijn hart voel ik nog steeds.	The pain in my heart, you know? I feel still.
22)	R: that is a beautiful poem and it describes everything you have said... in your words I will write it for you in English.

T1 interview 3, audio transcription extract

728.	T1 Interview 3 - 23 June 2011 (duration 18.23 minutes)
729.	Sitting at the back of the classroom while students are working.
730.	R: Ok so, it's Thursday 23 rd June (2011) following on from last week talking about the sort of transition from E1 to E2 and I have been looking this week more closely at what kind of work they are doing and one group E1 are doing erm were actually doing quite a complex reading (T3) and question and answer session using quite a lengthy description about mobile phones and the use of them and things like that and they are E1 but on the other hand the other E1 that I have been looking at they are still doing (loud buzzing noise) Oh is that all right? Is that normal?
731.	T1 No! X student is doing something there.
732.	R: Erm they seem to be doing some very basic sentences and ... they are always checking so how is it possible to move them forward to the level that they need to for E2?
733.	T1 It's like if they pass E1 it depends how they pass that's how we look at it as well if they just pass then we have different level E2 classes as well.
734.	R Right so they are going to stay at a lower level then rather than
735.	T1 Yes lower E2 normal E2 and may be high E2. But this is a 'proper E2 class'. There are lower E2 classes.
736.	R There are low E2 classes?
737.	T1 Yeah another E2 class for example is high E2 and E3 because some of the students tak E3 most of them will take E3 some of them will take E2 and so we tend to separate them. If they are older students we look at their pass rates. If they pass for example 28 out of 30 it means that they are closer to the higher level than the lower one.
738.	R Do you think that the ability to progress may have influences from their background and their learning histories?
739.	T1 Yes but I wouldn't always label them give that as a reason. I wouldn't give that as a reason because if you keep saying oh this person won't be able to do it because oh he had a traumatic experience, that traumatic experience you know I think everybody had, ok not really traumatic, but they already had some bad experience and they they I think they leave it behind and it is up to the student as well.
740.	R So how is it possible do you think to get them over the dependence?
741.	4.43 mins
742.	T1 It is like you wean them off yeah. For example. I hardly check their writing straight away I would say 'check each other's first'. You know and if they ask me something yes I answer but I always tell them to ask each other first other students and then come to me. Yeah or if they are a bit more dependent they ask how do you spell this I say there are

	dictionaries look it up.
743.	R Do you notice a difference from when they come in the beginning to now they are at the end aren't they?
744.	T1 Yes
745.	R It is interesting that we can see them now you leave them alone and they are working all the time now really they are autonomous learners aren't they? But from next year then you will be having a new set so how do you anticipate that that group might be when you get them?
746.	T1 Oh they will be all different the other good thing about different teachers is that one class has sometimes minimal teachers sometimes 3 and every teacher does it a bit differently. I'm quit strict if you like and also I don't like to mollycoddle them I want them to do something and communicate with their partners and also explaining sometimes although it is not voluntarily sometimes too difficult for them to understand too technical may be without realising. It is quite useful to let the learners who know the answer let them explain.
747.	R right so from the beginning you are starting to get them to learn for themselves.
748.	T1 yes yeah. Where they can find information and what they should do at home. Of course if they do it or not it is up to them but I also make it perfectly clear that coming here 3 days won't be enough to improve quickly.
749.	R Yes because I wonder whether some of the students that I have been talking to in the E1 I think it is possible that they leave here they do their homework which is minimal really isn't it? And they don't extend that so it is possibly how may be they don't know how to?
750.	T1 Yes. That is the main reason especially if they didn't have previous experience they wouldn't know how to study. It is no good saying just you know go and watch TV especially for example SY student is a very good speaker but his writing is no good so I would give him different advice to a Chinese Student who their grammar is very good but the speaking as well the Chinese Student what I tell them watch films with sub-titles. Once they have seen a film a few times with sub-titles and then when you are confident with the sub-titles
751.	7.40 mins
752.	XY's writing although he is very busy, he is a businessman, very busy but he improved so much it is very difficult because his writing every word really was just a spelling mistake and he improved, amazing. It was amazing.
753.	R Did you do anything in class that erm encouraged him or did you give him different things
754.	[CLOCK CHIMES – Catholic church] – 8.30 mins
755.	T1 What I do especially with writing that the main with most students have difficulty with writing it is just err repetition that is the only way they can improve and reading so they do a piece of work at home they show me I mark it with them if possible I don't like

	<p>marking at home I like to mark in the class here with the students. Yes I can mark at home and then you know give feedback but it is not the same as showing them why most of them know the mistake or I just correct it and when I correct it if I do it together OR even if I sometimes it is not possible if I have a large class I can't mark it all here. I mark it but I don't correct it. I mark it and say for example this is a spelling mistake I just put 'sp' I give them codes at the beginning of the year they clip onto their writing book or I say I underline this word and say 'gr' grammar mistake, if there is a missing word I just put a 'v' in there so that have to think now what grammar mistake, what word is missing for them to find out themselves. That's much better than erm I give some I correct some but the majority I would code it and let them code it themselves.</p>
756.	R that again is building autonomy and making them work for themselves
757.	T Yes because if I just correct it I do that sometimes as well depending but they have to write it again. They have to write it again sometimes 3 or 4 times the same text because that's the way some people that's the way they remember yeah, depending on their study skills these are adults that sometimes they can't sometimes it is difficult sometimes not all these can do homework they have (?) time
758.	10.20 mins
759.	T1 XY student doesn't do homework because he is just too busy but he is a very good attender so yeah and ZT student she is not here today (?) she improved - her writing is really good reading and speaking – she has 9 children. 9 children and one 3 months old.
760.	R but she still does her work?
761.	T1 yeah she is nearly 100% attendance so there it goes it is up to the students. She wants to improve
762.	R Do you see the improvement as coming from an emotional side the determination and motivation and how they feel about themselves?
763.	T1 She doesn't want to be just ignorant I think a housewife mother and all the rest of it she is married she wants to be able to do something and give her opinion you know to to speak to the teachers may be but it's an attitude it is not only chance. And yes at the beginning if an asylum seeker just came from his country without much experience but if they are here for 10 years then I am sorry that's not an excuse there was a war ah well 10 years ago everybody has some sort of difficult time in their lives
764.	R And they have to get over that and..
765.	T1 I think in English society I think picking on this person who had a traumatic experience that was years ago he is over that if you keep bringing that up as an excuse you know I don't think it will take much longer time to be self-sufficient
766.	R mmm they have to move on from that and err
767.	T1 Yeah
768.	R be determined to come into the new culture

769.	T1 yeah exactly, it is difficult sometimes I had a student when I first started here six years ago I think erm WR student she was 17 I said you know something about your family and then she didn't write anything something else what an aunt or uncle or something or she could have written about her friend I can't remember she wouldn't write about her immediate family because they were all killed yeah but that was it I didn't sit down and say oh I am sorry I just left it at that. That's fine and she was fine with it as well, no she was younger. I didn't dwell on it that was it and she improved as well yeah I just got on with her
770.	R Rather understanding it normally
771.	T1 but pushing them to move forward ignoring it but I still know. It is not ignoring it if she is upset about it don't ignore it but I don't keep dwelling on it
772.	R No but having been aware of it
773.	T1 exactly
774.	13.30 mins
775.	R What sort of steps can you take to develop the motivation and self-esteem to move the student forward?
776.	T1 We have one to one's they need to make a decision what they want in the future what is the future you know, I don't want to get too close to the students I don't want them to see me as a counsellor because I'm not and I don't want them to depend on me for everything I'm a teacher OK. So the students have really a hard time I talk to them but I refer them to our counsellor yeah if they have emotional problems if they need emotional support (14.47 mins)
777.	T1 You know I give them advice as much as I can so sometimes they just need to get it out and talk but I don't dwell on it I don't err I am aware of the situation if they can't come if they and sometimes I know why so I just leave it at that but erm but no they er they would have some of the students but the newcomers have probably difficulties with trauma but most of them don't have a traumatic experience
778.	R mmm its down to them how much they want to work
779.	T1 Yes
780.	R but you, as far as you are concerned as a teacher you give them the tools and you've got the backup in the college to do that
781.	T1 yeah so a counselling service if we err I didn't have really only XY student I think ... the last few weeks like XY has been in and out of hospitals but came on the second session last week so XY was crying...
782.	R Yes you did say that mmm
783.	T1 I referred her to a counsellor and she had a session and she was quite happy because she doesn't have family here nobody here and there is only so much I can support her
784.	R and that worked

785.	T1	yeah yeah
786.	R	doing her studies and err Well I don't think I have anything else to ask you at the moment because I am sort of thinking I am coming to the transition well the emotional things the background of the students and how they transfer from E1 to their next course of study so I am coming to see the E1's next week after they have done their exam to see how they feel about it and then I hope to meet them later in July just to see what they are doing. I am trying to get them to bring me things from outside but none of them have yet which I find is quite interesting ..
787.	T1	Lots of them don't
788.	R	I am trying to understand what they do outside but they sort of don't seem to be very committal about it. Do they do nothing - do they always have translators?
789.	T1	Well lots of them don't lots of them don't do anything and these are the ones who really struggle from E1 to E2 they seem to hover over E1
790.	R	Yeah because I thought if I look at ask them about how their exam goes talk to them in the summer... anyway I will (turn off the recorder) Thank you.
		INTERVIEW END

Semi-structured interview questions and answer transcription.

Example extract of a semi-structured teacher and teacher manager interview which includes eight questions followed by answer transcriptions.

26 November 2012

Teacher and teacher manager, semi-structured interview questions by email or telephone.

Here goes.....I have tried to make it easy, so do you mind please, if replying to this by email, writing your answers after the red *** ?

QUESTIONS:

Please write any additional details/explanations you want to and miss out questions that don't apply to you:-

1. When you teach low level ESOL writing what do you think is the most important consideration (e.g. elicitation/input/emotions etc.)

Work recognition

The important things are what motivate students – pictures and examples from outside the classroom. It is a new skill and if there is no L1 there needs to be more L2 stimulation.

Preparation to write, building blocks, pictures, time for speaking and more consideration for students who do not write in L1 because they cannot support L2 by writing things down and they have to rely on memory.

Relationship w learners and trust. Preparation, preparation, preparation! - can never "wing it" in the way you might w higher levels. Pre teaching vocabulary or at least a strong awareness of potential vocab issues and how you're going to teach/deal w these - learners at this level may not be able to work things out from context as easily - may need help to do so - may get more stressed/ confused by unknown words. Need to keep grammar simple. Need to focus on spelling - spelling tests an phonics focus worked very well w my need to work on handwriting/ letter formation. Need for teacher to train themselves in primary school techniques that have not been part of any of my teacher training!

I don't teach low levels very often. It's always important to have a clear purpose (ie filling in a form, writing a letter) and to encourage students to write regularly to build up the motor skills.

No response

It's when low level students begin writing, when their grammar skills become fully apparent. As a teacher I have to take the students back to the basics of sentence structure for one idea. Students often write a sentence one topic and another sentence about a different topic often straying away from the writing task. Factors to consider are that the students may feel a little demoralised going back to basics as their skills are all in black and white

2. What did you think about participating in the research (e.g. was it helpful, was it threatening/uncomfortable etc.?)

Great! Good to get feedback and somebody to talk to and brain storm.

It helped to pay more attention and look into further details of why we are doing writing. Looking into more detail that will improve the quality of your lessons.

I enjoyed being in the research – it wasn't uncomfortable. It was a two-way talk as teachers not meetings where there is no chance to talk as a teacher and collaborate about problems with students – reflecting on and identifying the needs of low level learners' writing. Often there is no chance to explore ideas – you are just told you are not doing this right or that right – rather than this is good/suitable may be do this or this xyz... I want to become a better teacher not to say I am satisfactory, why and what to improve on!

Helpful and interesting.

I'm not sure I did much! I don't think I actively participated really – my role was to facilitate you working with other tutors.

No response

I was very happy to participate. Some of the questions prompted me to stop and think about my own methods of teaching, particularly from a student's perspective. I think sometimes I take for granted that students have grasped the concept.

3. What is your country of origin?

Turkey
Greece
UK
UK
UK
Bulgarian
British

4. What is your mother tongue?

Turkish
Greek
English
English
Bulgarian
Punjabi

5. Do/did your parents live in your country of origin or in England?

Migrated to Germany
Greek citizens
England
England
England
Bulgaria
British India/East Africa

6. How long have you lived in England?***

19 years
8 years
Life. n/a
Life. n/a
Life. n/a
16 years

Life. n/a

7. If England is not your country of origin why did you come to England?***

family

to study

n/a

n/a

family

n/a

8. How long have you worked at this college?***

9 years

3 years

4 years

8.5 years

6 years

5+ years

10+ years

Thank you for your time.

Field-Note - T1 and S3 Classroom Observation

Wednesday 2 November 2011 – 10.10am Room on 2nd floor

It was surprising that I bump into S3 on the first floor corridor, especially as we were looking for the same classroom. S3 began to apologise for lack of response to text messages and a missed mobile phone call. Our brief conversation, as we walked together, offered a window for S3 to explain how he seemed to believe that his life was becoming more complex as he said. “I have no job, it is very hard for me I am CONFUSED”. S3 seemed anxious about what he told me but we were now late for the lesson that was actually being held on the third floor. I knocked on the classroom door and we went in. The door opened into the back of the room and that made our entry, and brief apology, smooth because the lesson was well underway.

oblong shaped classrooms

Most classrooms faced onto the quadrangle garden area, framed by the ground floor rooms but one side the building, where we were, towered up to four stories. From outside, floors appeared to be sandwiched horizontally by seams of continuous and uninterrupted glass window, no doubt to give maximum light and architectural effect in its heyday. The building design seemed to dictate the run of oblong shaped classrooms that led off long corridors with a staircase at each end of the building and a lift in the centre. Classrooms were therefore rectangular shaped rooms, and the favoured organisation, as in this lesson, was to have a large solid mass of desks pushed together in the centre of the room. Students chose their places around the large central oblong work area. On entering this classroom, T1 was standing at the front of the class, directly under the projector with the whiteboard/projector screen behind her with a computer on a table to the front left. Along the inside wall, nearest the teacher, two women sat side by side. Opposite them, with their backs to the long window, a woman sat between two men. S3 took the free seat at the short end of the table that was opposite the screen and T1 at the front. I took a seat almost directly behind S3 at the back of the room where there was plenty of space from which to observe the long room

Sitting at the back, I already regretted my comment to T1 upon arrival, that not only acknowledged my presence, but also took some responsibility for S3’s lateness by saying that he was ‘talking to me in the corridor’. Immediately, S3’s glance back indicated that he might not have appreciated me ‘speaking for him’. I instantly held up my hand and nodded my head slightly towards S3, as an apology for speaking on his behalf.

The lesson revolved around New Cutting Edge elementary student book (Comys-Carr, J., Cunningham, S., Eales, F., & Moor, P. 2005) pages 27-29 and New Cutting edge Elementary Workbook (Cunningham, S., Eales, F., & Moor, P. 2005) pages 16-17. These pages were projected onto the whiteboard/screen. T1 had previously mentioned that she often used a website to project the course book pages onto the whiteboard screen. T1 explained that students should concentrate on ‘verbs’ and she asked them to get out their ‘blue writing books’ (exercise/notebooks that were handed out at the course start). The task was for students to write sentences about themselves and related to coursebook Module 3. There were several closed dictionaries dotted about the desks for students’ use. A man arrives late and sits on the right of S3 who appeared to explain the writing task to the latecomer and as part of doing so, S3 also showed him something in the dictionary that seemed to be used to illustrate his explanation. Students wrote in silence as T1 walked around the table, looking over students’ shoulders to help or correct writing. A student asked “‘I live house’ all right?” T1 pointed to the structure in the course book and said the correct version “I live in a house”. Students continued to write quietly and T1 moved to the computer at the front of the class as she says “do not close your books. Check capital letters and full stops. I am coming round to check each one.”. Students continued to write until the break.

There was nothing unusual about the lesson organisation. In most of the writing lessons observed, students sat around an expanse of desk area that resembled a 'boardroom' style layout with the teacher at the front or circulating to answer student questions or to give feedback. During writing tasks students often worked on their individual piece of writing or exercise silently but asked questions freely. This lesson continued a little differently because at the end of the task students were invited to complete the course book questions by taking turns to write the answers with a marker directly onto the exercise that was projected onto the whiteboard. At this point, one student's mobile phone rang loudly. Quickly S3 demanded "silent your phone!" and this was followed up by T1 saying "you can't speak in here, please tell whoever it is not to call you when you are in class". The incident appeared to somehow decentre the lesson. S3 appeared to attract attention to himself by speaking over or before the teacher. T1 glanced as S3 then continued, "look at the photographs on page 28 and the words in Box 1. Can you find any of these in the pictures". S3 offers an idea, pointing out "that one picture is a school not a college". T1 asked "why would it be a school and not a college?". S3 goes on, "because the people are wearing uniforms and at a college people don't". S3 then moves from his observation to give an unsolicited opinion, "in my country they don't wear uniforms [at school]. Good because everybody is the same". S3's remark opened the discussion for other students but the lesson continued. When it came to a picture of an English pub, S3 said "in my country not allowed". T1 offers an alternative and softer response as she looks at S3 "in my country, it doesn't look like this because these are very English, they are bars in my country".

The lesson progressed to consider the geographical features of a country. S3 seemed to almost intrude on the usual lesson proceedings in a sarcastic or even slightly provocative tone when he brings up his homeland. S3 said "twenty-five per cent mountains but now a store. Long range rockets at the moment". T1 looked directly at S3 and said "we don't think about war". T1 looked down at the course book and continued referring to geographical features. T1 said "...big earthquake in Turkey, by the boarder. In Iran some people died" she looked at S3 again and continued "there are some but not many strong earthquakes".

A convenient pause followed as the end of the lesson approached. T1 said that she remembered giving homework before the holiday, "*write about your family*". Instantaneously S3 passed his blue workbook forward to T1 who marked it and said "it is very good", as she handed it back to S3. T1, looked around the class and said "two people did their homework. That's rubbish! Spelling test!". T1 asks students to close their books because the words for the spelling test were used during the lesson. The spelling test continued: company, university (sighs), chocolate, restaurant, coffee, Chinese, friends, beach, photo, Britain, meal, railway station, Italian, brother, babies. T1 writes the words on the whiteboard and says "if you have ten correct you should have fifteen next time". S3 said he had ten spellings correct and some students had more. Later when I talked to T1 she explained that spelling was a target so she wanted to push students and did not want to make spelling too easy.

Most lessons seemed to be directed and controlled by the teacher, even though the format might not always be the teacher's ideal. The college testing and regime of teacher observations guided teachers towards desired outcomes that were in turn evident in lessons and translated into measureable targets. The targets appeared to be derived from migrants' tested skills. Migrants' 'needs', on the other hand, often appeared to be assumed.

Appendix 10 - ESOL SfL Examination Paper

Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life, Entry 1 – Reading, (2007), Trinity College London

**Certificate in
ESOL Skills for Life
Entry 1 – Reading
21 March 2007
10am**



Your full name: _____
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Centre: _____ Date: _____

Candidate registration number: _____

Time allowed: 30 minutes

Please answer **all** questions. Write your answers in pen **not** pencil.
You may **not** use dictionaries. You may **not** use correction fluid.

Examiner's use only

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15

10/002/07

Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life**Entry 1 – Reading**

Time allowed: 30 minutes

Task one

Read the text below and then answer questions 1–10.

Tell us about yourself

I am 30 years old. I live in Keswick, in the Lake District. I work in the local library. I love living in the Lake District. At weekends, I like walking. I usually go with my two brothers, Mark and Adam. Mark's a policeman. Adam's a hotel manager. He loves walking!

In the evenings, I also enjoy cooking. I cook all kinds of things. My neighbour, Meera Shah, is teaching me how to cook Indian dishes.

Kate Sanders
Local Librarian

Questions

1. This text is about *(Please circle the letter of the correct answer)*
A Meera Shah
B Kate Sanders
C Keswick
2. 'I' in the text is

3. Where does Kate work?

4. Who are Mark and Adam? *(Please circle the letter of the correct answer)*
A brothers of Meera
B brothers of Kate
C sisters of Kate

5. How old is Kate? *(Please circle the letter of the correct answer)*
- A twenty
 - B thirty
 - C forty
6. Which sentence is correct? *(Please circle the letter of the correct answer)*
- A Mark loves cooking
 - B Adam loves working in a police station
 - C Kate loves living in the Lake District
7. Who loves walking? *(Please circle the letter of the correct answer)*
- A Mark
 - B Adam
 - C Meera
8. What does Kate like doing at night?
-
9. Who works for the police? *(Please circle the letter of the correct answer)*
- A Kate
 - B Mark
 - C Adam
10. What is Kate learning how to cook? *(Please circle the letter of the correct answer)*
- A Lake District food
 - B all kinds of things
 - C Indian food

Please turn over

Task two



Look at the information above and answer the questions.

Questions (Please circle the letter of the correct answer)

11. At the Museum of Science,
 - A you can't smoke
 - B you can smoke inside
 - C you can smoke outside

12. You can take your dog to
 - A The Museum of Science
 - B The Museum of Art
 - C The Open Air Museum

13. In the Open Air Museum, you **can't**
 - A get medical help
 - B ride your bike
 - C make an emergency call

14. You can take photos in
 - A The Museum of Science and the Museum of Art
 - B The Museum of Art and the Open Air Museum
 - C The Museum of Science and the Open Air Museum

15. Which sentence is correct?
 - A You can't eat or drink in the Museum of Science
 - B You can use your mobile phone in the Museum of Art
 - C You can't run in the Open Air Museum

Appendix 11 - Textbook and work book extracts

Sub-Section 5.4.2 - Coursebook task - Page 38











Comys-Carr, J., Cunningham, S., Eales, F., & Moor, P. (2005). *New cutting edge. elementary students' book* Longman.

Language focus 3
Activity verbs and adverbs of frequency



1 **MD** Write the verbs in the circles below.


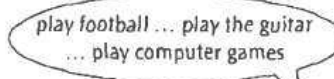
play listen to write watch have do

a  a newspaper	f  television
b  swimming	g  school
c  football	h  friends
d  a letter	i  nothing
e  the radio	j  a meal

2 a **MD** Add these words to the diagrams in exercise 1. (There may be more than one possibility.)

shopping a magazine the cinema an e-mail
the guitar CDs a video computer games
a restaurant a shower your relatives your homework

b Practise saying the phrases above. Then work in pairs and test each other.

3 a Put the adverbs in the correct place.

usually often sometimes not ... often



b Which sentences are true for you?

- I often go shopping on Saturday.
- I always read the newspaper in the morning.
- I never watch football on television.
- I don't often write letters.
- I usually listen to the radio in the car.

Grammar

Look back at the sentences in exercise 3b and complete the rules.

Adverbs of frequency (*always, often, never, etc.*) come before / after the verb in positive sentences and come before / after *don't* in negative sentences.

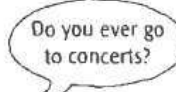
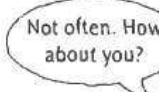
► Read language summary C on page 152.

Practice

1 Write sentences about something ...

- you never do.
- you *sometimes do in the evening.*
- you often do at the weekend.
- you usually do in the morning.
- you always do on Sunday.

2 Work in pairs. Ask and answer the questions below.

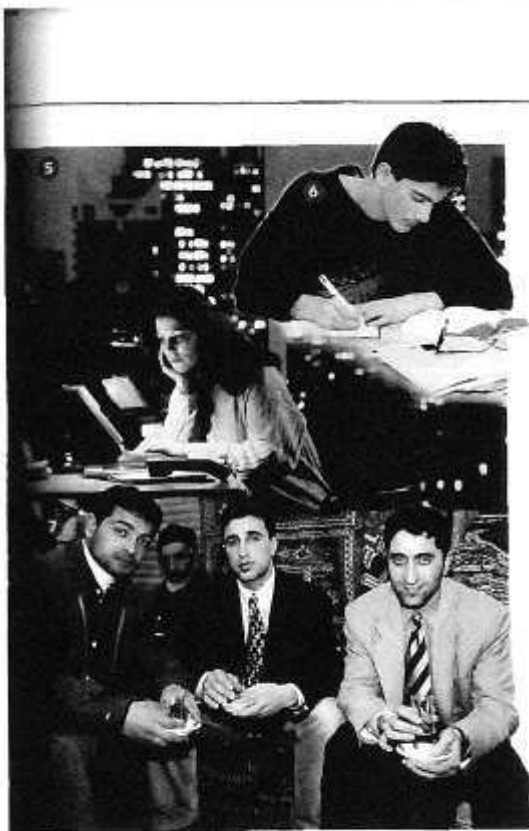
 

Do you ever ...

- go to concerts?
- visit relatives at the weekend?
- read poetry?
- listen to the radio at night?
- go swimming in the sea?
- play tennis?
- read computer magazines?
- do your homework on the bus?

Sub-Section 6.2.2 – Classroom Identity Challenges - Pages 27-29

Comys-Carr, J., Cunningham, S., Eales, F., & Moor, P. (2005). *New cutting edge. elementary students' book* Longman.



Language focus 1
Present simple questions

13.2 Listen and answer the questions for yourself.

✓ = Yes, I do. ✗ = No, I don't.

- a c e g
b d f h

Grammar

1 Present simple: *I, you, we, they*

I	live in Dubai.
You	work long hours.
We	go to English classes.
They	speak Italian.

2 Questions and short answers

To make questions and negatives we use *do/don't*.

Do	you	speak English?	Yes, I do.
		live in a flat?	No, I don't.

► Read Language summary A on page 151.

Practice

Pronunciation

1 Listen to the questions in Recording 2 again. We stress the important words. Do you /dʒə/ it weak.

/dʒə/ • •
Do you live in a big city?

/dʒə/ • •
Do you go to English classes?

2 Look at the tapecript on page 166. Practise saying the questions.

1 Work in pairs. Ask and answer the questions.

Do you live in a big city?

No, I don't.

2 a Look back at the diagrams on page 26. Write five more questions.

Do you go to the cinema a lot?

b Walk around the class. Ask and answer your questions.

3 **13.3** Can you complete the questions and answers? Listen and check.

- a A: _____ you _____ meat?
B: No, _____ . I only _____ fish.
- b A: _____ and your family _____
_____ house?
B: No, _____ . We _____ a flat.
- c A: _____ your parents _____ English?
B: Yes, _____ .
- d A: Do you _____ a big company?
B: No, I _____ . I _____ a small company.
- e A: _____ and your friends _____
_____ cinema a lot?
B: Yes, _____ . We love the cinema.

4 a Write eight true sentences about yourself, your parents, your family, or you and your friends.

I study economics at university.
We live a flat.
My parents work long hours.
We go out a lot.
They eat a lot of chocolate.

b Compare your sentences with a partner.

Reading and vocabulary

1 a **MD** Which things can you see in the photos?

the beach a flat a pub a shop the city centre
a house a garden an office a swimming pool
a school a restaurant a supermarket

b **TEA** Listen and practise the words.

2 Do the places in the photos look the same or different in your country?

The school is the same.

The house is very different.

3 **MD** Match the words and phrases in A and B.

A

- a start
- b open
- c a big meal
- d in the evening
- e go to work

B

- a snack
- in the morning
- go home
- close
- finish

4 Read about life in Britain. Complete the text with a word or phrase from exercise 3.

Life in Britain

HOMES

Most British people live in houses not flats. Most houses have gardens.

DAILY LIFE

Most office workers (a) go to work at about nine o'clock in the morning and finish at about five or six (b) _____. People don't go home for lunch. People usually eat a big meal in the evening – they just have (c) _____ at lunchtime.

SCHOOL LIFE

Children start school at about nine o'clock and (d) _____ at about half past three. Most children have lunch at school. Children (e) _____ school when they are four or five years old and leave when they are sixteen or eighteen.

SHOPS AND RESTAURANTS

Shops (f) _____ at about nine o'clock in the morning and (g) _____ at about six in the evening. Normally, they don't close for lunch. Most shops open on a Sunday, too. Many supermarkets stay open twenty-four hours, but most pubs and restaurants close at about eleven o'clock in the evening.





Listening Life in Australia

1 **TES** Nicky is asking about daily life in Australia. Listen and number the questions.

- Do most people live in flats or houses?
- What time do children go to school?
- What time do people start work?
- Do they go home for lunch?
- When do shops open and close in Australia?
- What time do pubs and restaurants close?
- What do people do at the weekend?

2 Listen again. Tick the sentences which are true.

- Shops open at 9.00 and close at about 5.00. ✓
- Supermarkets close at midnight.
- Pubs and restaurants close at about eleven o'clock.
- Most people go home for lunch.
- People have lunch in cafés.
- Children finish school at half past eight.
- At the weekend most people go to the beach.
- In the city centre, people live in houses.
- A lot of people have got swimming pools.

Language focus 2 Present simple (positive and negative)

Look back at the text about life in Britain. Find three positive sentences and two negative sentences.

Grammar

Complete the gaps.

- | | |
|------|-----------------------------|
| • I | live in a house. |
| You | go to work at about 9.00. |
| We | have lunch in a café. |
| They | start school at about 9.00. |
| • I | _____ have a big lunch. |
| You | _____ work in an office. |
| We | _____ live in a flat. |
| They | _____ go to school. |

► Read Language summary B on page 152.

Practice

1 Complete the sentences for your country. Use either the positive or negative form. Correct the information, where necessary.

Most people don't live in houses. They live in flats.

Life in my country

- Most people _____ (live) in houses.
- Most people _____ (have) gardens.
- Most office workers _____ (start) work at 9.00.
- Most people _____ (go) home for lunch.
- Most people _____ (have) a big meal in the evening.
- Children _____ (go) to school in the afternoon.
- Most young people _____ (leave) school at sixteen.
- Most shops _____ (stay) open twenty-four hours.
- Most shops _____ (close) at lunchtime.
- Most shops _____ (open) on Sundays.
- Restaurants _____ (close) at eleven in the evening.

2 a Write about three things that are different between your country and Britain.

In Britain children start school at about nine o'clock, but in Poland they start at eight o'clock.

b Write about three things that are the same in Britain and Australia.

Children finish school at half past three.

3 Use the ideas below to make six true sentences about yourself. Compare sentences with a partner.

live in a house	have a swimming pool in my garden
have lunch at home	have a big meal in the evening
eat a lot of meat	drink a lot of coffee
speak Spanish	study a lot at the weekend
go to restaurants a lot	work in an office

I don't have lunch at home.
I have lunch in a café.



Common verbs

Match three words or phrases from the box to each verb below.

- | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| meat | in a small house | Spanish |
| coffee | to work | with my family |
| for take | economics | French |
| law | long hours | a lot of fish |
| water | mineral | Japanese |
| to university | black tea | to the cinema a lot |
| in Mexico City | in an office | in restaurants a lot |
| at university | | |

- a. speak _____
- b. live _____
- c. work _____
- d. go _____
- e. study _____
- f. eat _____
- g. drink _____

Questions

Complete the questions with a word.

1. Do you live in Edinburgh?
2. _____ your parents speak English?
3. Do you and your brother go _____ a lot?
4. Do you _____ green tea?
5. Do you and your family live _____ a flat?
6. Do Ben and James _____ German?
7. Do you eat a lot _____ chocolate?
8. Do all the students _____ law?
9. Do you _____ with your parents?
10. Do you work _____ hours?

Listen and check. Practise saying the questions.

Negatives

Join a sentence beginning with an ending to make negative sentences.

1. Most people don't work _____ economics
2. Moans don't come from _____ of the weekend
3. People in Brazil don't speak _____ Australia
4. Babies don't go _____ meat
5. Most children don't study _____ to school
6. Vegetarians don't eat _____ Spanish

Listen and check. Practise saying the sentences.

Positive and negative

Read the information about Thomas and Angela, from Sweden, and Julia and Ken, from Singapore.

Thomas and Angela



- home: a five-bedroom house in a small town in Sweden
- languages: Swedish, English, German
- jobs: they're lawyers
- hobbies: the cinema
- drinks: mineral water and coffee
- food: Swedish and Italian food

Julia and Ken



- home: a small flat in the centre of Singapore City
- languages: English, Chinese, Malay
- jobs: they're teachers
- hobbies: eating in restaurants
- drinks: tea
- food: Chinese food



Complete the sentences.

- 1 Thomas and Angelo don't live in a big city.
- 2 They _____ in a big house.
- 3 They _____ English.
- 4 They _____ Chinese.
- 5 They _____ in a school.
- 6 They _____ to the cinema a lot.
- 7 They _____ mineral water.
- 8 They _____ Chinese food.
- 9 Julia and Ken _____ live _____ in a big city.
- 10 They _____ in a big house.
- 11 They _____ Chinese and English.
- 12 They _____ in an office.
- 13 They _____ in a school.
- 14 They _____ to the cinema a lot.
- 15 They _____ coffee.
- 16 They _____ Chinese food.

Questions and short answers

Answer the questions about Thomas and Angelo, and Julia and Ken with short answers. Then answer the questions about yourself.

- a Do Thomas and Angelo live in a small town?
Yes, they do.
Do you live in a small town? No, I don't.
- b Do they work in an office? _____
Do you work in an office? _____
- c Do they speak Chinese? _____
Do you speak Chinese? _____
- d Do they drink tea? _____
Do you drink tea? _____
- e Do Julia and Ken live in a big city? _____
Do you live in a big city? _____
- f Do they go to the cinema a lot? _____
Do you go to the cinema a lot? _____
- g Do they eat Italian food? _____
Do you eat Italian food? _____
- h Do they drink tea? _____
Do you drink tea? _____

Buildings

Label the buildings with words in the box.

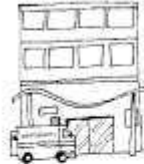
- a block of flats a library a school a bank
a supermarket a railway station a hospital a hotel



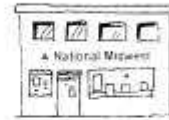
1 a block of flats



2 _____



3 _____



4 _____



5 _____



6 _____



7 _____



8 _____

Listen and check. Practise saying the words.