

# Migrant ESOL Learners: a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to contribute uniquely to both the debate and the literature on diversity and difference within the college sector in Scotland. It investigated how migrant ESOL learners are supported within one large college in Glasgow, and adopted a qualitative approach underpinned by a previously under-used strand of Foucault's theory of practices of the self to interpret the language and practices of both ESOL learners and their lecturers. It analysed how the college situates the migrant learners' experience by examining the discourses of two focus groups of learners and staff, as well as seven individual members of staff and selected learners at both Intermediate and Advanced levels.

The research found that both the learners and their lecturers have to negotiate quite different manifestations of power as they work towards their individual goals. The learners' practices illustrate their sophistication as they assimilate behaviours and language which help to ease their progression through and beyond the college, while the lecturers work within the challenges of their role to enable, with evident care, the goals of the learners which are entangled with their own.

The findings raise issues for practitioners working within the field of ESOL learning and teaching, specifically how to support students in negotiating the learning process, and the associated layers of power embedded within the practices of the college. The key beneficiaries of this study are the lecturers but, ultimately, the migrant ESOL learners and the potential is identified for

Foucault's framework of practices of the self to be used to support lecturers in developing more culturally sensitive practices.

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# 1. Chapter 1 - The Study and its Context

## 1.1 Introduction

The role of the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher or lecturer is almost symbiotic. It offers the lecturer opportunities, while teaching, to learn about the lives and languages of individuals from other language backgrounds and cultures, and also to work with these learners as both teacher and colleague. The nature of the role has changed quite dramatically over the past thirteen years, as the advent of migrant learners to Scotland has had a significant impact on learning and teaching within the sector, particularly on the provision and delivery of ESOL. This means that the job can be fulfilling but also, at times, challenging. This study, conducted over a two-year period, aims to understand how a college supports its migrant ESOL learners in their learning and progression through the college context. Its associated objectives are to investigate how the discourses of a college frame the migrant ESOL learner's experience and contribute to the construction of their learner identities, and to examine the success of the learning experience for the migrant learner in college.

These aims and objectives are represented by the following research questions:

1. How do the discourses and practices of the college frame the learning experience of individual migrant students?

2. How do ESOL teachers understand and construct their practices through their discourses?
3. To what extent do the practices of the college support the identities, learning and progression routes of the migrant learner?
4. How are current assessment practices constituted and how do they operate within the college?

The study is informed by the later, seldom-used work of Michel Foucault, specifically by his 'Technologies of the Self' (1982, 1984, 1985) framework, which is employed to help situate an analysis of the learner and teacher discourses. The research arose from Ball's concerns (2008) regarding power relations and their impact on education, where he reflects that 'the causes of failure and inequality are posited as cultural and moral rather than structural' (Ball 2008: 179). Such concerns, and their subsequent, continuing discussion around power and discourse, are rooted in Foucault's (1972: 31) reflections on 'statements in the field of discourse and the relations of which they are capable' which explore 'an understanding ... of the 'exercise' of power' (Biesta 2008: 194).

This research is the first of its kind to examine the discourses of both ESOL learners and college staff from this specific Foucauldian perspective, within what Diaz-Bone (2007: non- paginated) considers to be 'an emerging field of Foucauldian discourse analysis'. In so doing, it aims to augment the body of literature on the learning experience of migrant ESOL learners. The study involves an analysis of the discourses of two focus groups of lecturers and learners, as well as semi-structured, individual interviews with selected staff

and learners at both Intermediate and Advanced levels (see Appendix). It considers the discourses of ESOL students who learn and progress within the Scottish college context, and analyses the discourses of the staff who work with them and who are bound by the same, or similar, interweavings of power, with consequent effects on their practice. For Foucault, 'the concept of discourse [was] not purely a 'linguistic' concept. It is about language *and* practice' (Hall 2001: 72) hence this study's focus on discourses not only as language but as they illuminate practices of learning and teaching.

This study also discusses, within a reflection on the discourses, the place of assessment in relation to the ESOL context. This follows the requirement within the Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland that there be 'a coherent framework for ESOL teaching, learning and assessment' (2007:13); this framework, and its resultant impact on ESOL learners, their teachers and on ESOL learning and teaching, is examined through a Foucauldian lens as a specific disciplinary practice which influences and regulates certain discourses and behaviour.

## **1.2 Background to the research**

The impetus for this study is situated within the researcher's own background in ESOL teaching and desire to make sense of the cumulative experience of working with migrant ESOL learners. The initial decision to embark on the research was also motivated by changes instigated by the associated societal and demographic change throughout Scotland from 2000 onwards. I noticed that the dispersal of asylum seekers and the arrival of migrants from the European Union accession countries had a significant impact on my professional context as a lecturer, then senior lecturer, in ESOL at a Scottish

college. This particular group of learners have diverse needs which are determined not only by their educational, social and familial backgrounds, but also by their various motivations for moving to Britain. Most came to Scotland by choice, but many arrived here having fled political or social unrest in their own countries. In addition, migrant ESOL learners were and are required to study English to become more effective contributors to society as a level of English language competence is required, by law, of all migrants who want to settle in Britain and become British citizens. This means that for most, learning English was and continues to be an imperative. I had been conscious over several years of challenges arising from such a diversity of backgrounds among ESOL migrant learners, as well as their attendant experience of prior learning, for class teachers and course programmers alike, for a variety of pedagogical and cultural reasons.

My developing interest as a researcher concerned the relevance of courses and programmes in meeting learner needs. More specifically, I wanted to ascertain how far migrant learners' linguistic and educational needs were being met within the existing structure of a college and its ESOL courses. However, the study focus was broadened to include the role of the ESOL teacher. It became increasingly clear during the research process that the ESOL teacher has a pivotal function not only in the acquisition, development and maintenance of the ESOL learners' language but also as the temporary guardian of their individual and iterative identities as lifelong learners. Through the efforts of members of the ESOL department, and what participants in this study considered to be carefully contextualized tuition, each ESOL student is not only supported in the development of their language but in their emergent sense of identity as he or

she negotiates belonging to another culture as well as a learning environment. Within this context of individual and collective support of the learner, I was aware that there existed a potentially restricting timetable and curricular structure into which migrant learners might have to 'fit'. I therefore began to consider how much account was being taken of their differing needs, and whether many were in learning situations where college structures were dictating the limitations of curriculum and timetable within discourses which could restrict the learners' development of their English language skills, as well as their progression through and beyond the college itself.

It is intended that this study offers a catalyst for the discussion of the appropriateness of provision for migrant ESOL learners in the college sector in Scotland in order that they might be more fully equipped to take their place within Scottish society. It aims to be an example of 'the possibilities of research that makes a difference in struggles for social justice' (Lather 1996: 18).

MacLure (2003: 175) has echoed Foucault in her description of discourses 'as practices for producing meaning, forming subjects and regulating conduct within particular societies and institutions at particular historical times' thus emphasizing the importance of context to the experience of the subjects of this study. I was aware, throughout, that in congruent educational contexts, 'failure to develop a curriculum ... for a multicultural society had contributed to continuing ignorance and xenophobia between communities' (Tomlinson 2005b: 154) and, therefore, of the need to explore this issue in my research.

There is always the risk that further societal discord might develop if the college sector, and indeed all education sectors, do not respond positively and appropriately to the continued diversity within their student population and equip

all learners for life in a new country. Migrants learn and live in our society in which media rhetoric sometimes presents that ‘strangers appear as a problem... that needs to be overcome...by making the stranger similar to us’ (Biesta 2006a: 59-60). Many news stories, particularly around the time of the 2014 general election, were illustrative of the unease with which migrants and second- or third-generation Britons are viewed, likely influencing the current political debate around migration. This research therefore offers a basis for discussion of related issues which exist in ‘a world of plurality and difference’ (Biesta 2006a: 54) and aims to assist migrant learners and their teachers in ‘how we might understand that world’ (ibid.).

### **1.3 My place in the research**

Tomlinson’s (2005a: 4) observation that ‘Despite a rhetoric of ‘inclusion’... [the] UK... [has] become one of the most economically unequal countries in Europe’ prompted me to consider this statement in relation to the learning experience of migrant ESOL students. As a researcher I was therefore motivated to explore how the structures of a college, its learning and teaching, language and support practices prepare ESOL learners for the transition from being a college learner to contributing to the UK economy and society in order that the diversity of people living in the UK might ‘exist together in plurality’ (Biesta 2010: 568). It is often forgotten that many new migrants are highly skilled or have been well educated in their own countries, as currently they may be employed in a capacity far below their level of academic competence, as highlighted by Schellekens (2001) in her work on employment opportunities for migrant learners of English. This research, which makes reference to developing learner identities, observes how some individuals are enabled to succeed not

only via gaining qualifications, but based on a confidence, developed through learning, which supports their progression to the workplace or further study.

West's advice (1996: 2) to consider 'what a return to education represents at a particular juncture in a person's life and why it may be crucial' is pertinent to many of the learners interviewed here, as the return to learning was, for some, an initial step to establishing a new future and even a new 'self'.

The research experience has led, also, to the process of identifying my own 'self' as a researcher within this context. Concerns around the relevance of provision for ESOL learners have permeated my working life, and so have had a direct impact upon my professional 'space'. Before embarking on this research I had spent most of my teaching career in English Language but had left the college sector four years previously to work in the development of ESOL assessment. I had therefore already established strong connections to both the site of the fieldwork and to the field of ESOL in Scotland and was conscious of two potential areas of conflict: with my previous role as a Senior Lecturer in ESOL within the site of the fieldwork, and with my existing role as ESOL Development Manager for the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

It became increasingly obvious that my position as a researcher within a college in which I had worked for many years would perhaps be questionable for some of the professionals with whom I would come in contact and indeed for others who might read and respond to the final research. I had previously been a high-profile ESOL professional through my work within a college well known for supporting the learning, teaching and progression of asylum-seekers, refugees and migrant learners. I had also worked closely with many ESOL professionals through my role at Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and,

subsequently, SQA, so I was aware of a particular duty, given my unique position, not only to conduct the research in a humane and ethical manner, but also to represent the ESOL profession with the integrity within which my professional practice had always been located. As the researcher I was bound by the ethical code of the University and ensured that my research proposal was firmly anchored within these requirements, so my responsibility during the research process was to explore and describe the field of the research in a way which respected both ex-colleagues and current ESOL students.

I chose the college location as a research site specifically because it had been a successful provider of ESOL for many years. At that time, in 2008, the college was one of the largest providers of ESOL in the city, delivering both full-time and part-time classes to around 600 learners from a variety of nationalities in an ESOL department which comprised three Senior Lecturers and 38 teachers, most of whom were employed on a permanent, full-time basis. As a researcher interested particularly in the discourses of the college, I was confident that my knowledge of the fieldwork site would not interfere with the analysis of the language of both the students and their staff, but would situate it. I therefore sought and received permission from the Principal of the College at that time, and was given an assurance that the college would both support the research and contribute to its funding. In consultation with college managers, it was agreed that I would not interview or collect data from students whom I had taught. I would, however, be free to interview lecturing staff with whom I had worked, having assured these individuals that I would represent them, and the college context, objectively and with integrity. I was conscious throughout that I would have to 'avoid feeling too comfortable...for fear of losing [my] critical



perspective' (Coffey 1999: 5). In other words, however professionally separate I had become, from my previous workplace, I would have to ensure that I removed myself (in the form of my ex-ESOL lecturer 'self') fully from the research in order that I could remain as objective as possible. Underpinning this, in accordance with the University's strict ethical research guidelines, was a duty to behave in an appropriate manner and represent the findings of the research accurately. Lather (1996: 15) writes of 'giving voice to the voiceless ... this text of responsibility'. I had to remember, however, that my interviewees were not 'voiceless'; the ESOL learners were at the very least, bilingual if not plurilingual, each functioning, albeit at a different level, in a multilingual Scottish society, while the teachers themselves were highly educated and, mainly, very experienced professionals. I was simply a recorder and interpreter of their discourses.

The second, but associated, potential conflict of interest was with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), to where I was seconded when the research began. Part of the reason for my move to SQA was to separate myself from the research field; it became clear that it was more appropriate, and perhaps easier, to comment on the discourses of the college in question as an outsider rather than an insider and to distance myself from what might be considered as 'personal, emotional and identity work' Coffey (1999: 1). Impartiality is crucial to the research process, specifically in maintaining the necessary objectivity. I was also conscious of Evans' (2002: 146) advice that 'If you want to avoid presenting a blinkered view you need to remove your blinkers', and felt that this would be best effected by placing myself externally to the field of the research. However, I was also becoming increasingly aware that the nature of my

'professional status' as both a seconded lecturer and a developer of assessment materials for the examination 'authority' might involve some conflict. Once I had become immersed in the work of Foucault, and therefore more conscious of the existing and often hidden tensions between power and discourse, specifically within the field of ESOL learning and teaching, I began to consider the work I was doing in assessment development, and its potential impact on the learning and lives of ESOL students, within a Foucauldian frame. I was, however, equally open in discussions with my line manager at SQA and made it clear that this area of the research would analyse and discuss the issues concerning assessment as they arose from the discourses around ESOL learning and teaching within one college, and from a Foucauldian perspective, that is, as a disciplinary practice. I was, in turn, and subsequent to this discussion, part-funded by SQA in the knowledge that the research itself could ultimately be published and available for discussion by ESOL professionals or any other interested parties; I therefore felt comfortable that potential conflicts of interest had been neutralised.

At the same time, however, I was aware that I needed to minimise the impact of my lecturer colleagues' perception of me as an SQA representative, so I developed strategies for distancing myself, as a researcher, from this role. I knew I had to manage how I was perceived in this new role as 'researcher'. During my initial meeting with the lecturers I explained that the research was a personal project which had emerged from my experience as an ESOL teacher. I discussed and clarified both the reasons for and the rationale underpinning my development as a researcher and the resultant research questions, and invited discussion of the project to reassure staff who might have concerns over my

SQA 'day job' that this exercise was personally motivated and not connected to SQA. I did so because it was important to distance myself from my 'SQA persona' so that the integrity of my intention and the research itself would not be in question. Throughout the interview process I referred to my researcher role and its connection with the purpose of the research, and made it clear to the participants that they could comment on, or even withdraw from the research, if they felt any discomfort or unease. I was aware of the potential irony that I, as a researcher investigating issues of power, risked being viewed as the representative of a powerful educational organisation, the SQA. I therefore made sure that I separated myself and my identity as a researcher from that organisation and my role within it, and by doing so, I nullified any accusations of conflicting interest.

This led me to reflect further on my own identity as researcher. I belong to the white, Western majority who are usually the visible decision makers in education in the UK, so I was cognisant of yet more potential or actual 'inescapable power imbalances of inquiry situations' (Lather 1996: 2) which might influence the research process or indeed myself as the researcher. While aware that I might be regarded as a representative of such an educational 'elite', I had previously raised this particular issue in my application for ethical clearance, and was grateful to the representatives of the University for considering my genuine assurance that I would be careful of my positioning in my researcher role, and I remained conscious that my 'whole research process...must incorporate consideration of different perspectives; different explanations and interpretations' (Evans 2002: 146).

I began, therefore, and throughout these considerations, to understand that I was developing a new professionalism, or 'space' for action which was wholly pertinent to this study. This was centred around a 'capacity to pursue new knowledge, techniques, values and ideas from a relatively independent point of view' (Friedson 1994: 178). I remained conscious of my unique position as an 'external' researcher who had a certain knowledge of the context, but within that role I had choices to make. I had either to retain the status quo or, preferably, to work, through my research, to try to make the provision of ESOL more effective; I had to try through the research to contribute to enabling access to meaningful progression and life choices and to try to ensure, through research-related and subsequent discussion with other professionals, that the field of ESOL would have fewer opportunities for the often hidden or unacknowledged misuse of power and its associated language. I found that during the research process I was able to observe, and indeed comment on, the college context much more easily. I had previously been highly accustomed to using the language of the college sector and was aware that language in any context such as this is not used neutrally; this allowed me a distance and therefore a privileged perspective from which to research my specific context and to consider the associated research questions. I found it helpful to remember that 'considerable moral work goes on regarding the interviewee and interviewer' (Silvermann 2005: 22), and that I had a personal and ethical duty to my former colleagues and to current students, as outlined in the University's code of ethics, which sets out 'rigorous, critical standards' (ibid. p.15).

## 1.4 The college context

Foucault (1971, cited in Ball 1990: 3) asserted that 'every educational system is a political means of maintaining or modifying the appropriateness of discourses with the knowledge and power they bring with them', highlighting the importance of the context in which discourses are both shared and shaped, and their resultant power to affect learning and its associated practices. This study was situated within a large ESOL department in an established city college in which ESOL has thrived and evolved over many years. However, I was mindful that:

Despite the confidence of policy makers and the claims of the sector's managers that FE institutions are highly accessible and localized, attracting non-participant adults to colleges might nonetheless involve significant changes in identity and perceptions (Gallacher et al. 2002: 495).

ESOL learners had clearly been 'attracted' to this college to study, but central to the impetus for the research was a wish to discover and initiate discussion with professionals around whether or not the learning experience might need to involve 'significant changes' in order to be more effective. This may have been a sector which I knew and understood, but in distancing myself from my own previous experience of lecturing I would be able to examine the discourses in a way which was separate from the college context as I had known it. I was aware that 'educational institutions control the access of individuals to various kinds of discourses' (Ball 1990: 3) but was able, in my researcher role, to concentrate on the language used by both the learners and the teachers in that

college at a particular time; aware that Foucault, in his later work, 'became even more concerned with how knowledge was out to work through discursive practices in specific institutional settings to regulate the conduct of others' (Hall 2001: 75). Thus, the emergent research developed, through a Foucauldian analysis of the discourses, to reveal and discuss various relations of power in practice within the college and their effects on both the learners and their teachers, while illustrating 'how the ambition to be 'inclusive' through lifelong learning has exclusionary practices as one of its effects' (Nicoll and Fejes 2008: 5). The research ultimately revealed that the power and politics of the language embedded within the discourses of this particular college was, at times, not wholly inclusive in practice.

In the process of analysing the data, it became evident that the college was in a period of flux with regard to responding to the demands of a national economic crisis and the consequent sectoral funding crisis, but also one which was situating itself, structurally and in its curriculum, within the emergent Curriculum for Excellence and its gradual impact on the college sector. The pillars of my research, then, had already begun to wobble shortly after the interview phase was commenced: the impact of an international recession had led to unease within the sector which resulted in swingeing cuts to both courses and personnel, and a subsequent restructure. The concomitant curricular review and revision was only beginning to affect the college sector, but the combination of both forced a rethink by the management of the college which took effect, ultimately, in relation to its provision of ESOL and planned cuts to courses. The microcosm of my research context had been affected by these 'macro' developments but this resulted, I believe, in a much more current and

interesting study of how one college decided to work in difficult and fluid times to support its ESOL learners. This research also illustrates ‘ways in which language is involved in social relations of power and domination’ (Wetherell 2001: 229) and reveals how interwoven political, societal and financial pressures can combine, via unyielding capillaries of power, to have a significant impact on learning and teaching.

### **1.5 The college sector, ESOL and market forces**

An additional concern for the college sector was and is the ‘pre-entry’ language requirement for many ESOL students who enter the UK as ‘International’ students, which further fuels the uneasy tension many feel exists between the ways in which ESOL is often marketed and the presumption that ethics is central to the field of education. There is an associated political discourse of English language fluency and its required attainment, for migrant learners, if they are to access citizenship or settlement in the UK.

In her reference to the Australian school system, Rebecca English refers to ‘evidence of the “marketisation of language”’ (English 2009: 95), a description which can be appropriated to describe the specific, financially-driven practice of recruiting ESOL students from some areas to the Scottish college sector as well as the linking of English language attainment with access to citizenship for migrant learners. Tomlinson refers (2005a: 6) to ‘the de-personalization of people as human beings into consumers, human resources and human capital’, a reflection which is wholly apposite to the context of this study; attainment in English language tests, and its associated financial outlay for the applicant to settlement and Citizenship, can be described as ‘an economic transaction [in

which the] education itself becomes a commodity' (Biesta 2006a: 19-20). This research may be situated in a political context, evident from an analysis of policy documents, in which many migrant learners of ESOL have been welcomed to the country purely for their contribution to sustaining the Scottish economy, but its basis concerns their preparation, through appropriate language learning in the college sector, for their various roles in society; in other words, it aims to examine whether ESOL learners' progress is enabled, by way of appropriate and realistic routes, through and beyond the college to a new life in Scotland. During such a process it must be recognised that, 'crossing cultural boundaries can fragment a sense of identity' (West 1996: 15) but with ESOL learners there is an additional caveat, that 'identity constructs and is constructed by language' (Norton 1997: 417). At the root of the ESOL experience is the ways in which an individual develops while acquiring the English language, so it is essential that this study discusses the associated discourses, some of which are conducted within 'a culture of accountability in education... which has brought about ever-tighter systems of ... control, and ever-more prescriptive educational protocols' (Biesta 2005: 57). This is highlighted in individual participants' discussion of the requirement that their language competence is measured and linked to potential citizenship or settlement in the UK. Within this process 'the implications ... are considerable since citizenship determines continued residence in the state and access to rights and benefits such as health, education, and welfare' (Shohamy and McNamara: 2009: 1).



## 1.6 Terminology

Throughout the research, references are made to 'ESOL', 'ESOL learner' 'migrant learner' and 'new Scot'. An ESOL learner is someone who speaks English as a second or other (that could be, for example, a third or fourth) language; he or she might study ESOL in an FE (Further Education) college, or progress beyond ESOL classes to further study or employment. A migrant learner, in the context of this research, is someone who has come to settle in Scotland to study with the intention of accessing employment but also, potentially, permanent legal membership of Scottish society in the future. A new Scot is someone who has come to Scotland, who wishes to remain in this country and who has obtained Citizenship status and the right to settle in Scotland. I have referred, mainly, to the ESOL 'learner' rather than 'student', although at times the words are used interchangeably, depending on the context. This terminology is current within the college sector and will be recognised and understood both by practitioners in the college sector and by educational theorists.

'Mainstream college courses' is a specific term used in relation to migrant learners in the college sector. Many ESOL courses are, or have been, 'mainstreamed' in colleges; however, they are often considered peripheral, as they are funded by Scottish Government money which may not continue to be provided. The term 'mainstream college courses' is used, therefore, to distinguish them as 'non-ESOL' courses to which any ESOL learner might progress, such as National Certificate (NC), Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Higher National Diploma (HND) courses. These are also referred to as 'mainstream' because they can be accessed by indigenous Scottish learners.

Finally, I have chosen to refer to college 'lecturers' and 'teachers' interchangeably as the title 'lecturer' is used in colleges while the purpose of the role is to teach.

## **1.7 The structure of the thesis**

The thesis is organized into seven chapters, this first chapter serving as the Introduction. Chapter Two discusses the policy context within which the learning and teaching of ESOL is situated, the particular discourse of policy and the researcher's perspective of it. Chapter Three examines the wide and varied literature which has influenced and enabled this study and its place within this specific ESOL context. Chapter Four describes and discusses the methodology which has underpinned and enabled the research, while Chapters Five and Six discuss the discourses at its heart. More specifically, Chapter Five places the learner discourses within Foucault's 'Technologies of the Self' in order to examine the ESOL learning experience, while Chapter Six describes and analyses, within the same Foucauldian framework, those discourses of the college staff which are central to that experience within the college. Both chapters Five and Six analyse assessment with reference to Foucault's later work on disciplinary practices, and examine the place of assessment in the learning and teaching of ESOL. Lastly, Chapter Seven concludes the thesis with a discussion of the challenges arising from the research, as well as implications for further policy and practice.

## **1.8 Conclusion**

To date, there has been very little research in the field of ESOL education in Scotland, and none at all, as far as I can ascertain, which has been concerned

with the discourses of a college within which migrant ESOL learning and teaching is situated and framed. It is the intention of this research that when learners and staff are alerted to the significance of the discourses of colleges within the migrant learner experience, the resultant discussion will offer a framework for guidance on the learning and teaching of migrant learners. Meanwhile, there has been some interesting and welcome research into ESOL in England, initiated specifically because 'too little was known about effective teaching and learning practices' (Baynham, Roberts et al. 2007: 6). However, this, along with Cook and Simpson's (2008) timely account of current provision for ESOL migrants in England, while sharing much with the Scottish experience, fails to connect with the issue of the relations of governance and power, perceived or otherwise, within this specific context. The present study will therefore build on work concerned with the learning and teaching of ESOL, but from a different perspective, in the hope of offering some insight into the power relations within, and their implications for, the migrant learner context in Scotland's college sector.

The analysis of the discourses of the college situated within a Foucauldian framework provides an insight into the varied power structures within a college and therefore highlights the linguistic, social and cultural issues around provision for migrant learners in this sector. I am aware that 'in educational discourses there is often much invested in meeting students' needs... yet...evidence...seems to be lacking ... theoretically' (Edwards et al. 2004: 17). This research aims to provide this 'theoretical evidence' relating to the learning experience of ESOL learners and to contribute to the developing body of

professional knowledge within the ESOL and the broader college teaching community.

West (1996: 14) refers to 'how data collection was combined with analysis, and the concern to understand whole stories rather than simply linguistic fragments', an approach which informs the practice throughout the research. However, I was cognisant throughout that 'engagement with learning is a subjective experience bound up with other life events and experiences' (Crossan et al. 2003: 64), and that for ESOL learners, a researcher cannot separate the language learning from the learners' own experiences, both in life and in learning, or from their future plans. At the core of this research is a concern for social justice: that the research might support ESOL professionals to work for a positive educational (and, therefore, life) experience for ESOL learners. There is a tradition in Scotland of supporting the individual and diversity; as Robert Burns declared: 'A man's a man for a' that' (Burns 1946: 259). As the discourses examined for this research illustrate, 'education is more than the simple insertion of the human individual into a pre-existing order' (Biesta 2006a: 8).

## **2. Chapter 2 – The Policy Context**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Consideration and analysis of the policy context, especially with regard to the language of the key policies, is vital to building an understanding of the ESOL learning and teaching landscape. Ball (2008: 167) asserted that 'In contrast to the flood of interventionary, enabling and constraining policies in other areas of educational practice national policies on 'race' and gender equality have been few'. These 'few' are the very policies which underpin the learning and progression of ESOL students along with the development of their learner identities and it is therefore essential to consider them. Ball (1998: 124) suggests that 'policies are ... articulated both to achieve material effects and to manufacture support for those effects'. These policies, being concerned with 'manufacturing support for' integration, race and the learning context of adult ESOL learners, relate to the central issues influencing the ESOL context and consequently upon migrant learners' lives and learning. This chapter examines the key policies at the centre of the delivery of ESOL and the development of its landscape. It analyses and responds critically to the discursive positioning of the policies and their relation to the experience of migrant learners and their lives.

### **2.2 Policy and its unique discourse**

Colebatch's view (1998: 29), that "policy' refers both to the authorised statements and to the process which produces them', is fundamental to any

consideration of the policy context and, for the purposes of this study, establishing understanding of its impact on the migrant learner experience in Scotland. To examine whether ESOL learners and their futures really are at the heart of any policy, it is necessary to follow Edwards et al. (2004: 3) in '[examining) the practices through which discourse and texts attempt to achieve their goals' in a policy context wherein 'education...is inherently a rhetorical practice' (ibid.). Any such analysis must reflect on how key policies came into being, as well as whether their aim is to make a difference to learners' lives or whether there might be something more machiavellian at the heart of the policy discourse: who, indeed, are the proponents of the 'authorised statements' and, as the question posed by Humes (2009: 69) asks, 'Whose interests does the discourse really serve?' In other words, do the discourses considered by this study serve the needs of migrant ESOL learners? It is helpful to remember Scott's advice (2000: 18), that 'Ultimately texts are located within ontological and epistemological frameworks'. This locates the genesis of a policy text, clarifying that policy is never divorced from either a political or societal context, an idea which must be considered in conjunction with Ball's observation that:

Discourses...are important in two ways...in their contribution to the construction of the need for reform, particularly in the case of globalisation... and, second, in providing and making necessary 'appropriate' policy responses and solutions...policies to greater or lesser extent have a semantic and ontological force (Ball 2008: 13).

Thus, policy discourses are developed and have a locus in societal and philosophical contexts which each shape their development as well as steering their potential effects. This is evident in, for example, the positioning of the

Race Relations Amendments Act (2000) which not only arose from the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry (1998) but also had an immediate and practical effect on all public bodies. Its direct impact can be traced further to the recent examination of the role of the police, resulting in the Stephen Lawrence Independent Review which reported in March 2014.

However, despite an apparent, or intended, 'semantic and ontological force' (Ball 2009: 13) dichotomies can arise between 'language used in political discourse and language used in government action' (Fairclough 2000: 147), and this should be considered when analysing the policies themselves. For this study, it has been vital to be alert to the rhetoric of a document but also to consider the context in which it was written and, importantly, how such language might be used to steer the field, or outcome, in a particular way. The learning and teaching experiences of lecturers and students has been influenced directly by policy and its process of development, principally because of the language contained therein. This is the crux: a policy can only be brought into practice if its language is appropriate for the purposes of the government body within which it is developed and eventually situated. However, related issues can arise concerning the efficacy and the appropriateness of that language in relation to the intended beneficiaries of the policy.

The language used in the key policy texts at the centre of the delivery of ESOL and its related development is examined closely in the textual analysis, below, using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). As Taylor explains (2004: 436), its use 'is particularly appropriate for critical policy analysis because it allows a detailed investigation of ... how language works within power relations... [and]

researchers can... demonstrate how policy texts work' in practice. This illustrates, for this study, Foucault's theory that the concept of discourse involves both language and practice.

### **2.3 Scotland's policy context**

In recent years a number of initiatives have taken place in Scotland to promote social justice which have had a direct influence on migrants' lives and their associated learning experiences.

After the publication of the Immigration and Asylum Act (HM Government: 1999), asylum seekers and refugees from a diverse range of countries were dispersed across Scotland's central belt. From 2000, Scottish Government policy on ESOL and the genesis of demographic change in Scotland were in tandem. In 2004, with the inclusion of ten new accession countries into the EU (seven of which were former communist states), a variety of Scottish regions became host to migrants from areas of Eastern Europe. At the same time, after the publication of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act in 2000, colleges had been given a legal duty to examine their roles and practices, which resulted, in many cases, in a review of practice along with the development of what came to be considered as overly robust internal policies with the specific intent of making each college an equal opportunities provider and employer. As a direct result of this policy, the Scottish Executive's flagship 'One Scotland. Many Cultures' campaign was launched in September 2002 and thereafter, in 2005, the Scottish Refugee Integration Forum (SRIF) voiced concern over the gaps in educational provision for asylum seeking and refugee learners. Thereafter, the Scottish Executive, as it had been known from 1999, took action to redress



what were considered to be wider issues of inequality in Scotland. It began to publicly support the inclusion and diversity agenda resulting in the provision and extension of existing societal and educational opportunities for migrant learners. The first document to explicitly connect learning and teaching with the right to inclusion was 'The Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland' (The Scottish Executive: 2003). This language within this document, however, can be seen as an example of 'discourses [which] ... attempt to establish a preferred reading across a variety of audiences by articulating different discursive practices to a shared ideological frame of reference' (Knight et al. 1990: 137); that is, in the effort to be inclusive, or offer a 'shared ideology', or to include all readers, the language used is inconsistent and its effect is therefore unclear. This is noticeable from the beginning of the document: the title of policy is presented as 'for Scotland', yet the first person singular pronoun is used at the very beginning in 'My vision' (The Scottish Executive 2003: 4); one wonders whose vision is being articulated. This causes some confusion of pronouns with the following use of the plural pronoun in 'we believe' indicating that the document is not just one person's 'vision' after all, which is not clear at the beginning. Such a lack of discursive clarity appears to be remedied by a direct reference to Scotland as 'an inclusive society' (ibid.) so that any discursive inaccuracies are remedied by its egalitarian intentions. The result is that the discourse appears muddled, and therefore potentially insincere, by purporting to be inclusive in its support for 'people [who] have the chance to learn, irrespective of their background' (ibid., p.3) while being undermined by the disconnect in the language used.

The publication of 'New Scots: Attracting Fresh Talent to Meet the Challenge of Growth' (The Scottish Executive: 2004) the following year was intended to reinforce Scotland's commitment to 'a tolerant, open and diverse country' (ibid., p.22), but opens with the general and unevidenced statement that:

Scots want to stay at home, to enjoy all the economic, cultural and social opportunities that 21st-century Scotland has to offer. They are proud of their country and think it is the best place in the world to live and work (ibid., p.1)

This is more reminiscent of the language of a tourist brochure rather than of a policy document, as there is no information on which Scots were interviewed to contribute to this statement or on who specifically is 'proud of their country'. The comments are therefore apparently without foundation while the discourse employs the rather 'couthy' rhetoric of a cosy nationalism, particularly with regard to the 'traditional Scottish welcome:

Scots enjoy a reputation for being warm, welcoming, friendly people... extend that traditional Scottish welcome to the new Scots who will help our country grow (ibid., p.1).

This text, perhaps in an attempt at inclusive language, appears rather as a rhetorical nod to stereotype. It is an example of 'lifelong learning ... positioned to harness the desires and values of those working in the terrain....an attempt at a seductive discourse' (Edwards and Nicoll: 2001) in its use of the embrative phrase 'our country' (The Scottish Executive: 2004: 1). Such an imbalance of formal, political language such as: 'a project team was set up in the Scottish Executive to develop proposals which would help the managed migration' (ibid.,

page 7) with an apparently informal discourse of inclusion such as ‘a Scots welcome’ (The Scottish Executive 2004: 15) seems to depoliticise and to minimise any intended impact in terms of considered support for migration. Its update (The Scottish Executive: 2005) drew media interest because of its, and First Minister Jack McConnell’s, reference to the new migrants and the need for ‘a constant flow of fresh talent over the next decade’ (2005). This direct reference to the economic contribution which migrants could make to Scotland might appear to have been a welcome and overt commitment to social justice, but the ‘clash’ here was one of omission. More specifically, there was no mention of how their linguistic needs, and thus the practice which might emanate from these documents: their future learning, employability and life choices, might be resourced and supported.

With the establishment of a rebranded, minority Scottish Government in 2007, a number of new initiatives were developed. ‘Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy’ (The Scottish Government: 2007a) had a direct visual impact: the title text was inclusive, both in terms of language and accompanying photographs, and its depiction of a variety of learners from different backgrounds reflected the aim to ‘promote equal access to and participation in, skills and learning’ (ibid., p.1). Throughout, the document discussed the needs of all adult learners, as well as the associated discourse of migration and employability, within the vocabulary and the principles of the emergent Curriculum for Excellence, thus ensuring its educational ‘currency’:

To build a smarter Scotland we need successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society and the world of work (ibid., p.14 ).

This document was a unique ‘call to action’ (ibid., p. 3) which, however, appeared to attempt the grandiose by echoing the discursive style attributed to the language of St Francis:

- *where we have* issued challenges...
- *where we have said* we will make changes...
- and *where we have indicated*... (my italics)

Its use of personal (‘we’) deixis aims to include readers directly in the discourse, while its use of verbs of intention: ‘we *expect to see* a response’; ‘we *will work with you*’; ‘we *will do this* in partnership’ continues the inclusive rhetoric. This is an example of the function of rhetoric (Elliot: 1984, cited in Edwards et al. 2004: 9) ‘to stimulate imagination, to arouse feeling, and to prompt action’ and situates Allan’s observation (2006: 53) that, in policy, ‘its inherently political nature is downplayed’; in this case, at the expense of the attempt at warm, inclusive language. However, at the same time the language is exclusionary in its repetition of the temporal deixis ‘where’. This neatly circumvents the need for any concrete examples of previous ‘action’, or times thereof, to be given; the reader is thus excluded from any knowledge of what the ‘action’ alluded to in the phrase ‘where we have issued... have said... have indicated’ (The Scottish Government: 2007a) might have been. While such rhetoric, with the hyperbolic national self-confidence situated in the inclusive ‘we’ as well as the exclusionary ‘where’ (The Scottish Government 2007a: 3), might appear at odds with the political thrust of the full policy text, it exemplifies the ‘interdiscursivity’

described by Fairclough (1993: 137), evident in texts which are 'constituted by combinations of diverse genres and discourses' (ibid.). Such 'interdiscursivity' achieves a certain effect, in this case a sense of involvement, on readers even though the text may be exclusionary in practice.

However, its reference to access to 'quality courses in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and improved recognition of existing skills and qualifications' (The Scottish Government 2007a: 14) ensured that adult ESOL education at last became a mainstream concern in Scotland. The country's need for migrant workers, as stated in 2004, was connected with the devolved government's plan to 'reverse the population decline that threatens our future prosperity, through a modern scheme of managed migration' (The Scottish Executive 2004: 1). This was given further clarity and urgency by presentations such as Wright's 'Growing the Labour Force' at COSLA's 'Managing Migration' conference in November 2008, prefacing Ball's observation (2008: 189) that 'Equity issues are very often subsumed within more general policy strategies and are tied to goals concerned with workforce skills, flexibility, efficiency and effectiveness'. This view resonates particularly with the ESOL initiative and its links with Scotland's population strategy, as it had become clear to many employers and policy makers that migration was, and would be, not only beneficial for migrants but for the continued stability of Scotland's economic future. It therefore followed that finance, not education, was at the heart of such directives.

In parallel to, and underpinning, these developments sat the specific ESOL educational context. The 'ESOL Mapping and Scoping Exercise' (The Scottish Executive: 2005) had laid the foundations for the development of 'The Adult

ESOL Strategy for Scotland' (The Scottish Government: 2007b), which was initially welcomed by many in the ESOL profession as a milestone in Scottish ESOL education.

## **2.4 The Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland**

The principal aim of the Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland was to adopt 'a coherent, learner-centred approach to ease ... integration into Scotland' (The Scottish Government 2007b: 3). The learning needs of migrant learners were to be addressed in order to aid their integration for their own benefit but also, as has been discussed, to contribute to the Scottish economy by enhancing its workforce. This policy was the first to influence directly ESOL learning and teaching in Scotland; previously, policies such as those mentioned above had centred on related social and societal issues rather than specifically on learning. Its vision promised 'high quality, accessible and affordable ESOL... in a diverse and pluralistic society' (ibid., p. 4), which aspired to support the learning of migrant learners with the proviso that such learning be 'affordable', a small but clear discursive reference to the importance the government placed on the commodification of 'learning'. Its language therefore may be rooted in 'the discourse of social democracy' (Gillies 2008: 687-8) in its reference to 'accessible...ESOL...in a diverse and pluralistic society' but there is also a further 'clash' with 'the discourse of quality management' (ibid.) in its reference to 'high quality' ESOL learning and teaching (The Scottish Government 2007b: 4).

The strategy document further (ibid.) explains that that 'These language skills are central to giving people a democratic voice and supporting them to

contribute to the society in which they live'. These are aspirations which may sound worthy, but they are reminiscent of Allan's advice (2006: 53) that it is important to notice 'the way in which teachers... and others are constructed through policy'. The discourse herein may appear well-considered, using the language of inclusion and detailing exactly how the learning opportunities, and therefore the lives of ESOL learners, would be supported and potentially enhanced by this policy, but effectively it aims to construct ESOL migrant learners, and their needs, through the discourse and in this sense could be considered as a form of disciplinary practice. Foucault, in his later work, increasingly referred to 'discipline' as 'a power that targets *actions*' (Nealon 2008: 31) 'whose main focus is 'what [individuals] do' (Foucault 1977: 18). Much of this policy text uses the discourse of inclusion, but at its heart there are indications of what is to be *done to* ESOL learners, thus excluding them from any involvement (or 'inclusion') in the intended effects, in practice, of the policy discourses. As such, it is an example of what Berglund (2008: 139) referred to as 'the discourses of lifelong learning which regard individuals as 'docile bodies'. In this instance, it is clear that the discourse may be *regarding* such individuals as 'docile bodies', but it has also become evident, from interviews conducted for and discussed later in this study, that this is not the case.

From the Ministerial Foreword, the objective of the document could be considered as a piece of political posturing: 'We want to attract bright, hard-working...motivated people...to make a positive contribution to the economy and society' (The Scottish Government 2007b: 3); the positioning of these words, with the emphasis on people and skills to support 'the economy' at the beginning of the document, illustrates the intent of a politically youthful

government which 'is determined to improve' the English language requirements of migrants for 'successful integration' in order to 'create a better Scotland' because of the growth of 'our international profile' which requires 'talented people' (ibid.) to make this happen. However, many migrant learners come to Scotland because of political upheaval; they may not be 'bright' or even 'motivated' and are therefore, discursively, excluded from this policy. In this context, Tomlinson's (2005a: 6) view is apposite: that language such as this supports 'human capital' rather than the real lives which individuals will, and do, lead. Such exclusionary language is an example of the 'clash' between what the documents purports to do and what it actually achieves. Much of the discourse is statement-led and repetitive: 'Provision which supports... which recognises... which is high quality'(The Scottish Government 2007b: 5) using short, clipped sentences of a style more suited to the delivery of facts than a thorough discussion of inclusion. The effect produces discourses which function as dictat and could put pressure on ESOL teachers to ensure that any learning which takes place is skills-based and focused on employability alone.

It is language such as this which MacLure (2006a: 9) asserted, "speaks' in [a] particular way', prompting her to add that 'there is no single discourse of policy ... no discourse is monolithic' (ibid.). Such discursive variety is evident in the document as, in the introduction to the Vision Statement (The Scottish Government 2007b: 4), the first reference is to 'growing the economy', reinforcing the market language of the political foreword. This introduction is, however, followed directly by the Vision Statement itself whose language is illustrative of 'no single discourse': its statement that settled residents will 'contribute to society' (ibid.) is preceded by 'high quality English language



provision...to enable them to participate in Scottish life' (ibid.) where, in contrast, the strong, initial position of this phrase within the first sentence ultimately gives the statement a more inclusive, balanced tone. This contributes to the inconsistency of discursive genres within the text and an overall sense of some confusion.

#### **2.4.1 Practical impact: how the policy has worked in the field**

The layers of power within the Adult ESOL Strategy and their potential impact becomes evident in a consideration of the remits of the three working groups set up following the launch and publication of the Strategy in 2007 to develop, separately, a curriculum framework; professional pathways for ESOL teachers; and finance to meet a 'cost-effective' requirement (The Scottish Government 2007b: 12). This covert reference to finance does not sit well with the Strategy's aim to 'provide a blueprint for the direction and structure of ESOL provision in Scotland' (ibid., p. 22) and, rather, in its pursuit of what is 'cost-effective' (ibid., p. 12) resonates with Biesta's (2006b: 169) concern over 'the need to remain competitive in the global marketplace'. It is another instance of inconsistency in the language of the document which betrays some of the power struggles, for example between inclusion and the constraints of finance, discussed within it. All three groups reported not only to the Scottish Government but to ESOL practitioners at the National ESOL Conference in November, 2009, illustrating that as Taylor (1996, cited in Whitty 2002: 19) asserted, 'democracy benefits when politicians, academics, administrators and professionals have opportunities to engage in policy debates ... in a context that requires neither agreed conclusions nor clear decisions'. If 'a first step is often to identify a

single voice to speak for the clients or beneficiaries of a policy' (Colebatch 1998: 34), then the development of 'The Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland' met this guidance; the single voice was in fact multiple: the work of ESOL specialists, whose preparatory document (Rice and Irvine 2005) had laid the foundations for the ESOL Strategy and, thereafter, 'public consultation on the draft strategy was held between July and October 2005' (The Scottish Government 2007b: 7). Marquand (2004: 79) has asserted that historically, 'professionals' impact on the public domain became increasingly ambiguous', but the genesis of 'The Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland' illustrates that the involvement of professionals was vital: it both steered the document in the right direction, that of practical support for delivery of ESOL, and gave an expectation of support for the professional status of its teachers. However, the inconsistencies in discourse therein reflect Humes' (2009) question as to whom the policy discourse serves. Its promise of 'support for the ESOL teaching community' (The Scottish Government 2007b: 22) was initially adhered to, and in this respect the development process appeared relevant to the advice given by Colebatch (1998). Within this process, The National ESOL Strategy policy document may have led directly to an increase in the provision, and initial funding of, ESOL classes for migrant learners, but it also conflated the notion of the potential 'usefulness' of migrant workers, as first addressed in 2004 by the Scottish Executive, in an uneasy marriage with the government's stated aim 'to address the needs of ESOL learners more effectively' (The Scottish Government 2007b: 3). This is an example of institutionalised power operating within discourse. It is issued from a government which fuses outwardly

'inclusive' policy rhetoric while its concerns are more with the specific outcomes of the policy: in this case, that migrants work and contribute to the economy.

#### **2.4.2 Interpellation with policy**

'The Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland' had, and continues to have, a profound impact not only on both my public professional space, but also on my professional identity, in common with all ESOL teachers. It aspired to develop the quality of ESOL learners' and teachers' professional lives and secured funding for continued language learning. In so doing, its aims may have appeared admirable, but the language of learning was enmeshed with that of commerce. It was welcomed, however, by practitioners as an opportunity to change the nature of ESOL practice: there had previously been concern that ESOL learning lay outside the mainstream, and one of the most positive outcomes of the policy was that, as in 2004, ESOL was discussed as a subject in itself; and it was funded, albeit within the confines of what was considered 'cost-effective' (The Scottish Government 2007b: 5). The issues which practitioners had identified in 2005 through public consultation involved them as spokespersons of 'the specialist community' whose 'area of concern' was 'outwith the agency' (Colebatch 1998: 36), and so they contributed to what was intended to be a 'Best Practice in ESOL' framework (The Scottish Government 2007b: 14).

The aims of the Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland to 'promote(s) attainment' (The Scottish Government 2007b: 5), recognising 'the need for an adult ESOL curriculum framework for Scotland' (ibid., p. 12) and 'a coherent framework for ESOL teaching, learning and assessment...fully linked to SCQF and to SQA

qualifications' (ibid., p.13) indirectly led to my secondment to SQA to be responsible for the development of the SQA National Qualification (NQ) ESOL Framework, to my appointment as a member of the Curriculum Framework Group and co-authorship of the resultant Adult ESOL Curriculum Framework. Within these roles I had an opportunity and the associated responsibility to 'encourage curriculum policies that would combat cultural ignorance, ethnocentric attitudes and racism' (Tomlinson 2005a: 192). Tomlinson was referring to curriculum in the broadest sense, but it became clear to me that any positive steps in this area in terms of ESOL could and should have a direct impact on the more generic area of language teaching in Scotland. Developments in the area of ESOL were, therefore, a contributory factor in the development of the Scottish Government's 'Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach' (2012).

### **2.4.3 The issue of assessment**

The statement that 'ESOL learners should be encouraged to work towards the most appropriate high-quality accredited ESOL qualifications' (The Scottish Government 2007: 15) may have 'represented a clear route to an intended future' (Shohamy and McNamara 2008: 89) but, at the same time, this '[illustrated] the peculiar 'power of tests as symbols of success, achievement and mobility' (ibid.). Such a concern, which became my own, is located in Foucault's (1977:191) unease over an examination candidate whom he considers a 'case', who is 'compared with others, in his very individuality'. This view has since been echoed by Shohamy and McNamara (2008: 89), who raised concerns regarding tests and their associated power, viewing them as

'reinforced by dominant social and educational institutions as major criteria of worth, quality and value'. I similarly became aware that the process of assessment may, ostensibly, value and credit success but in so doing it can also be seen to objectify individuals whose self-worth is consequently under surveillance via such tests. Ecclestone and Pryor (2003: 472) voiced similar concerns, adding that 'little is known about the effects of assessment and social processes in classrooms and at home on learners' identity.' This led to my experiencing a feeling of unease as this process of assessment appeared to counteract practitioners' requests for equal access, through existing qualification routes throughout Scotland, and thus to parity of opportunity through progression, for ESOL learners.

However, there have been positive, practical results from the Adult ESOL Strategy's impact in the field of ESOL qualifications. The advice that learners work towards recognised assessment has led to high levels of engagement in and attainment of SQA ESOL qualifications. This is important for equality of access to further courses, and employment, as Higher ESOL is accepted as one of four Highers required for entrance to many universities, while Intermediate 2 can enable access to certain NC or HNC and HND college courses. The external assessment reports available (SQA: 2012, 2013, 2014) confirm that the number of candidate entries for Higher and Intermediate 2 (now National 5) ESOL continues to rise: in 2014 there were 714 candidates for Higher ESOL, 86 more than in 2013, while there were 723 candidate entries in 2012 and 684 in 2011. In 2014, 550 candidates were entered for Intermediate 2 ESOL. Although this number was 148 fewer than in 2013, this may be accounted for by the fact that the new National 5 qualifications to support

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) were launched in 2014, for which 210 candidates were entered for ESOL. Previously there were 786 candidates for Intermediate 2 in 2012 and 776 in 2011. During this time there have been progressively more new 'centres' or educational establishments, such as schools or colleges, entering candidates for these qualifications which is evidence of increased interest, across Scotland, in entering ESOL candidates for qualifications which are recognised by both further and higher education establishments and employers. As such, this is an equal opportunity measure directly attributable to the Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland.

As such, the Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland can be seen as an example of a policy which is rooted in good intention, but lies within 'lifelong learning policy as a form of deliberative rhetoric' (Edwards and Nicholl 2001: 105-6); that is, it is one example of a 'persuasive genre [which is] future orientated and speculative' (ibid. p. 105). Its purpose may have arisen due to a collective demand for equality of access and of opportunity, but its language, which is often 'speculative', remains an example of the layers of power with which migrant ESOL learners are uniquely and regularly assaulted. In its 'refresh' (The Scottish Government 2015: 2), the discourse has altered: the Scottish government will 'continue to aim for high quality...[of] ESOL provision in today's economic climate' (ibid., p. 3); a perfect example of 'the conflation of the language of quality with the language of equality' (Gillies 2008: 690). This problem illustrates a strange but continuing language of education, which aims, ostensibly, to support, but which is rooted in a process of commodification within this particular 'economic climate' (The Scottish Government 2015: 3). Further, it can be taken as an example of how the migrant ESOL learner is

uniquely bound within and by the various tentacles or 'capillaries' of power, specifically those of a linguistic, political, social and educational nature.

## **2.5 The wider impact of policy on ESOL**

A variety of other policies have had an impact on the learning and lives of ESOL migrant learners. Clarke's 'important insight' (in Whitty 2002: 8) that 'educational policy needs to be informed by a sensitivity to the nature of the wider society' is wholly relevant in this context, as core values such as an awareness of the need to support progression, and thus life chances, of migrant ESOL learners, were overtaken in recent years by the global financial crisis and the resulting imperative, in the Scottish government's view, for an education sector to deliver more efficiently. It is this context of financial unease which has also resulted in the prevalence of wider rhetoric around migration in the UK, fed by sections of the media which appear to be informed, in general, by the language of stereotypes rather than facts; this has been particularly evident in the recent rise of UKIP, from 2012-13 and its associated discourse prior to the 2015 general election. For a while, the ESOL context had been gaining momentum, in the form of an educational and inclusive imperative after the dispersal of asylum seeking migrants to the UK, but subsequent events on 9/11 in New York and afterwards prompted a revision of UK government policy which resulted in rigorous new Citizenship laws and an underlying rhetoric of conformity, exemplified by the then-Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown's announcement (2006) that 'people who come into this country should play by the rules...I think learning English is part of that.' Tomlinson (2005a: 193) had already expressed her concern that 'there were no educational

policies designed to counter a xenophobic nationalism... after September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001' and I have congruent concerns around the current context in which the delivery of ESOL is situated and the language often used to describe its learners. Tomlinson's (2005b: 167) warning that 'Exhortations to achieve well and obtain qualifications... are only of use to individuals if there are... educational policies which aim for a... productive life for all' seems even more pertinent as she makes reference to the need for valid and relevant policies which enable rather than restrict opportunities.

Several policies have had such an influence on the lives of ESOL learners, albeit tangentially. Bowe et al. (1994, in Whitty 2002: 21) warned of the 'danger of being captured – or even trapped – by the discourse of marketization' which currently pervades the ESOL college experience; there are demands from college boards of management to attract international and fee-paying students which in many cases then determine curricular content, class sizes and even the selection of students for particular courses.

In recent years, however, policies such as this have, under the direction of successive governments, evolved into specific Citizenship directives. These have a unique yet continuously changing impact on the lives of ESOL learners, as they are framed in language such as 'those seeking British citizenship should show measureable progress in English' (Tomlinson 2005a: 192) and 'with ... the introduction of a citizenship curriculum' (ibid.). The result is that 'Language testers...have begun to recognize and discuss the use of tests by governments as instruments of power, as... tools for setting educational agendas and exerting influence on the political order' (Shohamy and McNamara 2009:1). Once more, Foucault's concern with disciplinary practices,



with the language of power and its impact on education, resound within a consideration of current ESOL practices, particularly around the objectification of the individual in what he considered to be '[production of]... rituals of truth' (Foucault 1977:194). 'It is in this context that the policy of language tests for citizenship, immigration, and asylum' (Shohamy and McNamara 2009:1) are situated in the 'major national issues of migration, globalization, ethnic diversity, and linguistic and human rights' (ibid.).

It is in areas such as this, where rights to Citizenship are aligned with language scores and assessment, that policies such as the National ESOL Strategy are devised and developed; they are moreover, revised, which may prompt further political debate, but this process seems to have had little effect on the various discourses of power used therein. This is evidence that we inhabit a 'culture of distrust... corroding the values of professionalism, citizenship, equity' (Marquand 2004: 3) and its resultant effects on education and, further, on social justice, is an example of where policy can negatively, and even dangerously, affect the progression and life choices and chances of migrant ESOL learners.

### **2.5.1 The dawn of Curriculum for Excellence**

While the UK government situated in London was developing the citizenship agenda arising from The Crick Report (1998), the new Scottish Executive had, from 2002, been discussing curriculum development and potential changes which might benefit education across Scotland. However, this too involved imperatives not solely situated within educational principles, as 'Curriculum for Excellence' (CfE) (SEED 2004: 10) clearly specified 'the need to increase the economic performance of the nation' as one of its driving principles.

Subsequent concerns voiced by educationalists such as Gillies (2006: 25) that “Curriculum’ is notoriously difficult to define’ challenged the foundation of the development.

‘A Curriculum for Excellence’ was devised initially, and principally, for the school sector, but began gradually to influence both theory and practice in colleges and was therefore to affect, in parallel, the learning opportunities for ESOL students. This is an example of the way in which ‘governments declare policies a success and extend them even before they have been evaluated’ (Whitty 2002: 18). The political and educational genesis of this policy initiative arose from the concerns held by many in education regarding the relevance of the existing curricula and assessment system; however, the consultation with ‘stakeholders’ perhaps illustrates that ‘among those prominent in practical policy affairs... professionals are more often than not seen as obstructions to their goals’ (Friedson 1994: 179). There have also been related concerns with regard to the discourse of CfE and its particular vocabulary, specifically with regard to the ‘capacities’ and their associated values: the lines between what is desirable for developing citizens and an attempt at instilling more personal qualities are rather blurred. Indeed, it has been observed that perhaps:

An attempt to marry two different approaches to values education can be seen at work here: on the one hand is the more prescriptive, normative emphasis of ‘character education’ and, on the other, the more open ‘citizenship’ approach. With the former, young people are to be taught certain (national) values; with the latter, they are encouraged to develop their own values... This area of ‘national values’ is fraught with problems. (Gillies, 2006: 32)

The development of 'A Curriculum for Excellence' illustrates 'the policy process as the application of *authority*' (Colebatch 1998: 48), which in this case might refer to governmental dictat. Without continued practitioner engagement it may be very difficult for teachers to feel any 'ownership' of the ensuing institutional or curricular change to which they have had to react. There appear to be prescriptive methodologies which reduce language and the linguistic capabilities of an individual into a minimal amount of competences. This policy initiative may be considered as evidence of change, not evidence of improvement, especially for my professional area. I believe that bilingual and plurilingual young people will be constrained, and possibly undermined, by having their 'Literacy' assessed, perhaps at a very basic level, in English, while they may at the same time have established competencies in at least one and possibly several other languages, as yet unacknowledged.

Priestley's (2005: 29) view is that CfE 'presents greater scope for innovative teaching, flexibility in provision, less overcrowding and a potential challenge to the entrenched subject paradigm' although, in more general terms, 'the extent to which the rhetoric of personalisation is translated into institutional and classroom practices remains to be seen' (ibid.). For many ESOL learners, the experience of more relevant learning and associated assessment could bring an added depth to their experience of living, and of accessing appropriate, meaningful, progression routes to both education and employment in Scotland. However, Gillies (2006: 33) raises a concern specific to 'the multicultural and multi-ethnic nature of Scottish society' and the fear that the 'values' underpinning the Curriculum for Excellence might constitute the 'majority view to be imposed on others' (ibid.).

## **2.6 Conclusion: policy and its effects**

This analysis of policy and its particular discourses has revealed that a policy's stated intention to be inclusive, or to support a particular group, may not, in practice, happen. Rather, such an analysis can uncover a variety of discourses which are enmeshed in the document. These, when examined, can reveal a confusion of aims and resultant practice, as illustrated by an analysis of The Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland (2007b) and its predecessors, where policy which appears to be open and inclusive has been directed and influenced by the language of a particular government at a particular place and time in history, thus locating such policy 'discourse' in a Foucauldian context. It is clear that in this case the 'interests' of the discourses do not always serve their stated beneficiaries, the ESOL learners and the field of ESOL learning and teaching. From this exercise, the discursive intentions of a particular organisation can be revealed and, therefore, an insight into the workings of its specific power.

Fundamentally, this analysis of policy has suggested that the 'modest practical contribution that research offers' (Hammersely 2002: 9) has contributed to the development of policies such as the Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland (2007b) and its 'refresh' in 2015. The necessity of embedding research into the process was summarised by Shohamy (2009a), who explained in a plenary conference address to English language professionals that 'participating, discussing, negotiating and disagreeing can lead to more realistic and successful language policies which are open, dynamic, critical, and constructive'. She continued to advise that 'each teacher is a language policy maker whose voice, knowledge,

expertise and experiences should be incorporated into the act of language policy making' (ibid.).

Ultimately, policies, their discourse and their actions, no matter how well developed they become and whose involvement has shaped them, are only as successful as the discourses and the impact of wider political and global climate will allow. ESOL learners live and learn in a national, but also an international, environment which influences both their language development and each individual's learning goal, so it is vital that policymakers are aware of the global forces which situate and affect learning rather than relying on inward-looking national discourses which may limit learner goals and potential futures.

However, within this context, it is clear that 'any contemporary study of education demonstrates the growing influence of discourse' (Mac Lure: 2003, cited in Edwards et al. 2004: 2); this behoves any educator to be aware of 'the relation... between and among positive forces and capacities' (Nealon 2008: 37). It is these forces which must construct and underpin the policy discourses in order that they affect learners, and their learning, in the most positive way.

## **3. Chapter 3 - Literature Review**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This study, and its analysis of the discourses concerning the migrant ESOL learner in the college sector, spans a number of areas underpinned by the associated literature. The consideration of such literature is important as it elucidates the particular context from which the learning experience of the migrant ESOL learner has arisen and within which it is situated.

The selection of literature pertaining to this study can be categorised into key headings which address the context as well as the ongoing educational debate. These are: ESOL Learning and Teaching; The Locus of ESOL; Professionalism and Professionality; Equality and Inclusion; and Culture and Identity. These areas are wide ranging so it has been necessary to select texts which illuminate and privilege the experience of this particular group of learners.

### **3.2 ESOL Learning and Teaching**

Historically, much of the literature produced on ESOL has been specific to learning and teaching and thus aims to support teachers in their pedagogic practice and to nurture the 'guidance' element of their role. There is a wide array of literature available, from the guidance of Krashen (1981, 1982) on comprehensible input to Swain (1985), Ellis (1993) and Cummins (2001, 2003) on language acquisition, and the analysis of discrete languages and their relevance to the English language by Swan and Smith (2001). All of these authors have shared in developing reflective and confident practitioners to date.

Barton and Pitt (2003) have been critical of much of the literature produced since 1998, but have also signposted other pieces of welcome and relevant research. The following literature, specifically from 2000, reflects the dramatic change in the nature of, and context for, the delivery of ESOL in the UK, and can be considered as an introduction to these issues and their resultant impact on the ESOL landscape. It is this more recent literature, arising from a confluence of national and international political initiatives, which has aimed to support practitioners to comprehend and situate such change within the expanding ESOL context so that they might work to provide language input to support the provenance, language background and associated goals of their learners.

One of the key texts from this period is Cooke and Simpson's (2008) 'ESOL: A Critical Guide' which aims, and succeeds with clarity and currency, to illustrate and inform its target audience of new and existing ESOL teachers of the variety of issues surrounding the teaching of ESOL learners, many of whom are new migrants to Britain. This thoughtful and thought-provoking text succeeds in illustrating and explaining the difficulty of homogenizing one unique 'ESOL learner' at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, given the diversity of learner backgrounds whereby learners, in the words of Ward (2007:17) 'are not a uniform group'. This is resonant of the work of Barton and Papen (2005), and of Ivanic et al. (2006), which both acknowledged the need to integrate language learning with an understanding of learning contexts, as did the work of Cooke and Simpson (2008: 11), who discuss practice in 'interesting times [for] the teaching and learning of ESOL'. In doing so, they situate issues and practice within both the political and the legal frameworks which exist in England and

Wales, and refer to such alien (within Scotland) notions as ‘imposed structures such as a national curriculum for ESOL’ (ibid., xii). However, such decidedly Anglo-centric content ultimately resonates with the Scottish context because of real and shared concerns about how to adequately support the development of language learning where broader issues of immigration, culture and identity influence the learning itself.

In a similar vein, Schellekens’ ‘The Oxford ESOL handbook’ (2007) has emerged from the recent expansion in ESOL provision to support the practice and understanding of a specific group of practitioners. As such, it provides a focus for all ESOL teachers and is informative on both the political and social movement of migrant learners to England and Wales. It is, further, a clear guide to the practice of ESOL while contextualizing its history and provenance which also makes reference, albeit fleetingly, to the Scottish context. Schellekens is currently a key voice in ESOL; her ‘English Language as a Barrier to Employment, Education and Training’ (2001) is the only recent survey targeted specifically at ESOL learners who want to remain and work in the UK and is therefore essential reading for practitioners wishing to understand the potential impact of the Scottish government’s commitment to employability. Her work, then, has not only illuminated the ESOL context, but has signposted other studies internationally which have a particular significance within this developing migrant ESOL context. The work of Dimitriadou (2006) on social capital in ESOL and Nohl et al (2006) and their exploration of cultural capital has also shed light on areas of culture and identity, the key literature on which is considered below. There is, additionally, an interesting body of commentary



arising from the ESOL research forum managed by James Simpson at the University of Leeds.

In parallel, the government-established 'ESOL Scotland' website has collated the research relating to ESOL in Scotland since 2007. However, even here there is little evidence of current literature from Scotland itself: there was small-scale research commissioned by the Scottish Government in the form of a Mapping and Scoping study (2005) as well as an equally small study on online assessment (2008). Both are worthy supports to practitioners as the former provided detailed analysis to inform the subsequent National Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland (2007) while the latter arose from that key document and further centralized good practice, helping to ensure parity of provision across the country. The website also refers practitioners to the body of research from NIACE, which has funded much of the research central to both ESOL delivery and practice. That this body is based in England highlights the fact that most of the literature from Britain concerning ESOL has evolved from the English context, while there is little substantive recent literature on the migrant ESOL learner experience from Scotland.

There is, however, a particular body of work around the area of citizenship, which again has mainly arisen from the English academic context. This illustrates the unique and precarious position of the migrant ESOL learner, by which many individuals see themselves as political pawns in a system in which rules, and indeed laws, are made and changed, then changed again. Cooke (2009) illustrates succinctly the way in which an individual's language development, and hence their opportunity for settlement, is at the mercy of politics; while Shohamy and McNamara (2009) and, further, Shohamy and

Kanza (2009) summarise and illuminate parallel international contexts within the area of citizenship and associated language testing as not only a global practice but of global concern. That this issue is current and of concern to many within Britain is highlighted in Williamson's (2012: 241) reference to the conflation of 'language practices with an exacting model of good citizenship through pervasive testing' and their accompanying and potentially threatening impact on the personal and learner identities of migrant ESOL students. While this body of analysis is invaluable to those working with migrant ESOL learners, it is important to note that, again, no reference is made to the unique Scottish context; only since 2013, and after much negotiation, have ESOL learners been able to use evidence of language progression through the attainment of specific Scottish qualifications which might enable them to access settlement or citizenship.

While such literature examines and situates the ESOL learner experience, so too does the following literature, which might be considered as contingent to, or even as underpinning, such an experience.

### **3.3 The Locus of ESOL**

Lo Bianco (2008) notes that 'When you learn a language well, you engage in the deepest manifestations of a cultural system.' His is a clear voice acknowledging that it is neither appropriate nor wise to separate any consideration of the language learning experience of ESOL students from the situation or context within which that learning takes place. He adds that 'an understanding of the causes and consequences of migration is important for applied linguists and language teachers.' (ibid.). There are echoes in his work

of Tollefson (1995: 2) who insists that 'English language teaching must be examined within the context of the spread of English as a world language', a view which resonates with the need for learners to have sufficient English language skills to enable their progression and allow their mobility within and beyond their 'host' countries.

ESOL and its international partner-in-practice EFL (English as a Foreign Language) is a global brand, and thus the nature of the practice is that it is delivered and supported by research in the medium of English. The literature pertaining to this, exemplified in the careful work of Byram and Grundy (2002), Arndt (2010) and research from the European Commission (2005), illustrates one reason for the advent of large numbers of ESOL learners in Britain: that within this global structure, the marketisation of ESOL, in the guise of EFL, is both prevalent within higher and further education and is, for many such educational institutions, an imperative if they are to remain financially viable. Much of the research within this context, illustrated by that of Tomlinson (2005a: 6), refers appropriately to as 'the de-personalization of people as human beings into consumers, human resources and human capital' where individuals are treated as commodities not only by the vagaries of political processes in their dealings with migrant ESOL learners, but by market forces which trade English as a global lingua franca. Tollefson (1995: 2) insists that 'an understanding of the causes and consequences of migration is important' and such analysis is illustrative of a body of work, from Crystal (2000, 2003) to Graddol (2006), which stresses the need to consider any study of the English language, its teaching and development *beyond* the UK borders. Further, the view is set out that perhaps learners might be better supported, as is posited by

Graddol (ibid., p.118) within the premise that if language practitioners are to support fully the developing language skills of their learners, they must move 'beyond English' as it is 'not enough for the UK'. In other words, that a fully-functioning society in future will require citizens to have fluency in more than 'just' English. This interesting research, coming as it does after the concise and relevant work on English as a global language, has been timely, and was central to the Scottish Government's working group's report (2012) to launch the emergent '1+2 Languages' policy. This proposes a strategy to support language learning throughout Scotland, as 'In engaging with a globalised world young people in Scotland will increasingly need to be able to communicate in more than one language.' (ibid., p.3). What is interesting for Scotland and its language providers is that the document makes no reference as to how additional language teachers might be trained nor local authorities funded to support such an initiative; the resultant and necessary discussion will clearly be vital in supporting the language acquisition of both monolingual, developing bilingual, and indeed plurilingual, migrant and settled Scots.

There is much associated and recent literature concerning language acquisition and development which illuminates the particular position of the migrant learner to Britain, for example MacLure (2004, 2006) and initially Lyotard (1992: 109), who assert that "Basic Language" is the language of surrender and forgetting.' which might appear a rather negative way of explaining that although a migrant might need to begin by acquiring knowledge of the second language, they should never forget their own tongue. More recent researchers on bilingualism from Krashen to Soraci (2010) have echoed the belief that a strong foundation

in the first language is vital for continued language acquisition and development.

Within this context, Tollefson's caveat (1995: 3) that 'English Language educators too often adopt uncritical assumptions about the value of English... that... do not reflect the reality of the lives of many English Language learners' has some resonance, although such apparent negativity could potentially be harmful to the confidence of such 'new professionals' (see below). It may indeed be true that some ESOL teachers' pedagogy is delivered without the necessary consideration of their learners' backgrounds and current context but, in my experience, this is very rare. Tollefson's comment therefore seems broad and simplistic and, as such, has little relevance to the work done by ESOL teachers to ensure that their learners develop sufficient language for survival in a particular community, and for the fulfilment of each learner's individual goal or 'telos', as Foucault would have referred to it.

It is the specific and compelling requirement for language learning for migrants *within* Britain, or more specifically in Scotland, which I believe that this particular literature misses. McPake (2002, 2006) has examined the growth and context of community languages of Scotland, but it would be helpful to have further research on the impact of this, and of associated first language development, on the learning of ESOL. Meanwhile, research from the Scottish EAL Coordinating Council (SEALCC) and the resultant 'Learning in 2+ Languages' document (2005) have been vital in ensuring the continuance of first language development while English is being acquired, thus offering genuine support for teachers resulting in focused language development for many language learners in both schools and colleges.

There is, however, a need to remember what Diken and Bagge Lausten (2005:10) refer to as 'the biopolitics of race.' Their work on the sociology of 'the camps' has been central to an awareness of the reality of many ESOL learners' lives outwith the classroom, specifically their acknowledgement that 'racism demonstrates a 'camp mentality... [and]... translates heterogeneity into homogeneity.' (ibid., p.17), a reminder of the precarious lives and learning contexts of many ESOL learners, particularly as the authors consider that a specific group of migrants, asylum seekers, are often 'held in a position of immobility.' (2005:88). I would add that many migrants have to negotiate the same 'immobility' in their lives, as in some areas there are neither effective social nor educational structures to support them and protect them from the casual and/or institutional racism which can impact on both lives and learning. There is some Scottish-specific literature in this area; for example, the research by Sim (2009) for the Scottish Refugee Council examines issues which have an impact on both the lives and learning of refugees to Glasgow and has added much to the understanding of the perceptions of the migrant ESOL learner experience. Similarly, Hopkins and Hill's (2006) research into the needs and experiences of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in Scotland illuminates not just the lives but the learning experience within the particular college context inhabited by the young learners, and indeed their adult classmates. Marquand (2004: 71) asserts that 'language [is] merely a weapon in the struggle for power' - an example, from this literature, of how language learning, although at times restrictive, can empower learners living in such a society.

### 3.4 Professionalism and Professionality

Within the context of support for the migrant ESOL learner living in the 'host' community lies the literature of professionalism and professionalism, much of which resonates with the unique professional locus of the ESOL teacher.

There is a considerable body of writing on the subjects of professionals and professionalism tracing the rise of the professional worker and discussing the context within which they work. I concur largely with Friedson's work which, though generic in its reference, is pertinent to ESOL in its allusion to 'professionals possessing both knowledge and skills that ... set them apart' (Friedson 1994: 128). This is true of ESOL teachers who have a peculiar professionalism: their knowledge and skills prepare them not only for the pedagogic demands of the job but also for the flexibility required to deal with, for example, the exigencies of continuous enrolment or the unique demands of settlement and citizenship regulation. The need for such varied knowledge does 'set them apart' from professionals with more mainstream roles, enabling them to acquire them an additional 'cultural authority' (ibid., p.9) which must be developed in order to support both the linguistic and educational progress of their migrant learners. It is Friedson's reference to 'a new professionalism' (ibid., p.178), which encapsulates the role of the ESOL teacher as the author expresses a strong 'belie[f] in its value to society' (ibid., p. 200) and a recognition that what this particular group of 'professionals do is of special value to their clients' (ibid.). This is, of course, also true of many other professionals, but in this context the 'special value' is evident as potentially life-changing with respect to learners' access to society. Other research has

produced similar findings but the above is in line with Tomlinson's assertion (2005a: 185) that a 'reappraisal of values and attitudes in education' is required, as well as 'a redefined concept of what it means to live in a British society' (DES 1985a: 8) as this is being done, on a daily basis, by the professionalism and commitment of ESOL teachers.

There is a tangential body of commentary around the associated area of therapeutic education, with which ESOL professionals have been connected due to concerns that some practitioners are 'too' supportive of students. Clegg and Rowland's work on the related area of kindness among teachers asserts that 'kindness in teaching is both commonplace yet unremarked' (2010: 719) while they are 'seeking to elucidate a quality that is already there in good teaching' (ibid., p. 720). It is this 'kindness' which is apparent and bound into the specific and 'peculiar professionalism' to which I referred above, and which exemplifies the 'new professionalism' (Friedson 1994: 178) of the ESOL context.

Tomlinson's comment (2005a: 192) that teachers have a responsibility to 'encourage curriculum policies that would combat cultural ignorance, ethnocentric attitudes and racism' is particularly relevant to this group of practitioners who in Scotland have responsibility of working with the Scottish Government to develop the Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland (2007). This has ensured the development both of learning and of teaching for adult ESOL learners, thus endorsing Friedson's comment (1994: 9) that 'professional elites... exercise the considerable... authority that professions have had in the past' and that they are therefore illustrative of 'professionalism ...being reborn' (ibid. p.179).



The above literature appears to directly contradict other work on professionalism, specifically the central tenet of Marquand's work, in which he insists that we inhabit a 'culture of distrust... corroding the values of professionalism, citizenship, equity' as well as referring to learners as 'only customers' (Marquand 2004: 3). It is evident that rather than working with 'only customers', the practice of ESOL teaching carries a 'belie[f] in its value to society' (Freidson, 1994: 200) which is the corollary of corrosive values and which contradicts, through seminal and specific practice, Marquand's claims.

Marquand continues, referring to the historic rise of the professions, by claiming that 'professionals' impact on the public domain became increasingly ambiguous' (2004: 79). The genesis of the Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland, however, is proof that the involvement of professionals both exists and is vital: it has steered the development of the document which has itself assured continued support for the professional status of teachers. In doing this, ESOL teachers have embodied the continuation of that professional struggle with status which began in education in the 1900s but which has developed, certainly within Scotland, to the point where such professionals have become central to practice which affects policy. This reflects prior work by Colebatch (1998: 36) in which he refers to 'the specialist community' whose 'area of concern' was 'outwith the agency'. In the Scottish context, this can be argued to be illustrated by the grassroots support which has had a viable impact on the genesis of the strategy, evidence that the united body of ESOL professionals became a positive force of 'mobilising authority from outside government' (ibid., p.34), thus embodying Whitty's assertion (2002: 15) that 'understanding the limits as well as the possibilities of action is an essential part of teachers'

professional literacy'. This particular professionalism in practice is summarised by Stronach et al. (2002: 131) who assert that 'professionalism... has to rely, in the end, on positive trust', as embodied by the work of ESOL teachers and their trust in each other but also by the efficacy of the government with whom they have ultimately chosen to work and in whom they have had to put their trust, to the resulting benefit of both learners and the professionals themselves.

### **3.5 Equality and Inclusion**

ESOL teachers' professionalism is evident in their commitment to promoting the work and study choices of their learners, people who will ultimately join 'a future workforce [which] will draw heavily on minority young people' (Tomlinson 2005b: 155). In other words, teachers work to promote equal access for ESOL learners, with their monolingual peers, to the various opportunities which can be accessed through learning. Scotland is an inclusive, multilingual nation which will need migrant learners, as noted and discussed by many commentators. There is much in the literature by Biesta which alludes to this; he states (2006a: 8) that 'education is more than the simple insertion of the human individual into a pre-existing order' but acknowledges that in society 'strangers appear as a problem... that needs to be overcome... by making the stranger similar to us' (ibid., 59-60). This notion, that the 'incomer' should conform to the requirements or even the demands of the majority is at the core of much of the literature relating to inclusion and equality, and the resultant impact on the ESOL teacher who works to effect such inclusive practices is perhaps best expressed by Britzman et al. (2009: 780), who observed 'that giving help to others in need asks a great deal of the helper.'. In order to ensure such inclusive practice in a

school or college, it is often necessary that teachers give more of themselves, an argument in alignment with Friedson's view (1994: 178) of 'a new professionalism'.

The acknowledgement that teachers need to work harder to fill the gap in what is offered within state education is central to the work of Allan (2008) concerning inclusion which, though rooted in special education, sheds particular light on areas of inclusion tangential to the ESOL context. Doughty and Allan (2008: 278) highlight the importance of 'Social capital... as contributing to human capital... thus reducing existing inequalities'. This is a view echoed by Biesta (2006a: 19-20), who recognises that a 'great many potential ESOL students living and working in Scotland... desperately need English language to survive in their daily lives', thus acknowledging the value of ESOL language provision in supporting ESOL learners to access and develop their own social capital and associated goals. Biesta acknowledges that 'much of ESOL education is indeed 'an *economic transaction*', a commodity' (ibid., pp.19-20), but develops this concern to advocate the need for educators to be aware of the 'more ethical and fundamental reasons for education', including, in particular, 'to establish ...a space where freedom can appear' (ibid., p.93), 'where perhaps 'educators can liberate and emancipate their students' (ibid., p.17). It is this lofty rhetoric which I would argue resonates with the practical guidance of ESOL researchers from Krashen (1981) through to Schellekens (2007) and which ensures that both the linguistic and personal goals of learners are developed through good ESOL provision.

The aim discussed above may be a worthy and humane one, but underpinning the literature and its associated discourse of the need for inclusive educational

practices is concern regarding the 'inclusiveness' of the learning experience itself. Bagnall's view (2004) that the ethics of lifelong learning is dubious is developed by Morgan-Klein and Osborne (2007: 5), who discuss 'new patterns of inequality' which are 'not necessarily emancipatory'. They echo Tomlinson (2005a: 4), who asserts that 'despite a rhetoric of 'inclusion' and policies designed to 'lift' poor children out of poverty... the UK... has become one of the most economically unequal countries in Europe'. Gallacher et al. (2002: 496) see this as a challenge for 'the [college] sector... reaching out to those on the margins of society'. The flavour of the views within such literature echo Biesta and his reference to the 'impact of the FE experience on ESOL students in 'a world of plurality and difference' (Biesta 2006a: 54), one that 'makes education an inherently *difficult* process' (ibid., p. 9-10). Perhaps, though, there will never be consensus on this issue, and the role of the ESOL lecturer in the college sector is therefore to assist new Scots in 'how we might understand that world.' (ibid.). Smyth and Kum (2009, 2010) discuss the congruent situation of refugee teachers and highlighted issues specific to their educational context. In so doing, however, they miss the opportunity to make general comments on the lives and learning of the broader refugee community which might be beneficial to practitioners working in that area.

### **3.6 Culture and Identity**

Issues of inclusion and whether or not the current educational provision supports the learner adequately are echoed further in the literature on culture and identity. Many writers have acknowledged that the educational experience of ESOL learners is underpinned by their own language and culture as well as

their developing familiarity with their emergent status and locus within Scotland. At the root of this, for all members of the college community, is the question formulated by Biesta 'of how to live with others in a world of plurality and difference' (2006a: ix). As considered above, this attempt to discuss issues of culture and identity is found in literature with various different focuses, but it has resonances for this educational context in the work of West, who refers to 'the combination of opportunities in a context of fracture and desperate uncertainty' (West 1996: 9). This view summarises the potentially precarious social and associated learning position of the ESOL learner, in which opportunities can exist but only if inclusive practices support and nurture learners and their learning.

This understanding of the place of culture within learning, and of the potential problems for those caught within and between cultures, has been best illustrated in the work of Said who refers (1993: 15) to 'a gathering awareness of... the lines *between* cultures' which 'allow us to discriminate', as 'cultures are humanly made structures... less benevolent in what they exclude and demote', thus acknowledging that any discussion of culture within which learners operate and which they have to negotiate to succeed is a difficult exercise. Some writers in this vein have challenged whether cultures can ever 'exist together in plurality' (Biesta 2009: 13); specifically, Diken and Bagge Lausten (2005: 41) acknowledge the existence of the practice of 'classification of people according to different categories' as well as 'the manufacturing of a large reservoir of cultural imaginaries'. These commentators, though they may be both geographically and chronologically distant from Said, share the same concerns, illustrating the magnitude of this issue; their work illustrates the genuine

problems for educators who are concerned with how best to support ESOL learners in developing language for a future within which they may never have a stable position. MacDonald et al. (2006: 255), in their work on culture, insist that 'cultural frames of reference are... part of their (language learners') potential as intercultural beings', while West (1996:8) notes that 'individuals are involved in a struggle... to build a new identity through... education'.

It is this issue of identity being developed (or not) while negotiating two cultures which has exercised many commentators. Norton (1997: 409) finds the link between 'language and identity thought-provoking and important' while Braidotti (1994: 166), albeit in relation to nomadic cultures, suggested that 'Identity ...is relational', a view which is indicative of the migrant ESOL learner and his or her locus within previous and new homes, as discussed by Derrida (1992).

Within the broader area of 'culture' research and commentary has also been published on the specific culture of learning within which the experience of the migrant learner is developed and formed. The field of Therapeutic Education, discussed above in relation to teacher professionalism, is a topic which also arises in the literature concerning culture and identity. For example, Ecclestone et al. (2010) examine the culture of learning and its impact on learners, developing the work of Ecclestone and Hayes (2009: vii) and their vociferously-expressed concerns about the 'infantilisation of learners of all ages', expressed as 'therapeutic language (ibid., p.20) which, they assert, diminishes learners who already 'have fractured lives and fragile learning identities' (ibid., p.65). This view echoes the more general comments made by West, above, which directly reflect the experiences of many ESOL learners. Such concerns have been developed by Nolan (1998) and Furedi (2004), noting and commenting on

the dehumanising language around learners and the resultant impact on their lives and learning.

Within such work lies the issue of the impact on the learners themselves, on the emergent identities of the learners and indeed on their identities as new Scots.

Bernstein (2000) poses interesting questions regarding the nature of the identities being developed through the curriculum and pedagogic practices, while 'Teachers talk about students gaining ownership of the curricular material, and by this they refer to... personal meaning as well' (Wenger 1998: 201).

Perhaps such debate around culture and its effects within education is connected with a 'failure to develop a curriculum for a multi-ethnic society' which results in 'an increase in xenophobia and racism' (Tomlinson 2005b: 153). It is the power of such literature and its direct association with classroom pedagogy and the lives of learners which can promote debate and therefore inform action and even create change.

Congruent to this, Zetter et al. (2006: 24) highlight the implications for understanding how different social groups form and shape their identities, and thus how learners function within the wider society outwith the classroom or college. Clegg further (2011: 105) examines the 'tensions' originally identified by Crozier et al. (2010) in relation to the development of learner and individual identities. The strength of much of Said's language is evidence of his concern about this issue: he refers (Said: 1993: xxii) to 'newly empowered voices asking for their narratives to be heard.', of 'the wish to... speak freely and without the burden of unfair domination' (ibid., xxiii) and of 'a new intellectual and political conscience' (ibid., xxvii) which 'provoke[s] and challenge[s] the fundamentally static notion of *identity* that has been the core of cultural thought' (ibid., xxviii).

Said's work passionately pre-empts that of Zetter et al. (2006: 23) who offer a discussion of 'the necessity to sustain multiple identities [as] part and parcel of the contemporary social life for migrant groups in an increasingly globalised world', 'a challenge that is perhaps not fully recognised in the contemporary discourse on citizenship and social cohesion as it shifts to a more assimilationist model of integration.'(ibid.). What is interesting, and of some comfort to educators, is that a passionate and detailed discussion is now taking place among researchers and linguists such as Shohamy, as noted above.

Discussions about learning identity are continued with fluency and concern in much of the literature. Crossan et al. (2003: 66) argue that 'learning identities should be seen as fluid or even fragile, rather than fixed and unidirectional', while Gallacher et al. warn (2002: 495) with specific reference to the college context that despite the rhetoric and policies, learning will 'involve significant changes in identity and perceptions'. However, Morgan, Klein and Osborne (2007: 20) dispute this perspective, arguing that [discourses of] 'lifelong learning construct the learner... to reconstitute identities' and dare to posit 'whether or not such identities are desirable', referring to 'identity narratives... in the contemporary workplace and in lifelong learning contexts'. This builds on work by Crowther (2004), Gallacher et al. (2002) and Preece (2000), and echoes Crossan et al. (2003: 66) who 'acknowledge considerable ambiguity and volatility in learner identities'. That this work is not specific to ESOL learners is immaterial: the important element is the recognition that these learners live with continuous 'ambiguity and volatility' with respect to their own identities, so the discussion is illuminating, and also troubling, as it associates more general issues within the ESOL learning discourse.



Field (2009) discusses the notion of the importance of social networks as sources of personal support within the transformative process of learning itself, where 'entering a different culture or taking on a whole new identity... could be experienced as difficult and sometimes even as dangerous' (Barton et al. 2007: 125). This was previously discussed by Gallacher et al. (2002: 499) who expressed an awareness that 'social structures ... shape people's lives' and of 'the importance of structures associated with... ethnicity... [where]... social identities are constructed and reconstructed' (ibid). This viewpoint is interesting when one considers it in the light of Lave and Wenger's (1991) work examining situated learning communities as ESOL learners do not exist in isolation; this literature privileges their particular locus of learning in which ensuring the successful future of their lives and work within a particular community is the prime goal; such literature which reminds us of the role and of identity, however fragile, which is central to the learner's goal or 'telos'.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

Throughout this review it has remained constantly apparent that our migrant learners are living in a society and learning within situations in which 'racism, real or imagined, intrudes at every stage and crossing cultural boundaries can fragment a sense of identity' (West 1996: 15). The literature discussed above is important because it has both situated and informed the discussion as well as raising awareness of the ESOL context. While this area has been illuminated by much of this literature, its resonance has however remained limited, because the literature arising mainly from the English context is either too Anglo-centric

or too generic in its aims, although it has served to fuel debate and exemplify thinking which has added to the discussion and knowledge within the subject field.

Consideration of this literature has shown that there are indeed gaps: there is little from the Scottish research context which directly addresses the migrant ESOL learner experience and this is a weakness, not just for practitioners working in this field but also for the learners themselves, whose learning experience is not currently subject to the same scrutiny as that of their monolingual or English and Welsh peers. Even within the English and Welsh context, discussion of the specific and compelling requirements for language learning for migrants is missing from the literature to date. It is these gaps which this study aims to fill. In considering the specific learning experience of the migrant learner within the Scottish college context, it aims to provide much-needed knowledge both for practitioners and researchers in the wider field of ESOL and thus to improve the experience of these learners and help to overcome the associated challenges.

## **4. Chapter 4 – Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the iterations of the research, explains the specific methodology which informed the process and sets out the theoretical framework which underpinned its development and eventual construction. The entire process has progressed from tentative beginnings through different varieties of both approach and thinking, influenced primarily by the words of the teachers and the learners which were always at the heart of the research. They have thereby contributed to and affected both the shape of the research and its outcome.

Throughout the process of thinking, writing and redrafting, the theories of Michel Foucault have been constants, prompting and steering reflections on the data and the associated discourses. Foucault's theory has not been used 'exactly like a box of tools' (Foucault and Deleuze 1977: 208) but has been the focal point from which the research began and to which the researcher has returned throughout in order to review, grapple with and reconsider the discourses of the participants.

### **4.2 Situating the research**

The researcher's work as an ESOL professional over many years allowed privileged access to the discourses of both learners and teachers, considerations of which consequently permeated my working life. On many

occasions there were points at which I wanted to record their voices in order to analyse and reflect on their experiences. At the time, this was neither practicable nor ethical, given the constraints of an increasingly busy role and an awareness of my professional position and its associated responsibilities, particularly with regard to confidentiality, while I operated as a Senior Lecturer in ESOL.

It had, however, always been my intention that I would later try to help to make sense of the experience of ESOL learners within the Scottish college system, by interpreting their voices and histories both for their benefit and for that of future learners. It was only when I left this Senior Lecturer role that I felt that the time was right. I had left the college yet I had not been wholly separated from the ESOL context. Indeed, although I was disconnected from the research site itself, I was 'emic' yet also 'etic' with fewer 'complex dualities of the research setting and the fieldworker self' (Coffey 1999: 20). I therefore embarked upon a Doctorate in Education as a means of situating my research in the context of my lifelong profession. This research route would enable both the study of the discourses in situ, within the college setting, and at the same time supplement the literature on the experience of the migrant ESOL learner.

Prior to embarking on the Doctorate, my working life had been concerned with equality and social justice and this was, therefore, the standpoint from which any research I undertook would be conducted. My background in language and specifically, discourse analysis, was the area in which I felt an intellectual confidence and from where I decided to proceed. However, I was also mindful that the 'whole research process...must incorporate consideration of different perspectives; different explanations and interpretations' (Evans, 2002: 146),

and that the proposed area of research therefore required to be considered within a broad field. Freire's sympathy with 'the just society, freedom, equity' (in Crotty 1998: 157) underpinned my professional experience and interest, which led to necessity that the study would be a critical inquiry, as no discussion of the migrant learner context could be separated from the college 'community', nor could it avoid addressing issues of equality and equity.

#### **4.2.1 Methodological approach**

Further reading informed the developing research, and throughout this process of consolidating a methodological perspective, I consulted the practical literature on research design and execution, particularly works by Gillham (2000), Denzin and Lincoln (2000), Coffey (1999), Lather (1996) and Evans (2002). In epistemological terms, the study is therefore located within the area of poststructuralist theory; the process and execution has been qualitative, an approach chosen specifically because I believed that the realm of language, so closely linked to an interviewee's experience and identity, could only be examined by means of qualitative research as this enables the researcher to discuss, in depth, issues related not only to identity but, in this instance, to the congruent areas of culture and language. Thus, the study concerned 'the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part' (Fairclough 1996: 24); that is, the specific experience of learners operating in another language (and indeed another culture) was examined through their discourses, and those of the related staff. The case study approach was chosen in order to support this methodology and, thereafter, narrative enquiry was used as a tool in the collection and analysis of the data. Such decisions steered and situated the

research so that it would revolve around the participants' language; would analyse the layers of power evident therein; and so that the work of Michel Foucault would be appropriate as a theoretical underpinning. The study is therefore informed by a Foucauldian perspective in an 'attempt to... analyse the strands of discourse and practices dealing with... knowledge and power' (Rabinow 1984: 7).

The research focus gradually became concerned with the social and cultural implications of learning and with the impact of power relations on the students' identity as learners and their learning context. As the aim was to understand and make sense of the learning experience and its context, the research is situated in the interpretivist tradition. I have always firmly believed in equality of opportunity and of language, and share the concern expressed by Edwards et al. (2004:17) that 'in educational discourses there is often much invested in meeting students' needs... a powerful emotive ring... yet... evidence... seems to be lacking... theoretically'. The purpose of the present research is therefore to provide that 'evidence' by way of analysis and interpretation of the discourses.

By adopting a Foucauldian perspective, the work was firmly located within poststructuralism so that close attention could be given to the ways in which the participants structured discourses and created a shared meaning. Through this process of analysis, 'the research task' was approached 'with greater clarity' (Crotty 1998: 216) in an attempt to understand how 'language is centrally involved in power' (Fairclough 1996: 17). It was also important for me as the researcher to notice what was *not* said, to consider Derrida's attention to 'absence' (Allan 2008: 206), in the form of the aporetic space; in other words, to

try to 'notice' the absences both in the discourses and in the micro-context of the college. In terms of the macro-context of learners' lives, Tollefson (1995: 3) refers to 'state language policies' and their 'rhetoric of "equality" and "opportunity"' which frequently serve to channel migrants and other linguistic minorities into low-paying jobs in the peripheral economy'. This concern is echoed by Schellekens' (2001) research into language and employment and is evidence of the undercurrent (or the 'not said') of institutional rhetoric and even discrimination within which some of the discourse around ESOL learners is framed; it was vital, therefore, to examine how ESOL learners are affected by such influences.

These are the underpinnings of the choice of the research perspective and the reasons why the approach is solidly qualitative. The methodology, a key instrument of the research strategy, took the form of the analysis of relevant college discourses conducted through a variety of interviews, which were semi-structured in form according to prepared questions and prompts. These became a springboard for the selection of extended and personal narratives for discussion in so far as they related to the learning and teaching of ESOL students in the college setting. In this process and setting, the role of the researcher was to be 'situated as witness giving testimony to the lives of others' (Lather 1996: 8).

#### **4.2.2 Philosophical approach: preparing to analyse the discourses**

Foucault's work is of fundamental relevance to the study of the experience of migrant learners in the college sector for two reasons. Firstly, there is a view held by some ESOL practitioners that migrant learners are what Foucault has

referred to as 'docile bodies', who are at the mercy of the power structures within the college and its processes; in other words, they are argued to have no interest in making and taking decisions for themselves. But, an understanding of Foucault's later work enables discussion and clarification of the position of learners in negotiating those practices of knowledge and power. Nicoll and Fejes (2008: 6) state that 'Foucault helps us to 'read it [lifelong learning]... as a mechanism of power whereby the individual governs *themselves* (my italics) within relations of power'. In other words, the migrant learners are actors, and not at all 'docile' in the face of the power at play within the college sector and, as the analysis of data reveals, they contribute both to a definition of both their own learning and, consequently, to shaping the learning and teaching context in which they learn. As Edwards (2008: 25) has clarified, 'In Foucault's terms... those learners are required to bring forth their subjectivities for disciplining so that they can become a particular type of person [and] become active 'subjects''; migrant learners make the choice, albeit one which may be 'required' of them as migrants and potential UK citizens, to be learners and actively involve themselves in the learning process; the fact that learners enter the field of learning and take part in what Foucault would refer to as that particular 'disciplinary' process means that they are 'empowered in particular ways through becoming the subject of, and subjected to, power' (ibid., p.24).

Secondly, as a college lecturer of some experience, I have become increasingly aware that there can be much 'careless and unreflexive language of inclusion' (Allan 2008: 15) within discourses around education. I therefore wanted to ascertain whether there were examples of the rhetoric of inclusion within the data collected and, if so, whether or not this was actively enhancing the



learning experience. I also wanted to determine whether, and how far, the 'inclusive' language of an institution has an impact on a migrant learner's educational experience. Berglund's assertion (2008: 145) that 'the individual subject, of Foucauldian writing, is shaped in and by the truths held within the discourses of which he or she is part' seems pertinent here: in this view, adopted in this study, the migrant learner is at the heart of both the learner and teacher discourses and, as is reflected in the following chapters, both the learner and the learning are shaped by these discourses and any 'truths' therein. It was important, therefore, to consider and interpret the 'truths', or what served as truths to each interviewee, within the discourses and to analyse any obvious, potential impact on the migrant learners and their learning.

This focus on both the students' and teachers' language resonates with the Foucauldian concern with knowledge and being, which, as his work progressed, became refined to become a focus on knowledge and the self, an ontological context within which migrant learners negotiate both their learning and their cultural locus, and furthermore their identities, within a learning context.

Foucault offers a way of thinking about the learning experience of such students and so for this study, his work underpins an analysis of the ways in which the language of the teachers construct the learner, and vice versa. This approach helps to give some insight into the learning and teaching practices, particularly those concerning power, as they govern individuals' learning.

Through this analysis of the discourses, 'the role of culture, power and environment in shaping subjectivity' (Edwards et al. 2004: 68) became evident within each specific linguistic context wherein the migrant learners, through their discourses, were positioning themselves as '*active subjects*' (Edwards

2008: 23). Indeed, they exhibited learner behaviour which could be considered as the antithesis of 'docile'.

### **4.3 Theoretical underpinnings**

In order to support the examination of discourses for this study, philosophers of language and their analyses of language and power were explored in depth. As has been outlined above, the work of Foucault was fundamental to this review. His writing on critical discourse analysis informs the theoretical perspective of this study, especially his work from 1972 -1977 in which he developed his theories of discursive practices.

Fairclough (1989, 1993, 1996 and 2000) sets out a discussion of language, power and the nature of their interlinked and pervasive influence within our society's texts and discourses. The work of Gee (2005) supported the choice of discourse analysis as a tool for the study, as did the range and depth of the current literature on discourse analysis within education, specifically the work of Edwards (2004) and MacLure (2003). In relation specifically to ESOL and its place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the work of Crystal (2003) and Shohamy (2009a) was consulted, particularly with regard to language and identity, and 'issues of how the self gets positioned and situated within social and cultural contexts (Coffey 1999: 13). Their work was essential in considering the unique position of migrant learners within the current global and educational context, and the ways in which such learners' experiences are formed and informed by policy and its associated practices. One key text, 'Foucault and Lifelong Learning' (Fejes and Nicholl 2008), primarily concerns the influence of Foucauldian thought on the college sector. Within this text, Edwards (2008 :22) advises that

'a Foucauldian discourse... defines what can be included and what is prohibited' which informed the selection of the learner which were collated and analysed for the present study. It also prompted an examination of the staff discourses which framed and underpinned the learner discourses as well as the discourses of the individuals wielding the most evident power within the migrant learner context. In so doing, it enabled a more careful and pertinent examination of the interplays of power and its effects, particularly on the learners.

The researcher is in a privileged position within the field of discourse: once an interviewee is willing to speak, he offers his words for analysis, for forensic examination and, potentially, for posterity, too. Said 1974 (1974: 35) explained that 'Discourse is... the organized social ethic of language'; the discourses within this study are from learners who are living in the host community and thus required to assume a particular 'social ethic of language', and also from both teachers and learners who use another quite specific language of 'college ESOL' and its associated 'social ethic'. For this reason, this researcher of discourse in a college Languages department, having prior awareness of the language used by those therein, was aware of a duty to represent the participants and to interpret their discourses with integrity for the benefit of the study, to ensure that neither 'social ethic of language' was misrepresented.

I have been cognisant for many years of 'unequal encounters where the non-powerful people have cultural and linguistic backgrounds different from those of the powerful people' (Fairclough 1996: 47), and my fundamental interests lie in the words uttered, the context in which they are used, and in the people to whom and about whom they are intended. Gee (2005: 21) terms this the 'discourses' and the 'Discourses' at work within the college setting. Not only am

I concerned, then, with the 'micro' discourses, or with the language used to, about and by ESOL learners; I am also interested in how they are situated in the 'meso' context of the ESOL department and in the 'macro' context of the college itself. Gee (2005: 7) observes that 'different Discourses... often influence each other in positive and negative ways' and this became evident from the focus groups when one participant's utterance would be 'picked up' and discussed by another. One of the linguistic challenges the study has faced is that language itself is iterative and this very fluidity can be difficult to pin down.

The study reveals that the choice of language used by some ESOL lecturers and college support staff was surprising, as were the resultant oppositions inherent in the discourses of the college staff and of the students themselves, reflecting the potential dichotomy of working with 'multiple narratives in different registers' (Lather 1996: 1). It is these linguistic oppositions, among and within the discourses of the ESOL learners, lecturers and college support staff, which are of most interest in the study, in tracing the ways in which the nuances of linguistic interaction set the tone for, evidence and, further, create 'senseless misunderstandings that haunt' (Tannen 1990: 13) relationships, within a context in which 'language contributes to the domination of some people by others' (Fairclough 1989: 3).

#### **4.4 Finding Foucault**

In 1982, Michel Foucault posited, in an interview with Rux Martin, that 'The main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning' (Martin 1988: 9). This remark is wholly relevant to a

consideration of the learning experience of migrant ESOL students, which develops into something more than ‘the seductive allure of the learning society’ (Gallacher et al. 2002: 496). For many migrant ESOL students, learning English is a necessity even though it may also be a ‘seduction’, and, indeed, it constitutes a vital endeavour through which they make their way towards the goals for which the learning is a tool or catalyst. Not only are they required to learn, and learn in, a different language, but in so doing they often have to ‘become’ another version of themselves, living and socialising in a new and often alien culture.

Foucault understood that this process of ‘becoming’ is not enacted in isolation; rather, at the core of his philosophy is the tenet that we are all subject to the power struggles among people in organizations, and that ‘power means relations... organized, hierarchical, co-ordinated cluster of relations’ (Foucault 1980: 198), so demonstrating, according to Hutton (1988: 135), ‘how power shapes our knowledge of the self’. This is particularly apt for a consideration of learning within the setting of a Scottish college wherein hierarchies of power can be organic. In a college, such hierarchies are often evident both within and throughout staff and student positionings and relations, but they can also be ‘hidden’ without being any less invasive or powerful. Foucault’s theory on power is that it ‘is relational and discursive’ (Fejes and Nicholl 2008: 6), that it works in a capillary way through and among individuals and the language, or the discursive relations they use with each other. Such ‘discursive relations’ are evident within formal college lectures and tutorials, but are also visible clearly through an analysis of more informal conversations between staff and students. Foucault’s work on power and discourse, as developed from 1972 in ‘The

Archaeology of Knowledge', and his development of the notion that the concept of discourse involved power language and power, is central to this study which references Foucault's lifelong concern with 'understanding how power is exercised upon individuals and how they are subsequently constrained to behave in certain ways' (Allan 2008: 85).

Foucault explained (1982: 208) that:

The goal of my work during the last twenty years has not been to analyse the phenomena of power... my objective, instead,...has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects.

In 'Discipline and Punish' (1977) he made it clear that institutions operate...a microphysics of power' (Foucault: 1984 173-4) and explained that:

This power... invests them [those who are dominated], is transmitted by them and through them; it exerts pressure on them, just as they themselves, in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them.

The earlier work identifies the existing power tensions and that individuals are subjectified and subjugated by these manifestations of power. However, as he states above, those who are subjugated 'resist', just as the students, in an analysis of their discourses, are actively resisting, in constructive ways, the actions which are in the way of their learning and progression. Foucault's later work on the 'Technologies of the Self' offers something different: it develops this theory in a way which enables the researcher to understand how the

learners deal with such 'domination', or subjectification, and how they work through this to reach their goals.

Foucault's earlier theory of this capillary nature of power led me directly to the theory of the 'Technologies of the Self' (1982 ff.) in which it seemed not only appropriate but essential to situate this research, as a key loadstone from which to consider and analyse the discourses at play within this particular college setting. It is his 'conceptual tools' (Allan 2008: 85), specifically his exposition of the core ideas detailed within his 'Technologies of the Self', which were utilised to make sense of the discourses of both ESOL learners and teachers.

Foucault's theory of the 'Technologies of the Self' can be summarised as a series of specific practices through which individuals self-regulate and therefore construct themselves, at least partially, through relations of power. What is particularly apposite to this study is that discourses play a key role in enabling or constraining such constructions. The framework of the approach adopted, then, is underpinned by this theory which has helped to elucidate practices within this specific college ESOL context.

#### **4.4.1 'Technologies of the Self'**

The four dimensions of the 'Technologies of the Self' arose from Foucault's examination of what he termed the 'practices of the self' (1982: 208ff), (1984: 340ff) and (1985: 13). When Foucault began to discuss (1982: 208) 'the way a human being turns himself into a subject', he proceeded to explain the ways in which 'he is...placed in power relations which are very complex' (ibid., p. 209). He later referred in the same work to 'struggles which question the status of the individual' (ibid., p. 211); in other words, he examined how an individual deals

with the layers of power and the effect which doing so has on him or her. He then developed this thinking into a discussion of 'relationships of communication... [which] produce effects of power... such as training techniques' (ibid., p. 218), in which he situated a discussion of the individual and power, and considered the consequent relationship between the two within the field of training or education. This theory was refined further with reference to 'an educational institution... (as) a block of capacity-communication-power' (ibid.), which Foucault summarised as 'blocks, in which the relationships of power are adjusted to one another... [and which] constitute what one might call... disciplines' (ibid., p. 219). In short, Foucault convincingly argued that '(t)he exercise of power...is a way in which certain actions modify others' (ibid.).

Foucault's development of these ideas is significant in itself, as it shows that he had been grappling with these concepts for many years and was gradually refining his theories and assessing their relevance to different realms of human existence. It is, however, within the context of education that the process of such development is given particular clarity and is thus relevant to this study. According to Foucault (1982: 208), it is through the process of education that a learner 'turns himself into a subject'. West later (1996: 9) writes of learners exposed to 'the combination of opportunities... to experiment with who and what they are but in a context of fracture and desperate uncertainty'. Both these examples, as provided by West and Foucault, of the potential transformative nature of education, are particularly apposite when we consider the position of migrant ESOL learners. They are often required to negotiate a new life in another country within the confines of learning a new language, and its



associated social ethics, in order to access any new structures or even opportunities within a community.

The new, social context of potential 'opportunities' can be considered rather differently when one remembers the associated power relations involved in the learning, for the learners are often at the centre of these relations of power, which may 'discipline' the learner and his learning by a variety of 'blocks,' as described by Foucault above, which learners must negotiate, as active subjects, if they are to be successful. Foucault's reference (1982: 211) to emergent 'struggles which question the status of the individual' are wholly pertinent to a description of the migrant learner's progress within the 'regulated and concerted systems' (ibid., p.218), in which migrant learners find themselves. Such systems may be particularly difficult to access or understand because the language in which they are relayed or conducted is not the migrant learners' own, and is therefore one example of the 'struggle' they face.

Foucault (1985: 25) situated a later exposition of this theory in a discussion of 'morality', to which he referred as 'a set of values and rules of action... recommended to individuals through the intermediary of various prescriptive agencies such as... educational institutions'. He had already discussed (Foucault 1982: 219) such rules of action for these 'relationships of power' in the form of a series of educational 'blocks' (ibid., p. 218) or 'whole ensemble of regulated communications' (ibid.) which all learners must negotiate if they are to progress. Foucault developed this theory, in which both values and rules are prescribed to individuals, within a consideration of 'the real behaviour of individuals in relation to the rules and values... the manner in which they obey or resist an interdiction or prescription' (1985: 25). Markula (2004: 302)

subsequently develops this analysis and refers to Foucault's Technologies of the Self as 'practices of freedom that are characterised by ethics of self-care, critical awareness, and aesthetic self-stylization'. In so doing, he summarises the ways in which migrant ESOL learners manage and construct their own learning and progression within the practices and discourses which may challenge their development, and progress, as learners. This is central to any consideration of the migrant learner experience and is an underpinning idea of the present research: that migrant learners are not 'docile bodies' but, in reality, that they are focused individuals who are capable of self-formation and even resistance, as evidenced by the learner discourses presented in the following chapters.

Foucault advised that 'one must determine how... individuals conduct themselves in reference to a prescriptive system' (1985: 25 – 26). He summarised this process as 'the morality of behaviors (sic)', explaining that 'with regard to a code of actions... there are different ways to 'conduct oneself... to operate... as an ethical subject of this action' (ibid., p. 26). This reference to the individual as the 'ethical subject' is central to his theory, within which he continued to exemplify the progress of the individual, focusing, in 1985, on marital partners and fidelity. This development in his thought may seem to have drifted from the previous close relevance to migrant learner progression, but his careful exposition enables the researcher to make parallels with any 'real behaviour of individuals' (1985: 25). His references to 'the prime material of moral practice' (ibid., p. 26), to the eventual 'telos' and the 'action' and 'the place it occupies in a pattern of conduct' (ibid., pp.27-8) can be used to situate any experience which is self-motivated, iterative and ultimately transformative.

By locating his initial exegesis a discussion of the Greek '*techne tou biou*' or, 'how to live', and asking: 'which *techne* do I have to use in order to live as well as I ought to live', Foucault (1984a: 348) situated the 'Technologies' within larger question of existence, and more specifically within the realm of a disciplinary structure'. Foucault continued: '[What] fascinates me... [is] the idea... that ethics can be a very strong structure of existence... within a disciplinary structure.' (ibid.). Again, this theory is a solid basis from which to begin a consideration of the migrant learner experience in terms of Foucault's 'Technologies of the Self'.

The four stages of Foucault's 'Technologies of the Self' are as follows:

Determination of the ethical substance, which is 'like the material that's going to be worked over by ethics' (Foucault 1984a: 353), refers to an individual's choice of a particular 'part of himself' which needs to be developed 'as prime material of his moral conduct' (Foucault, 1985: 26). In other words, this stage concerns the personal response of the individual to the set of 'rules and values' (ibid., p.25) to which he or she is subject. Each individual recognises what needs to be done within such rules or codes in order for him or her to be an ethical person.

The mode of subjection refers to the way in which 'people are invited or incited to recognise their moral obligations' (Foucault 1984: 353) or the way in which a person recognises the challenges which might limit his progress: how an 'individual establishes his relation to the rule and recognizes himself as obliged to put it into practice' (Foucault 1985: 27). In other words, the individual becomes aware of his or her position within the existing structures and sets out

what the areas of tension or issues are which have to be overcome if he or she is to become an ethical being. What particularly interested me was Foucault's reference to 'the attempt to give your existence the most beautiful form possible' (Foucault 1984: 353), an idea which resonates with a student's motivation to acquire and develop their English language skills to make his life better and more fulfilled, whatever the barriers to doing so may be. This links with the third aspect, what has to be 'done' to overcome the barriers, as follows:

Self-practice or ethical work refers to 'the means by which we can change ourselves in order to become ethical subjects... how we work on this ethical substance' (ibid., 354). This stage is concerned with how the individual's behaviour might be changed 'not only in order to bring one's conduct into compliance with a given rule, but to effect transformation of oneself into the ethical subject of one's behavior' (Foucault 1985: 27), so that the individual becomes what he deems to be 'ethical'. In Foucault's exposition in 1985 he refers to 'sexual austerity... practiced (sic)' but this, in his earlier reference to the educational context, can equally be practised 'in the form of a relentless combat whose vicissitudes... can have meaning and value in themselves' (ibid., p.27). In other words, having become aware of *what* he or she has to negotiate within the 'mode of subjection', the individual can then set out what they have to *do* to negotiate a *modus operandi* through the strictures inherent in the values or codes.

The Telos is the 'end point', or 'the kind of being to which we aspire' (Foucault 1984a: 355). It is a conceptualisation of that which the individual wants to achieve by virtue of following the above stages. It 'commits an individual... to a certain mode of being... characteristic of the ethical subject' (1985: 28).

Foucault made it clear (ibid.) that this end point marked ‘the establishing of a moral conduct’ (ibid.) or a point at which the ethical conduct had been set, and the goal met. He refers (ibid.) to ‘a perfect tranquillity of soul’ or a point at which the individual is at peace by virtue of the work done to arrive at this point.

These four strands can each be seen operating within the ESOL learning and teaching context. Foucault wrote (1984a: 364) that ‘no technique... can be acquired without exercise; neither can one learn the art of living, the *techne tou biou*, without an *askesis*... a training of oneself by oneself’. Such ‘training’ would seem to me to be the equivalent of a migrant learner negotiating the learning process and context, wherein he or she is ‘worked over’ (ibid., p. 353), and moreover they must work on themselves to understand and carve a role within a new society and culture, through and beyond any challenges of discourse and practice in the college setting. In this way the learner is re-learning the *techne tou biou*, the ‘art of living’, making a better life through the learning of a language which will enable them to take their place in the new society in which they have come to live. This echoes Foucault’s (1988: 18) theory that the Technologies of the Self:

permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality.

This ‘determination of the ethical substance’ is the core or impetus of an ESOL learner’s drive to learn English; that is, to progress through language learning to

take their rightful place as a citizen in this 'new' society. Specifically, in terms of this study, progress from such a 'determination' is made within the ESOL department of a particular college in Glasgow, Scotland, which has been chosen as the site of the research, but thereafter, a student's 'place' could be taken in any society around the world where English is useful or required.

For such a language learner, the 'mode of subjections' are myriad and can be related specifically to the way an ESOL learner negotiates their place within the 'ESOL' learning environment. The language itself has to be learnt, but in addition the mores and the culture of this society must also become familiar, a process which in itself is an example of an 'attempt to give your existence the most beautiful form possible' (Foucault 1984a: 353). The learner, through the learning of this 'host language', aims for a new and best-possible 'form' with which they can access their hoped-for new 'existence'. In addition, the ESOL learner has to learn and work through, as 'modes of subjection', the overt and covert discourses and their related power structures within the college, which may be reflected in the microcultures and attitudes within an already-established 'norm' of Scottish education. Many learners also have to try to make progress in their learning while confronting a personal 'mode of subjection': for example, the age at which he or she begins learning the new language may inhibit or stall the progress required by the UK Home Office. Many experience intense personal feelings of pressure to succeed, which are related to the additional stress of having to provide for a family, which can delay or even prohibit language learning, despite a desire 'to live as well as I ought to live' (Foucault 1984a: 348) within a culture which may or may not be welcoming. Finally, there is the looming presence of the Citizenship Test which,

for many migrant learners, is the ultimate goal; this can, however, be a further, albeit final, 'mode of subjection' as well as an additional disciplinary practice which has to be overcome if the 'telos' is ever to be reached.

Such progress, which can be halting on the part of some learners, is supported, in turn, by 'self-practice or ethical work' which ensures that the ESOL learner works through their language learning, and behaves, to assimilate not only their learning but also their *identity*, in order to conform to the expectations of 'the mode of subjection' required to live in the new society. As Foucault explains (1984a: 369): 'Techniques of the self can be found in all cultures in different forms'; accordingly, each migrant learner, no matter their origins, can only fully access society by progressing through levels of English and passing the required qualifications. They must formally prove themselves to be an acceptable user of English to secure a job or, potentially, Settlement or Citizenship. At the same time, through the nature of their new learning experience and participation in the culture of the college, the learner is involved in:

certain discourses of lifelong learning... to become an active subject of a particular sort, one for whom care of the self – the ways in which we conduct ourselves – through the technology of learning becomes an expression of self-discipline (Edwards 2008: 24).

A learner who negotiates the varied 'modes of subjection' by way of this new language has joined the process of becoming an 'active subject' through their own 'self-practice' or, as Edwards explains, the way in which he conducts himself. In other words, they engage in the learning and the learning culture

and work through the modes of subjection to their goal; they are not, therefore, simply a 'docile body' upon whom the learning is enacted.

For most migrant learners, as the following chapters will further demonstrate, the 'telos' or 'end point' is the goal of acquiring the required amount of the new language which will allow progress within society, through finding a job and building a new life. For many, however, the requirements of the Citizenship Test represents the final 'telos': a point reached by one's own 'ethical work', during which many of the 'modes of subjection' have been overcome, and which will lead to full membership of the host community. For migrant learners, after the 'self-practice' required of an migrant learner in the college sector, it is to be hoped that the learner will, at last, find 'a perfect tranquillity of soul' (Foucault 1985: 28) through attainment of an individual 'telos'. Foucault asserts (1984a: 369) that 'discourse plays an important role... in the very rich framework of the practices of the self', and this is reflected in the learners' discourses recorded by this research, particularly in relation to issues of progression and learner identity in the pursuit of these 'teloi'. As Allan (2008: 85) has observed:

'Foucault's ethics allows us to envisage individuals as capable of transgression, enabling them to... find new selves, new ways of being in the world.'

Just as the development of the 'Technologies of the Self' has clear relevance to the experience of the learners as research subjects, so they are also relevant to an analysis of discourses of the teachers and of the wider college staff.

Fundamental to an ESOL teacher's role (and indeed that of any educator) is the 'determination of the ethical substance', however it may be articulated. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982: 256) note that 'Foucault... shows that care of the self was not focused on desires and their truths but on social acts'; a 'determination of



the ethical substance' can be interpreted as being expressed within 'social acts' such as those which advance learning, within the field of education.

As an example, different motivations for this profession and its associated practice were described by the teachers interviewed for this study. It was therefore appropriate to refer to the 'Technologies' framework to analyse the process by which the ESOL teachers negotiate a variety of 'modes of subjection' to arrive at their own 'teloi', as discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. Essentially, the framework of the 'Technologies of the Self' can be considered relevant to a discussion of the discourses of those whose practice includes teaching and supporting the learning and progress of migrant ESOL students. Having determined their 'ethical' substances', the teachers deal with the various 'modes of subjection' experienced within college ESOL through their own particular 'ethical work'. It was found that the staff interviewed for the present study believed in their work because they felt they were becoming 'the kind of being to which we aspire' (Foucault 1984a: 355); in other words, they were aspiring to a 'telos'.

In this way, the chosen approach enabled me to access the discourses of both the learners and the teachers. Three key themes emerged and evolved during the interviews: that of the role of the ESOL teacher, the place of ESOL within the wider college, and the associated issue of assessment. By underpinning this research in Foucault's work, I was able not only to frame the research but also to analyse my own assumptions within such an approach.

## 4.5 Foucault and the disciplinary nature of power – the examination process

One of the key issues arising from the analysis of the teacher discourses concerned assessment as a perceived mode of subjection. Lecturer concerns about this possibility were voiced as ‘problems around assessment in ESOL’, and were discussed within the data collected. Some of the data required a more conventional Foucauldian analysis to demonstrate the way in which students were disciplined through the examination process. This particular strand of discourse was situated within the framework of Foucault’s theory on the disciplinary nature of testing or ‘the examination...a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify, and to punish’ (Foucault 1984a: 197). He considered this a unique example of power-in-action, within which process the student is objectified, rendered ‘docile’ and ‘legible’ to authorities (ibid., p. 199). Foucault’s language, and in particular the reference to what he considered to be a form of social engineering masquerading as one of the fundamentals of the education process, is both concerning and illuminating. More recently, MacLure (2006a: 4), referred to the content and practice of assessment in both external and internal assessment, commenting that learners are:

Work[ing] from packages that specify objectives for every activity; how long each activity should take (to the nearest minute); its position and reference number within a nested structure of sessions, units and modules; and which actions to perform... In many cases, the trainer or practitioner will even be told *what to say*.

Maclure's position is evident from the structure as well as the content of the text: she piles concern upon concern and ends by placing stress on the 'even' and 'what', thus clarifying her difficulty with the nature of the process. She is concerned, principally, with the pre-determined nature and the rigidity of the nature of assessment, and in this respect there are echoes of Foucault's concern over the power structures which depersonalise and lead to rigid hierarchies, themselves objectifying and even depersonalising the 'candidate'.

Assessment in Scotland from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present has been a blend of internal and external assessment intended principally to enable rather than to hinder learners' potential success. Indeed, qualifications in ESOL were developed in Scotland in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century with the intention to enable rather than to limit options for ESOL learners. There was a perception that the current Cambridge qualifications, for example IETLS with its two-year 'shelf-life', as well as the perceived Eurocentric focus of most existing ESOL qualifications, did not offer an assessment route for migrant ESOL learners which ensured equal access to progression with their monolingual peers. However, from the Foucauldian perspective which shapes and informs this study, the voices of the ESOL teachers pronounce assessment an example of what I interpret to be a 'disciplinary technique', but there is a conundrum in that this is discussed as an enabling practice within the learner discourses. It is within this context, in which assessment can be considered a disciplinary practice while examination success is a requirement for learner progression in Scotland and globally, that the discourses of the teachers were examined.

## 4.6 The research design

### 4.6.1 The pilot interview

The research began with an initial pilot interview which raised some interesting issues and influenced the design of the eventual study. The questions were intended to be open-ended at this stage in order not to limit the responses of the interviewee, in this case the ESOL manager in a Glasgow college. The intention was that responses would arise which could be analysed from a Foucauldian perspective as a preliminary to the analysis of the research data.

The questions were as follows:

1. How many ESOL learners do you have?
2. Where are they from?
3. Can you tell me about the provision for their learning?
4. How are these students supported outwith the classroom:
  - by ESOL staff?
  - by staff in the wider college environment, ie by Student Services?
5. What support is there for progression from ESOL?
6. What do you think has been the impact of the ESOL learners on the College as a whole?

It was evident from the responses that capillaries of power, as discussed by Foucault and represented by this individual and his language, existed within this college. This was significant in terms of the planned study as it was immediately evident that discourse surrounding migrant learners is not 'context-free'. The responses also helped to frame to subsequent questions for the thesis; for example, the first question, above, was answered with an automatic, 'managerial' response which was both factual and accurate and which steered the eventual 'open-ended' question formation for the research study. When asked about support for students, the interviewee made it clear that 'ESOL staff deal with purely ESOL' and advised that Student Services should be contacted. The manager clearly did not know how learners were supported beyond the ESOL classroom. This response, in its insularity, also helped to frame the questions for the wider college staff as it was decided to ask about collaborative practice in order to gain an understanding of the support for the wider student experience.

The responses to the pilot interview were also interesting discursively: the interviewee's language became less assured at certain points in the conversation; there were numerous meaningless phrases as 'fillers' and the sentence structure and discreet clauses began losing their fluency. There was a deep-seated, unspoken negativity emphasised by his light-hearted language: that the interviewer should speak to 'the neds'; should use a 'hidden camera'; there was no hesitancy, which may have indicated some concern, that the students were being referred to in blunt, racist language in the lifts; instead, the interviewee was composed and his language factual. The effect of the interview was to reassure me, as the researcher, that research into the experience of

migrant ESOL learners was vital. This ESOL programme, as described by its manager, was an example of how a variety of strands of power coalesce to affect the learning experienced by migrant ESOL students, and further research could offer findings for a wide discussion with the ESOL profession.

The result of this pilot interview influenced the research for the thesis in two ways. Firstly, there was a recognition that the theoretical underpinning would have to be clear, that there would be a requirement for the theoretical Foucauldian 'foundation' so that any resultant findings would not simply be the opinion of the researcher but would be located within appropriate, relevant theory. This was necessary because of my own link, as researcher, to the ESOL field which ensured that this basis in theory would help to underline my own objectivity. In addition, I recognised that the theory would explain any negative and positive findings from the study so that the results from the research would have credibility within the ESOL community. Secondly, it also resulted in a focus on one college, rather than two, as had been the original plan. The amount of information gathered from this pilot, in itself a short piece of discourse, made it clear that the initial plan of researching the learning experience of migrant ESOL learners in two colleges could result in an unwieldy amount of data collected or, perhaps worse, a 'surface' analysis of that data. It was evident that a detailed analysis of both learner and staff discourses could better be produced from data gathered from one research site and that this could be discussed in full within the word limit required of the thesis. This would enable me, as the researcher, to analyse each interview, in detail, within this Foucauldian framework and to comment on related issues arising from the data which directly reflected and informed the learning experience of the migrant

ESOL learner. It was intended that this approach would be more likely to engage the ESOL community in a discussion of the issues arising from the analysis of the discourses within a context which they understood. The decision to concentrate on one city-centre college influenced the choice of the research setting which is described in Chapter One.

#### **4.6.2 Research aims and questions**

Once the ethical clearance and approved access to the college ESOL department had been confirmed, the research questions were reviewed, but were to undergo at least two further iterations; their final form is outlined in Chapter One. It was also at this point that the case study approach was decided upon as it offered scope to discuss the wealth of participant data in enough detail as well as the study's location in Foucault's 'Technologies of the Self'. It was clear from the pilot interview that any notable data collected could be further discussed with individuals or groups of learners in order to get to the heart of their discourse, and that the collective, and collected, discourses would thus constitute a narrative enquiry.

#### **4.6.3 The participants (see Appendix)**

The recorded data consists of interviews with six ESOL teachers from an initial focus group and from two separate, individual interviews with ESOL lecturers carried out thereafter along with one with the Senior Lecturer and another with the Head of School. Three members of Student Services staff were also interviewed to examine the support 'surround' available for ESOL learners. In addition, three focus groups, two each of Advanced and Intermediate level learners were interviewed, and four individual learners at Advanced level were

then interviewed. Throughout, it was vital to remember that learners were discussing their learning in the 'target' or their 'other' language and it is for this reason that ESOL learners who already had a strong foundation in English, were chosen, from Intermediate (or SCQF 5; SQA Intermediate 2 level) or above. As an experienced ESOL teacher I was aware that the learners would be able to interact well with this level of English, and that I would also be able to recognise anything unusual in terms of the fluency and fluidity of their language on which I might choose to comment.

The participants were anonymised throughout the research and data gathering process. Each was given a Roman or Greek 'alias' which continued the link to the Classical world initiated by Foucault and his location of an initial discussion of the 'Technologies' in ancient Greece. The participants' names, and often their gender, were changed so that they could not be identified, as it was vitally important to preserve their anonymity because of the nature of the discourses in which participants were often candid. All the study participants, whether they were ESOL learners, teachers or support staff, were asked open-ended questions, as the interviews were structured in order to represent each authentic voice and experience, reflecting 'how... research and textual practice [can] construct, reproduce and implicate selves, relationships and personal identities' (Coffey 1999: 1). In this way, both the ethics of the researcher's position and the importance of accuracy in presenting the individual narratives were respected in an 'attempt to ... analyse the strands of discourse and practices dealing with... knowledge and power' (Rabinow 1984: 7). At the same time, the awareness was maintained that language learning itself is bound up



with issues of identity, so the researcher had a duty to both question and represent the ESOL learner participants with integrity.

#### **4.6.4 The interviews**

The interviews forming the data collection stage of this research were conducted with Foucault's commentary on power in mind, and specifically, his 'Technologies of the Self'. Foucault was 'interested in 'how power relations have conditioned, invested and fabricated specific human experiences' (Deacon 2002: 90). The choice of the semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to examine the locus (that is, the college itself) as a case study, but also to separately analyse the discourse of the interviewees. All the participants shared a desire either to learn or teach ESOL; for some this was an imperative required by the government, as stated in UKVI documentation. Thus, the research was situated practically in that the discourses were recorded from a single context, and methodologically, as the participants' language was considered and interpreted with an awareness of the capillaries of power within which they operated. The research sought to draw an understanding from these commonalities, while still being mindful of Lather's 'struggle' with 'the ethics of reducing... people's lives to analytic categories' (Lather 1996: 8).

The interviews were all recorded over a period of several months at the college itself, in the normal working environment for both the staff and learners who participated. It was important to put each participant at ease in their own learning and teaching habitat and thus it was ensured that individuals were given space and time to reflect and to answer questions fully in order that they could be represented accurately. Each interview was conducted in a

professional but friendly manner, and eye contact with the interviewees was maintained throughout. It was essential that the researcher-interviewer was not perceived as threatening, so I behaved with respect for individuals, institutions and the discussion which developed, mindful of Crotty's advice (1999: 40) that 'The onus is firmly upon us to initiate a working rapport and level of trust'. I sought, therefore, to be flexible and spontaneous in terms of the lines of the enquiry I followed, based on the set of questions I had constructed, and further, as recommended by Mason (2002), the semi-structured interview allowed me the flexibility to respond to, and to question further, the interviewee as appropriate.

In practical terms, there were some delays in arranging interviews with the staff and learners at the college. I was however able to request initial access to the college during the first phase of my timetable which allowed some flexibility and so ensured that any further time required was subsumed into the timetable. I often found it frustrating that I was not 'in situ' and was therefore unable to approach lecturers or students to further probe a moment of epiphany, that awareness which allows an individual, to suddenly 'see through' a difficult idea or process. My initial pilot study had already alerted me to how flexible and available I had to make myself if I was to collect and collate the data. I became aware that however busy I was, the interviewees were offering me a 'slot' in their own lives. I had therefore to ensure that I did them justice, not only by presenting their words for analysis, but by giving my time to them whenever it was convenient for them. I was welcomed, without fail, by the members of staff within the college and given access to both colleagues and students, for which I remain grateful.

I made sure that I was as unthreatening a researcher as possible: I dressed with decorum, given that many of the learners were from particular religious backgrounds and made sure my manner was relaxed while I was aware that as an ex-teacher who, by design, knew none of the learners, I remained in some position of privilege as I conducted the interviews. Initially I liaised with the teachers but on several occasions after I had interviewed a participant I would ask to return to speak to her or him at length, listening to and recording as unobtrusively as possible the words of these mainly non-white and non-fluent English speakers who were doing me the honour of being my main data sources. I felt that I was the embodiment of a particular and alien capillary of power but this made me, rather than uneasy, even more mindful of the responsibility I had to record and interpret the discourses accurately.

#### **4.7 The data analysis**

I began to analyse the data as soon as I received it, because with my initial tight timescale, I knew I had to be organised. I also realised that I needed to adjust my interview plan when I felt it necessary to pursue a particular 'line', in order to question further and to collect additional data. I listened to the recorded data repeatedly, noting emergent themes and issues, the lexis, and, where relevant, any interesting syntax, elision, tone and pronunciation which was of particular interest or which illuminated the participant's discourse.

The fundamental concern once I started to analyse the data was that readers would understand the analysis within the chosen Foucauldian context. It had taken me so long to grapple with Foucault's theory, specifically that of the 'Technologies', that I had to make sure that my analysis of the discourses, as

situated within this framework, was clear and viable. I was, however, convinced of the resonance of this theory with my own work; I knew, from Foucault's own reference to both 'rules of action' and 'educational institutions' (1985: 26), that this was the locus for the research which I had been looking for. One of the difficulties is that Foucault's own examples are rather obscure, and finding viable parallels with the migrant learner experience proved challenging at first. I did wish, however, that he had further elucidated his theory and was therefore frustrated that references to such phrases as 'the contradictory movements of the soul...the prime material of moral practice' (1985: 26) in his exposition of 'the ethical substance' might have been clarified further. This problem however, encouraged me to locate and refer to Foucault's earlier work, discussed above, which instilled confidence that the research was firmly situated in the framework of 'The Technologies of the Self'. My work is therefore proffered with sincerity and a respect for, although some frustration with, Foucault's exegesis.

In order to do justice to my methodological perspective I considered the theory of the 'Technologies of the Self' in detail and, at the same time, made decisions on the application of this theory to the specific context of the migrant ESOL learning experience. I had already found comfort in the fact that Foucault himself had made reference to the educational context, which was taken as proof that this research was not abusing either his philosophy or the associated intention. When I analysed the notion of the 'determination of the ethical substance' (1985: 26) it seemed appropriate, given Foucault's reference to 'the way the individual has to constitute ...himself' to connect this with what exactly the migrant learner has to *do*, how he has to *behave*, to ensure the 'prime material of ...moral conduct' (ibid.) or, in this particular case, the best way of

focusing on his learning within this particular college, in the form of his *ethical practice* of learning and progression.

Once I had analysed how such a learner operates within these ethics of practice it was easier to situate the learners, and indeed the teachers and their associated educational practices, at the centre the remainder of the theoretical framework. Therefore, I found it reasonable to situate the learner within 'mode d'assujettissement' or 'mode of subjection': this was what learners have to negotiate to progress through the various evident and hidden capillaries of power within the college in order to 'establish his relation to' such 'rule(s)' and, perhaps more importantly, '*recognise himself* as obliged to put it into practice'. In other words, Foucault was aware that any such practice embraced and developed an individual's self-awareness or identity, which was exactly what I had observed to be happening with migrant learners. Such personal development can only be effected through 'travail ethique' or 'ethical work' (1985: 27), a notion which was particularly illuminating with regard to ESOL learners as they 'attempt(ed) to transform (them)selves into the ethical subject' or, more specifically, tried to deal in a variety of ways with potential obstacles to their learning and progression, identified as 'modes of subjection'. These efforts lead to an individual's 'telos' which 'marks a stage in life, a possible advancement in its continuity' (1985: 28) which, in this case refers to the goal or end-point of all the work, or ethical practice, a learner does to effect the desired change in his life or circumstances.

The analysis of the notion of 'telos' became particularly illuminating in connection with my interpretation of the staff discourses as it enabled me to return to and reconsider the practices of the self in order to understand not just

the potentially transformative nature of the ethical practice but also some of the 'problems and difficulties' (Foucault, 1985: 13) that Foucault might have experienced when developing this theory. This analysis is offered in more detail in relation to the learner and staff discourses which form the basis of the following chapters.

## 5. Chapter 5 - Examining the Discourses of the ESOL Learners

### 5.1 Introduction

Fundamental to understanding the migrant ESOL learner context is awareness that 'what all [learners]... share is a desire to learn English' (Schellekens: 2007, xi). For most learners, achieving this enables them to take an active part in their 'new' English-speaking community. As Ward (2007: 31) has noted, 'learners rarely want to learn English for its own sake, but [as]... a tool to enable them to do something else', and it is evident in this study that learners who may have an existing command of or even facility with the English language are often required to extend their language skills in order to find employment or to pursue further study. Thus, competency in English language offers a direct route to advancing in their profession or to finding alternative employment.

However, as the following discourses will illustrate, within this context migrant ESOL learners are subject to layers or capillaries of power which 'insert...[themselves] into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives...within the social body' (Foucault 1980: 39), and it is this concern with 'how individuals [are] shaped and constructed by particular discourses but also how subjects position... themselves in relation to these discourses' (Gillies 2013: 15) which is at the heart of the analysis presented in this chapter. In this study, Foucault's interpretation of discourse analysis is used as 'pure description of discursive facts' (Foucault 1972: 234) and the discourses are presented and discussed 'as they emerge' (Andersen

2003: 2); that is, within the context in which they took place. The learner discourses addressed in this chapter have arisen from interviews conducted with two Advanced level focus groups and one Intermediate level focus group, after which certain learners were invited to attend individual interviews which further probed their initial comments. Foucault (1972: 38) explained that 'whenever, between... types of statements, concepts or thematic choices, one can define a regularity, we will say... that we are dealing with a discursive formation' and it is these 'discursive formations' (ibid.) which are now analysed, by theme, and in relation to Foucault's framework of 'Technologies of the Self', in the sub-sections below.

## **5.2 ESOL learners' motivation: determining the ethical substance**

For all the learners interviewed, the acquisition and development of English is a key part of 'the transformational mode of subjecting' (Andersen 2003: 25) within Foucault's 'Technologies of the Self'. It has led to their decision to enrol for a language class, whether this was because they were required to do so by the United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI) organization or for other reasons. A drive to learn the language of the host community is the prime motivation which learners have for a 'refusal of containment' (Jackson and Mazzei 2012: 64). These are the students who are motivated to progress and for many it involves a need to reposition themselves not only within a new culture but also personally within this society; this can be in order to develop academically in terms of employability or, simply, to settle within the new context, with or without family members.



### **5.2.1 The Learners Focus groups (see Appendix A)**

The motivation for migrant learners to learn English and to transform their lives, as discussed above, was echoed by a number of participants in the study.

These were the members of the first Advanced focus group who were chosen because of the level of their language, but also so that the study would comprise participants from a variety of ages, gender and provenance.

#### **5.2.1.1 The Advanced Learners – Focus Group 1**

Among the twelve students in the first Advanced level focus group, most stated that their reasons for learning English were to further their aspirations for the future: ‘to improve my language’; ‘to be an accountant’; to go to University’; to ‘finish my Masters’ and, for some, to take their full place in British society and ‘to get Citizenship’. This determination on the students’ part was exemplified by Aurora, a mother from Pakistan, who acknowledged that she ‘had problems shopping and visiting [her] GP’ before she began to learn English, challenges which gave her the motivation to learn English. Remus, a student who had been living in Glasgow for over three years and who struggled to clearly describe his motivation, agreed with his classmate Diana in her articulation that ‘the people who take this course, they here for themselves’ illustrating that individual reasons for joining the class may have been slightly different but they all wanted to learn English ultimately to benefit themselves and their futures.

These learners were assured in voicing their motivations and confident of the progress they had made. In Foucauldian terms, they had enough English to express, or ‘determine’ what can be described as their particular ‘ethical substances’, in terms of what they were actively striving towards, renegotiating

their own 'techne tou biou' or art of living within this new society by way of developing their English language skills. In their use of this 'practice' of language, through the discourse itself, they further explained their paths towards their intended goals.

Diana used the strong comparative of qualification when she described speaking English 'much, much better'. Her language was grammatically assured, as there was no hesitancy or use of modal verbs, but instead her conversation featured the positivity of the verbal infinitive. For this student, her discourse was helping to 'fabricate... specific human experiences' (Deacon 2002: 90), or giving voice to what Foucault referred to (1985) as her 'ethical substance'. Minerva, from the Ukraine, described her particular learning 'journey' metaphorically as 'continuing on my educational path... [to] go to University', while Hera, an Iranian woman who had been in the UK for four years, spoke of her specific motivation 'to improve my academic writing... for University'. Similarly, Remus, a young learner, was pleased to have 'learning... you're gonna use, for the job, for the future', repeating, and therefore stressing, the linking word 'for' in order to emphasise his purpose. It was clear that that each interviewee was garnering language, in practical terms, both to describe and to reflect upon their self-development, 'the ways in which individuals negotiate their identities in an active way, as members of (sometimes changing) social milieus' (Gallacher et al 2002: 497). This is particularly apposite when one considers the 'changing social milieus' in which migrant ESOL learners find themselves and which they have to negotiate if they are to reach their 'telos' and survive in new learning and social contexts. This positioning of the learners and their discourses within a specific context illustrates Foucault's concern with:

the production of knowledge and meaning through discourse...his definition of *discourse* is much broader than language ...Foucault [sees] forms of power/knowledge as always rooted in particular contexts and histories. Above all, for Foucault, the production of knowledge is always crossed with questions of power and the body (Hall 2001: 78).

These Advanced ESOL learners each had their own reasons, expressed in the affirmative, for choosing this particular college, including that it was 'the best in the city'; 'I specifically applied... heard it's good'; or that 'it's cheap'. Their respective motivations were clear and the students were, in general, very happy with their choice and with the results of their accumulated learning so far. Diana, for example, felt that her progress in English was 'absolutely beneficial' - note the strong qualifier of the adjective to strengthen her opinion - to her future, which stressed the value she placed upon her learning.

#### **5.2.1.2 Individual interviews**

When pressed further in an individual interview, Diana, a Polish student who had already been studying English for four years, spoke of 'opportunities... finding more interesting things to do in future' while Remus, in his individual interview, stated that he was learning English 'to get my British passport'. Their particular individual discourses express and support a route through their own language development, to each learner's notion of the 'telos'. This self-construction through language learning was being enacted within and among the various weavings of power within which they were learning, including that of the timetable, the teaching programme, the assessment 'regime', the teaching style, and the requirements of the teachers. Hoskin (1990: 31) refers to these

as 'little practices, or 'micro-technologies' which exercise discipline upon 'the person, so as to produce 'docile bodies'... so as to facilitate constant forms of surveillance and the operation of evaluation and judgement' (ibid.). However, in co-constructing their learning, students such as Diana and Remus are not simply 'docile bodies', but should instead be seen as active participants in their own learning, 'with the potential of becoming lifelong learners' (Berglund 2008: 145), progressing either to further academic courses or to more informal learning within employment or the local community.

Such building of futures, both linguistically and socially, by the students is therefore being done despite the capillaries of power within which each student was, in Foucauldian terms, determining their 'ethical substances', and for which 'modes of subjection' they would have to find their method of negotiation or 'ethical work'. Biesta reflects (2005: 59) on such 'accounts of adults for whom engaging in education was a lifetransforming event, an experience through which they not only came to know what it was that they really wanted or needed, but through which they also found a new self, a new identity.'

### **5.2.2 The Intermediate Learners**

The responses from the Intermediate group of learners were framed in a similar way, as illustrated by Creon from Poland who wanted:

To finish this class... to improve my English... well, just for myself... to have a good contact with people... to have some opportunities... just for myself. I'm taxi-driver so... meeting a lot [of] different people.

The repetition of 'just for myself' appears to emphasise individual motivation, but perhaps also reflects the slight unease of a young man responding to the motivations of older classmates associated with their families who, like Thetis from Iran, wanted to 'move another class... get childcare... speak [with] my son's teacher'. It is evident that the ages and motivations of the learners may be different but the overall goal is the same: 'speak with English... other person...' and 'have some opportunities', which are similar to the motivations expressed by the Advanced learners. These learners were clearly at ease discussing their learning while interacting with each other. The decision was taken, however, not to invite them to participate in individual interviews; this was based on the level of their language which was not sufficiently developed to be able them to answer in any detail, but also to minimise any potential stress that lack of fluency might entail.

Further discussion within both groups of students, and their consequent reflections upon their learning experience, referred specifically to what they considered to be in the way of their learning, as discussed below.

### **5.3 Negotiating the 'mode of subjection'**

With each of the focus groups and throughout the individual interviews, a series of concerns emerged to which students referred and which, after further questioning, they discussed in some detail. Such concerns relate to Foucault's description of the 'capillaries of power' evident within the modes of subjection, which affect not only the learning but also the emerging identities of the students interviewed. These are now discussed in turn.

### 5.3.1 The examination system

Within each group or individual interview conducted for this study, the need for students to attain qualifications in order to progress was evident. In the Intermediate learners' focus group, the concern raised by Thetis was that 'we have tests the teacher tells us you must concentrate on' while the response from an Algerian learner, Selene, 'not terrible... have two, three chance', was interesting; when questioned further, these particular students were somewhat bemused by the fact that they had several attempts at internal assessment, as summarized by Thetis: 'and if we have problems we try again', at which the members of the group echoed 'Yes!' in unison. When questioned, the students made it clear that this practice, of several attempts at assessment, albeit with different tasks, was not a feature of their own experience of assessment in their own countries. The issue of exams was discussed further and with more fluency by the students in the Advanced focus group in which Charis, from Hungary, noted that 'I came to get the qualification' and 'now I can see my life' because she knew what she needed to achieve in order to progress to university. When pressed to comment on the amount of assessment she faced, she answered that 'the more I do exams the more I feel confident', a feeling which was echoed by Hera 'the more I do exams I feel more confident... not so scared when I go into the exam', while Diana agreed in similar terms, 'I know. You know what's gonna happen 'cos it's done before and you know, the more you do it, the less you're scared'. The conflation of the confident phrasal balances 'the more... the less' and the informal language within her discourse is evidence of her confidence: she adopted a relaxed manner of speaking while discussing what Foucault would refer to as a disciplinary technique.

All learners are made aware that they need to pass both internal and external assessments to progress, thus manoeuvring themselves into a 'competent learner' context where they 'become' what is required for the assessments, which can be seen to echo Foucault's prediction that they are consequently of interest not as individuals but rather as 'subjects... constrained to carry the knowledge and marks' (Foucault, 1977: 194). Not only, then, does the new content of the assessments have to be learned, but their processes and constructs also have to be absorbed before any progress can be made. This involves a particular mode of discipline within which the migrant learners, and their teacher, are located: as they have to they have to work and progress through various assessment tasks. However, the learners' feedback illustrates the conundrum that assessment, for these learners, can be beneficial as well as a potential disciplinary practice; success in attaining qualifications is, in fact, necessary in order to enable their progression through and beyond the college setting. Further, they are not simply constrained by the practice of assessment because they have the potential for agency in preparing, themselves, for each assessment task. This can be regarded as further proof that they are not 'docile bodies' but, as Edwards (2008: 23) explains, that 'discipline as a form through which power is exercised cannot work unless subjects *are capable of action*'.

The learner agency is clear from the occasions on which students have, in Selene's words, made 'two, three' attempts' at an internal assessment. As Kronos from the Advanced focus group remarked, 'they always give us tests', a continuous assessment process which for him as well as for his peers in the group, had been previously outwith his experience. Within this process, it is

clear that the learners have to, simultaneously, manage the shaping of their learner identities. Vulcana confirmed, when asked to compare their cultural experience of the examination system, that 'it's very different...we have just one exam. We know this', while Kronos acknowledged that 'at home... they...push you to do one exam... but here it's different. Maybe easy as you know what to do.' Remus agreed: 'I want to be a radiographer, so I know I need [SQA] Higher ESOL' an qualification which can lead to university entry. These students know what is required of them if they want to progress onto their chosen career path, but part of the conundrum is that the assessments themselves are controlled by the disciplinary structures inherent in the process of assessment, which further controls learner achievement via the process of generating results and, therefore, their potential life choices. Remus, for example, can only have a chance at becoming a radiographer if he attains SQA Higher ESOL. Such processes are 'regulated' by the SQA as, through them, are the individuals, their goals and life choices, which are similarly controlled or re-shaped through success or failure dependant on the level of the student's success. However, this same sequence of regulation can help influence, through an individual learner's motivation and success, the route towards their goals in life. In an individual interview, Philo explained that: 'My teachers said I needed [the SQA qualification] Int[ermediate] 2 to get on to my [HNC] Engineering course', while Hermes, a refugee doctor, could not have considered re-entering his own previous profession without a pass in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) as he explained in his individual interview: 'I was a doctor in Iraq but need to pass IELTS at a very high level to work, to get a job, here. I... am depressed... sometimes... really'. At this moment in the interview,



the final 'really', with its elongated vowel and an accompanying shrug, gave a sense of finality and of the despair which Hermes felt, as he continued: 'it will take many years. My children will be big'. In this statement, Hermes is making reference to the fact that as a non-European he is required by the UKBA, subsequently the UKVI, to take an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test. Such issues around requirements of testing and assessment were also referred to in the Advanced focus group where his classmate, Kronos, explains that 'I can apply, just, for a job here' without having to take the same test.

This exchange illustrates that there are a range of possible assessment routes (such as SQA Intermediate 1 and IELTS) qualifications which an ESOL learner might follow in order to progress, but commonly, and post-National ESOL strategy, this is achieved by attainment of specific ESOL qualifications, developed either by the SQA or by Cambridge ESOL. On the surface, it appears that these routes to a socially-included future of opportunity have been, and are being, supported by the varieties of assessment on offer to the ESOL learner; however the Foucauldian disciplinary nature of this particular exercise is clear, and is not specific to ESOL learners. There is evidence of relentless pressure on candidates to succeed not on their own terms but to be as good as, or better than, others. The equivalence, in Scotland, of each assessment level to the relevant level on the SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) ensures that all candidates are placed on a 'ladder' of qualifications where they may aim to do better; a necessity if they are to progress to a 'good' job, live in a 'good' area, and help their children get into 'good' schools. One of Hermes' concerns, outlined in his individual interview, is

that his children will be 'big' when he is ready to access employment. In the meantime, his options are limited: 'my area... it is not good... really'. Part of his ethical work is to find a job within his profession in order to support a 'better life here' for his family, and to do this he has to 'pass IELTS to get a job. 'Maybe in a hospital. I was a doctor in a hospital in Baghdad.'

The unique but related experience of these particular migrant learners illustrates a fundamental concern within the domain of assessment in ESOL, within which there is an implicit discrimination inherent in the assumption that ESOL students require English to progress at all. Shohamy and McNamara (2008:93) question 'the [imposition] of language' and the fact that 'for many immigrants it is not possible to acquire a new language, especially as adults' (ibid.). As Aurora from the Intermediate focus group demonstrated, there are related issues for learners such as her who may have fractured education or literacy in their own language(s): 'I need English... writing very difficult for me. I no write in Urdu'. The imperative both to learn and succeed in the medium of English is 'very difficult' or at best stressful, and at worst, forcibly substitutes another language for their own and thus can be said to marginalise the status of the learner's language culture, background, attendant memories and subjectivities. Even in this context there is something of a conundrum as it, arguably, necessary that doctors such as Hermes speak a high level of English to work in UK hospitals so that they can communicate clearly and avoid accidents of diagnosis and prescription. In this case, the need to learn English could be argued to be a purely practical (and safety-assuring) step. However, discrimination can still be argued since EU migrants are clearly in far easier situations than refugees from war-torn countries outside the EU who have to

pass more exams and prove themselves; there remains the genuine issue of ensuring fluent English for a safe workplace, wherever the health professional has come from.

Within the domain of ESOL there is the congruent personal, and at times emotional, pressure of the students' goals, for without a certain level of English, an ESOL learner simply cannot go to university or access the demands of certain professions, no matter what role or position within society she might have held in their own country. The cycle of demand, based on a continuous pressure to succeed, can be relentless for some students such as Philo, who explained:

I had interview for Engineering course and my [Engineering] teachers were happy. I know about engines. I worked with cars in my country. But my [English] teachers they say I need ESOL exam. I am very tired. My teachers at Engineering they say I no need exam. It is very hard. Always exams in this country. So...the teachers they talk. And I no need exam.

Meanwhile, Aurora wants English simply to access her community and Thetis is happy to have 'two three chance' at assessment so that she can succeed. This illustrates further the conundrum of assessment: that for most learners it is necessary for progression with the society in which they now live, while for learners such as Philo and Hermes it appears to be a strain; there are much more stringent requirement allied to Hermes' possible future of a possible return to a profession and, in conjunction, a better future for his family.

It is helpful at this point to examine specific, related assessment practices which, from a Foucauldian perspective, are examples of modes of subjection,

but which also generate power: over teachers, learners, curricula, syllabi and, moreover, over the ethos and culture of the classroom which has to situate such processes..

### **5.3.2 Global forces, assessment and the impact on ESOL learners**

The imperative that ESOL learners study for and pass qualifications in the English language is rooted, in part, in the new success story for education: the selling of English Language pedagogy, practice and qualifications internationally. This has been based on the marketisation of education which purports to care for and support the language of international students but which can also be considered by some as a nouveau-colonial activity as explained by Crystal (2003: 9) who helps to put such a practice in perspective: 'A language has traditionally become a global language for one chief reason: the power of its people'. He admits that 'access to the emerging global language – widely perceived as the language of opportunity and empowerment – needs to be guaranteed' (ibid. p. 28) for students who need English that 'opportunity'. However there are associated and congruent concerns, specifically with regard to ethics, as raised by Harding (2012: 3) who remarks: 'the West... shaping a world in its likeness... In ways we fail to acknowledge, we issue the invitation and map their journeys towards us'. These concerns have been echoed by Graddol (2006:9) when he notes that 'the global spread of English raised not just linguistic, educational and economic issues but also cultural, political and ethical ones' in referring to the recruitment of international students by universities and the associated examples of inequality inherent in this practice. For example, Hermes, as a qualified and trained Iraqi doctor,

could not access his profession directly when he arrived in the UK, while a qualified and trained doctor from Europe, or an engineer such as Kronos, could have done so. 'Assessment should reflect equal opportunities practice' advises the Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland (2007: 14), but the reality is often different. Hermes' experience resonates with that of many individuals who wish to enter their own profession after arrival as migrants to Britain. The NHS in Britain insists that each new doctor arriving from a non-European country must attain a pass at IELTS no matter at what level their previous education or existing level of English has reached, and that they score at least 7 points (where a native speaker level is at 9) in each component language skill, that is, Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. This generic English language test, which is designed to provide an assessment of English language level as an entry to any non-specific course of academic study, requires rigorous preparation. Test content can be taken from any academic subject, and the resultant grade is current and viable for only two years, thus adding additional pressure onto candidates to secure employment quickly.

Within this context lies a tangential mode of subjection within the uneasy marriage of routes to citizenship and the associated language test which purports to support access to settlement or citizenship for migrant ESOL learners living in Scotland. Harding (2012: 9) construes the rationale for such a test rather differently, explaining that 'we're certain that the ones who are already here should be thoroughly patrolled, to make sure they speak our languages and grasp the way we like to do things'.

### **5.3.3 The Citizenship Test as a disciplinary practice**

The issue of Citizenship is one which continues to frame the learning and assessment within the provision of ESOL. As Remus noted, 'I'm turning 18 in May so I'm doing this course... so I don't need to do 'Life in the UK' exam'. This participant was referring to the established practice that currently, the attainment of one SQA Unit at a certain level in ESOL can support a learner's Citizenship or settlement application, removing the necessity to take the UK government's 'Life in the UK' test. There is concern that this might lead, in some cases, to over-emphasising the process of assessment, which Ecclestone and Hayes (2009: 69) refer to the 'empowering rhetoric' of 'students taking ownership of their own learning'. There are genuine tangential concerns over the implications of linking Language assessment with routes to Citizenship, as echoed by Roberts, Cooke, Baynham and Simpson (2007), in that ESOL provision may be being hijacked for the purpose of gaining political capital. It is a fact that 'The most firmly established use of language tests is as a condition for access to full citizenship' (Shohamy and McNamara 2008: 90), but also that 'language tests are used in many countries to select immigrants, and to investigate the claims of undocumented asylum seekers' (ibid. p.90).

The UK Citizenship process itself can, from a Foucauldian perspective, be considered as the ultimate form of surveillance, in which students are further objectified, considered as pawns in a process in which the UKVI, itself an agency of the UK government, is fielding humanity while universities are desperate to attract students and the financial resources they bring. Such

concerns have been summarised by Williamson (2012: 242) who saw the situation as follows:

Speakers of other languages are marginalized through the unequal dynamics of power which both endorses a narrow and restrictive standard of English and conflates language practices with an exacting model of good citizenship through pervasive testing.

Hermes, responding in the present research, wants to remain in the UK with his family, but to do so he must pass the 'Citizenship' test. One of the problems with this is that such assessment is linked to an individual's identity; in Hermes' case, as a doctor and as a father who wants to provide for 'my children, my wife... I want good home, nice area'. Such practices have become so intense that learning and teaching are caught in a web of *seeking* surveillance, in the sense that individuals such as Hermes are being judged by the practices of Citizenship. To be required to function within the given strictures of assessment is, for him, 'depressing' enough, but when this is linked to his emergent identity as learner and aspirant citizen of his adopted country, there may be implications for both the learner and the state. The first of these implications relates to the intensification of discipline masquerading as care, or the encouragement of a learner and prospective settler to be a 'good citizen'; secondly, there is an implication with regard to the prevalence of surveillance-as-the-norm: this can be argued to be an example of 'biopower' in action, a technique of surveillance which controls not only an assessment regime but ultimately and potentially, learners such as Hermes' or Philo's future and life choices. Philo added that 'I want to stay here and get a job. Maybe as [an]

engineer. I am safe'. However, to do so he will have to take many more tests than just SQA Intermediate 2 ESOL.

What is striking is that there continues to be a use of assessment to sustain and promote the existing culture of surveillance within this country, and arguably, learning itself is confined by such practices. Harding (2012: 10) has written that 'Learning the ropes is empowering. Language, above all, is the sign and the means of belonging'. It is no doubt essential that migrant learners are supported to learn English to a level which equips them to survive in the UK, and ultimately to build a life for themselves and their families. But, it is the imperative, the enforced conjunction of language learning with assessment, the requirement of proof of language ability for settlement, which is, for many such as those cited above, a fundamental and concerning disciplinary practice. The pronouncement that learning should be seen as fundamentally inter-linked within the capability to be a citizen would be puzzling to Foucault.

#### **5.3.4 Language to negotiate with the teachers**

Foucault (1977:304) reminds us that:

We are in the society of the teacher-judge... it is to them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual... subjects to it... his behaviour, his aptitudes, his achievements.

It is helpful, within the Foucauldian framework, to consider the idea of the 'teacher-judge'. This is the concept that the learner 'subjects...his behaviour' (ibid.) to the educator. For example, Vulcana, a member of the Advanced focus group, stated that her teachers were 'motivational'. After the strength of the



adjective was queried, Diana confirmed that all her teachers were 'very inspiring'. These were students who were aware of the value of a qualifier and the power of 'very' was intentional. The Advanced learners further asserted that teachers expected 'a hard-working attitude'; this is another positive message. Flora, a student from Pakistan and a member of the Intermediate level focus group, insisted that 'all staff [were] very good', a view which was echoed by Ariadne, her compatriot: 'our teacher always telling us everything... good guiding' where, despite the linguistic inaccuracy, the intended meaning was clear. Two other female students from the same group described their teacher as 'very lovely', while another assured me that she was 'helpful' and yet another that she was 'kind'. It became clear that, as Clegg and Rowland (2010: 720) have observed, the students also 'readily see kindness as a mark of the good teacher'. When the students were probed further on this, the feedback was more detailed; in the Advanced focus group, Hera commented, 'the lessons are interesting and the methods are modern. They start talking to you... see what you need for your future' to which the members of the focus group displayed standard linguistic 'interactive' behaviour, echoing 'yeah'; 'that's right' and giving further examples of the helpfulness of the teachers. This could be an example of a discourse, internal to the institution, which influences conduct and thus interaction. MacLure (2003: 49) suggests that, for Foucault, such discourses arise from within a specific institution, their role 'producing subjects who exert a 'mutual "hold"' on one another'. It could be also an example of what Tannen et al. refer to (1997: 83) as 'the possible need for students to learn the [linguistic] styles that are valued in school and in the world of work they are

expected to enter' which chimes with Foucault's reference to the 'teacher-judge' and which can thus be considered as a positive practice to enable progress.

The initial discourse of the learners, in which they set out their own goals, contained no hyperbole, and no unnecessary grammatical flourishes, and their descriptions of success and intention were stated, as above, with assurance. These were not learners who needed to use obsequious discourse to progress through the learning experience. However, this discursive theme, of students insisting on the expertise and furthermore the goodness of their teachers, continued throughout each interview. The learners from the Intermediate focus group agreed with Flora that 'all teachers very good', echoing the 'very lovely' observation, and it became clear that this discourse or particular 'refrain' was central to the language of both groups interviewed. These learners did not *appear* to be praising teachers as a way of receiving, in return, positive feedback for themselves; they did not need such extrinsic encouragement. But each of the students would be subject to both assessment and Guidance reviews from teachers, processes which, by their very nature, involved a particular 'layer' of power weaving through their learning. Indeed, Foucault (1977: 191) refers to 'each individual [becoming] a 'case', capable of being 'described, judged, measured, compared with others, in his very individuality'. In this context, the learners can be considered as having been caught in the web of power inherent in the college system, as actors within this very specific power 'weave', mimicking the language expected of them to progress within the system. In this system, each has their 'place' within which they have to behave, and to talk, in a certain way in order to be deemed a success. Perhaps, then, part of the 'mode of subjection' for an ESOL learner is an apprehension of the

unspoken but obligatory discourse of praise of the teaching and its associated practices.

If the progress through education for ESOL learners is, in Foucault's words to 'work... to become someone else that you were not' (Martin 1988: 9), then perhaps such a developing discourse, whether or not it is subject to the constraints of a linguistic power hierarchy, is part of that identity-reshaping process. The protagonist in Marani's novel 'New Finnish Grammar' of re-learning a language posits that: 'A learnt language is just a mask, a form of borrowed identity' (Marani, 2011: 52); this is obviously one point of view and, although it is situated in fiction, it illustrates the notion of identity within language learning and questions whether, while negotiating a particular mode of subjection on the road to the 'telos', a learner's identity has to be reformed, or at best re-negotiated. It has been argued (Gallacher et al. 2002: 493) that 'learning identities should be seen as fluid or even fragile, rather than fixed and unidirectional', and that 'engaging in learning involves a degree of socio-cultural boundary-crossing' (ibid.). This suggests that learners' confidence both in their own learning goals ('to be an accountant') and progress ('absolutely beneficial') might have to co-exist as a mode of subjection with such language of respect for one's teachers that is, at times and within certain contexts, considered the appropriate discourse by and for learners. Tannen et al (1997: 80) discuss such development of specific discourse styles, albeit in the school sector, which is relevant here:

Investigation of classroom talk [which] has begun to focus on student/student interaction among language minority students... where students... establish a shared, school centered community finds that such groups provide the interactional resources for young bilingual students to develop the... discourse style that schools value.

This is echoed by MacLure (2003: 157) in her discussion of identity, where she who suggests that 'self-hood is inescapably mimetic, a matter of masks and copies, whether or not we (know we) are deliberately faking it'.

Of particular interest within this very specific group of learners was the fragility of much of their background and experiences. The term 'ESOL learners' encompasses a varied group of individuals, many of whom have been forced by difficult circumstances to make their home in Scotland, as discussed in Chapter One. West (1996: 8) has noted that:

Questions about self and identity are strongest when the normal business... at home or at work, collapses... individuals are involved in a struggle... to build a new identity through... education.

This appears to provide a simpler echo of Foucault's notion 'of power relations (that) are mobile, reversible and unstable' (Foucault 1994: 292). Each individual learner interviewed in this research had left their home, family and social locus and was in the process of reconstructing both their language and identity. It did appear that many ESOL learners were in the process of developing a self which may have been shifting between two 'selves' or identities: that of the motivated, confident learner who had experience of another, familiar learning context, and this 'other' or different learner, within the Scottish learning arena.

Each developing identity was being constructed within these interweavings of power, as was evident from the discourses, as noted by Edwards (2008: 23):

For lifelong learning to be... meaningful, it is necessary that disciplinary practices emerge in correlative power-knowledge formations embedded in discourse(s) that define truth... the means that realize the performance of what Foucault referred to as the disciplinary practices in training and re-shaping 'docile bodies'.

The ways in which each learner negotiated these modes of subjection and re-shaped their identities as active learners can be traced in the 'ethical work' done by the learners.

#### **5.4 The 'ethical work'**

All the learners interviewed were, for a variety of reasons, situated at the heart of what Foucault would consider a web of power. They had to work on their own progress while being, at the very least, mindful of what language and behaviour (dictated by unspoken rules) would ease their way around the power hierarchies faced. This in itself 'illustrates how subjects are in a double-process of being produced as well as transforming themselves' (Jackson and Mazzei 2012: 62). For example, the relationship between teachers and learners is firmly within the 'co-ordinated cluster of relations' (Foucault 1980: 198), in that teachers have their place within the hierarchy of power, as they are enacting, reviewing and evaluating their own practice so that students are enabled to learn as required within the constraints of a curriculum, a syllabus and a timetable. But, the students have to enact their own 'work' on themselves, and the corresponding 'learner language', as each negotiates their path towards

their goal and within this 'cluster of relations'. The students' identities were also being enhanced, empowered and perhaps reshaped by the learning experience; in Foucault's terms, 'subjects are gradually, progressively... constituted through a multiplicity of... forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts' (Foucault 2000: xvi).

Diana, in her individual interview, commented that: 'At first I came here only for work'; with a stress on 'only' in relation to what followed: 'the longer I can see about the opportunities... now I'm actually finishing this year and next year I wanna do something else... I'm finding out a more interesting future'. She had enough fluency to manipulate her grammar to convey her positivity and the practical reality of her plans: not only the vocabulary, in its use of the qualifier 'actually' to emphasise what would happen, but the use of the positivity of the present continuous tense ('I'm finding out'; 'I'm finishing') by which she described *herself* as the actor. Such discourse, evidenced by the grammatical immediacy used to express her experience, stressed that she considered herself to be in control of both her learning and her future, even within a structural web of power.

Her only use of the first conditional: '*if* I'll finish this course with success and I'll find a job, *probably* I'll stay here' (my italics/emphases) described, even in its inaccuracy, her rather tentative plans, but the secure language of the present conditional, as alluded to in the previous paragraph, described what could be considered as the 'negotiation of her 'own' subject' towards that goal. In other words, she referred to the 'work', in Foucauldian terms, both ethically and practically, she had to put in to complete the course successfully and to further her aspirations.

Diana's work to further her planned goals could be determined as 'ethical', a term which could also be applied to the 'self-work' done by the Palestinian student, Ajax, from the second Advanced focus group. This particular group was formed in order that I, as the researcher, could compare the different motivations and the language used within two groups of the same language level. Ajax spoke of his 'two personalities, an Arabic one and an English one, yeah. I speak different in English and in Arabic... completely different!' He went on to claim that: 'My personality's changing now when I came here... is not like before', and when a member of the group queried this, he cited his 'new' behaviour as an example: 'I've learned a lot of things here; I've learned to... to respect... people more'. Here, the tentative nature of the ellipsis illustrated his hesitancy in 'proving' his 'Scottishness', as evidenced by the differences in his behaviour. He explained, unprompted, illustrating his ease among his classmates, that in Arabic 'I am like a boss. I tell my sister what she has to do. All the time'. His reference to his 'Scottishness' was immediately echoed by Paris, a Spanish student from the same Advanced group: 'here, they're more polite! All the time 'sorry... sorry! When you... I go back to Spain I say 'sorry' like... automatically'. This comment, while it amused the class, illustrated how two young men had begun to change their behaviour to ally themselves with the language and culture of the host community. They were beginning the linguistic 'ethical work' on themselves and their identities which enabled them to negotiate the unspoken rules of their learning and social contexts. Basha, a part-time waitress from the same group, added 'I know. I am so 'thank you, thank you' always' echoing Ajax's claim that this also happens in the host community, not just when an individual returns to his own country. This

illustrates MacLure's (2003: 131) reference to identity as 'always deferred and in process of becoming – never really, never yet, never absolutely "there"' (p. 131) while Wilkin (1999: 200) suggests that 'for Foucault...we are fluid and hybrid beings with the possibility of almost infinite change.'

Foucault's reference to 'ethical work', one of his 'Technologies of the Self', refers to bringing 'one's conduct into compliance with a given rule'. One example of learners carrying out this 'ethical' work, is that they have had to renounce their prior experience of learning and of assessment, so that they can be 'measured' according to new standards and assessed in a different way. This is done in order that they might progress to their chosen 'telos for which each has had to adapt themselves, their learning behaviour and identity. Within this context, the 'given rule' refers not only to the way someone behaves in accordance with, for example, assessment processes, or to their behaviour to the culture of the college itself, for example, no smoking indoors or forming an orderly queue in the canteen, but to the *unspoken* 'rules' of discourse among ESOL students, which might include an overuse of 'thank you' in a supermarket or discourse to discuss, or interact with, their teachers. In 1989, Spolsky (cited in Morgan-Klein and Osborne: 2007) referred to inequalities, which might be construed as racism, within an institution which affect the learning of a language; such adaptations of discourse could be considered a feature of institutional discrimination, where the discursive utterances themselves ensure that ESOL learners keep themselves, albeit unwittingly, in their metaphorical and linguistic 'place'. This would seem to be yet another 'mode' to which ESOL learners are being subjected, and it is not only in place within college, but also when they progress to further work and study, as illustrated by Schellekens



(2001), who found that migrants were working in jobs which did not match their experience.

Using this specific type of discourse, such as the praise of teachers which might support the ESOL learner in negotiating their place on the particular ESOL ladder of success could also be considered an example of 'ethical work'. Peirce (1995) argues that a learner's ability to speak is also affected by relations of power between speakers, and Foucault (1977: 89) has asserted that 'power is ... exercised, and that it only exists in action'; so that praise of the 'expert' teacher can be argued to be a specific discourse they felt they had to articulate within this power-play, and it appeared to demonstrate the 'self-work' as discursive 'performances' in which students were being excessive in their praise of the teachers. When this was raised further with the learners, however, it was clear that they were genuinely pleased with their teachers, their methodology and their practice; in the Advanced focus group, Charis elaborated that 'they work more with us'. When asked to compare teaching styles with their own cultural experience, the reply from Vulcana was: 'they do very good things... (for example) found mistakes where you are weak... she discusses with everyone'. Again, the response was standard linguistic 'interactivity' whereby the rest of the group echoed 'yeah' and supported each other in completing the example. An example of the group support in proclaiming the positive attitude they held regarding their teacher was recorded as follows:

Charis:           students know that the teacher is prepared =

Demeter:        = in advance

Charis: that (.) planning the whole class =

Kronos: = they give us always tests (.) that's good

The interpersonality of the discourse is evident: the students are fully involved, as illustrated by the very short pauses, and contribute to the conversation to co-create the discourse directly from the previous utterance, almost without stopping.

Bastalich (2009) noted that 'In Discipline and Punish (1977) Foucault outlines the micro institutional practices and political imperatives that... allocate individuals to specified places and tasks in relation to other individuals'. Not only would this co-construction of supportive discourse, and its concomitant language, have constituted a 'micro institutional practice', but it also seemed to be common to the language of ESOL students whose discursive practices allowed them to negotiate their paths and construct their own selves through what might be termed their own 'ethical work'. Their joint reflection on both the teachers and the assessment practice, as in the example given above, is therefore evidence of how they have progressed, by way of their own ethical work, to reflect on such teacher behaviour and assessment practice as notable, but at the same time as being usual in this, their new learning context. As Clegg and Rowland have asserted (2010: 720), learners 'seek... to elucidate a quality that is already there in good teaching, but is unremarked and under threat in the contemporary conditions'. It appears that many ESOL students coming from cultures where a different methodology has been the norm use this new discourse to comment on and negotiate the learning experience which is proving so different from their own, initial learning experience. Each of the

Advanced focus groups, and the Intermediate group, was asked to compare the behaviours of teachers from their own backgrounds educational experience.

The responses varied from Creon's 'they are not...kind' to Ajax's 'they are bossy. And in school they have sticks!' which caused some amusement among the members of the second, Advanced focus group.

It appears, however, that the English language itself was little used outwith the classroom. Remus, a learner who had recently progressed from the school sector, explained this with reference to the difficulty of 'making friends [on] this course for people from other countries.' He was unaware of the existence of the college gym, despite the insistence by student services staff on 'the service which we provide is cross-college'; this is perhaps evidence of the rather casual use of the language of service provision compared with the reality. Remus was not keen to make a fuss, and accepted this 'separateness' with a shrug: 'I've got a few Scottish friends but they out of college... I've got a few friends in this college but they're African... stuff like that...' The final phrase denoted the end of that conversation: he did not want to elaborate on the difference between the 'few' friends in and outwith college and signified this by hesitation. His closing 'stuff like that' had a finality which brooked no further discussion, but which appeared to be a sign of his discomfort.

Most learners referred to the practical help given by college structures, from the provision of bus passes to bursaries, which eased their financial concerns and helped them to study. It was unclear to some learners, however, why these were only given to certain individuals and not to others. The responses to questions regarding the helpfulness of staff were firmly in the mode of the discourse concerning the teachers: 'ladies from canteen helpful' and indeed

'respectful', which was an interesting choice of adjective given that the canteen was one of the few 'extra-classroom' areas which many students used and within which they felt at ease. In the same sentence, Flora, a Pakistani learner from the Intermediate group, noted that she found the common areas of the college 'busy' and 'noisy', while 'halal food' was available in the canteen. An area where students were able to relax and in which no compliance was required in order for them to feel at ease was clearly important to the learners, and it was clear why this particular supportive behaviour could be termed 'respectful' in this context.

ESOL learners may have felt diminished by the practices above and by the ethos within which they existed at the time of their interviews for this study, but they were also able to find their own method of 'compliance' which may have been, in this case, a shared discourse as discussed above. Not only did these ESOL learners have to negotiate the behaviour required of them, they also had to negotiate, in what could be referred to as *their* 'ethical work', the structures of the wider college which may or may not have supported them fully in their learning.

It is clear, from the information above, that there exists a culture of discipline, which learners must negotiate to succeed. Allan (2008: 101) has suggested that 'we know that power is so omnipresent and insidious that we need to find cunning ways to *subvert* it'; and indeed, that is what the migrant ESOL learners have been achieving by way of their 'ethical work' both on themselves and, jointly, on each other, as evidenced in the shared and interactive discourses.

## 5.5 Achieving the 'telos'

Diana, in her individual interview, enthused that: 'It's fantastic to meet people from different countries... not much Scottish because course really for... people who are not from Scotland... basically from other countries'. There were interesting breaks in her fluency, and the use of linguistic 'fillers' such as 'really' and 'basically' perhaps reflected her concerns or hesitation with the difficulty she expressed in making friends as being outwith her control. For the purposes of the present research, this can be seen as evidence that 'power relations have... fabricated [her] specific human experience[s]' (Deacon 2002: 90).

Perhaps it was her lack of ease with this topic which underlined her 'compliance', in that she had done everything expected of her as a student but *still* had not 'really' made any connection with Scottish students. The language used was in direct opposition to her vivid description of her progress and ambition, over which she did have control. Diana referred in very positive terms to how her language development so far had supported her work as a waitress in a bar outside of college: 'I can talk with customer without being stressed... more vocabulary to express myself... no limit no barrier'. This fluent and authoritative language including repetition of the negative to stress the positive 'no limit... no barrier...' reflected her growing ease with this developing language which will support her own personal 'telos' of university entrance.

The goals of other students would be much more gently and perhaps easily achieved; as Diana's compatriot and member of the first Advanced focus group, Demeter, said, 'I've stopped running; I don't need to run that much anymore; I've got time for... I don't know, playing guitar or painting, whatever'. In her

reply, the breaks in the fluency of her language were evidence of her relaxed manner, which stressed her ease with her situation as she had become more comfortable in her language learning and her goals. She had options in her free time, she had a university place and could see a future in Scotland. For others, however, it was not so simple. Her Iranian classmate, Hera, a mother of two, retorted, 'my life just changed since I get here; I have to run!' which emphasised the hectic pace of her life in this new country, where she was adapting to a new life, becoming 'someone else that (she was) not in the beginning'.

For Hera, as with many ESOL learners, the personal learning 'journey' was the 'rebuilding' of both a social and a personal life through education in a new society, and the resultant impact on, and indeed existence of, this developing identity cannot be ignored. The transformative nature of the learning experience, particularly in the context of lifelong learning, is not of course unique to ESOL, as stories such as this permeate the college environment, but it was salutary to witness Foucault's 'Technologies of the Self' being enacted within this particular 21<sup>st</sup> century learning context.

For many ESOL learners seeking to reach their ultimate goal of becoming a UK citizen, there is the last hurdle of the discourse of the Citizenship test for which ESOL learners must prepare. For this, they are required to read and learn an array of 'British' contexts and to display this knowledge in a timed test. As Remus offered, 'Higher ESOL better for me... no time to just learn, learn everything for the Life in the UK test'. This is an example of how ESOL learners are constricted not only by the 'micro' or local discourses of the college, but also by wider and national discourses. Not only is there a web of power to be negotiated within the college itself, but it is also embedded in the host society.

Remus explained in more detail that: 'I'm turning 18 in May; I need to do Life in the UK test... this course will improve my grammar and learning skills and stuff like that... and let me stay'. Again, he made use of his own particular discourse marker 'and stuff like that' when he found the subject uncomfortable. He later realised, with some relief, and emphasised it by the use of the word 'just', that 'I don't need to take the life in the UK test because I just do this course'. The course itself, which he was enjoying, would give him the equivalent evidence of language acquisition and the progress required for Citizenship.

Even this requirement has changed since the data collection for the present research took place, as the UKBA's, now the UKVI's, rules for Citizenship have become less flexible and there has been resultant and real concern among students and educators over the requirement for learners not only to evidence language requirements, but also about the current government's immigration and repatriation policies. Williamson (2012: 243) describes this as: 'a shift towards more stringent immigration and naturalisation policies' and their 'pre-requisite language requirement for entrants and for those seeking citizenship in the host country' (ibid.) which, to echo Foucault, has resulted in 'a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish' (1977:184). This, however, is not only 'a normalizing gaze' but a further, and rigid, method of 'compliance' which many learners must negotiate if they are to reach their individual and ultimate 'telos'.

For all the learners interviewed, the telos they were striving towards was their 'aim that extends beyond the mere activity' (Andersen 2003: 26) although in all cases the 'activity' was the ethical work which enabled them to access their goal. For many, this involved 'questions about who we are and who we want to

become through education [which] are always also questions about our relationships with others and about our place in the social fabric' (Biesta 2005: 60). These questions prompted learners, such as Ajax and Paris, to consider comment on their own transformation as learners of the 'host' language and its impact on their developing identities.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

Marani's protagonist in 'New Finnish Grammar' declared (Marani 2011: 86) that: 'through language... we come into this world'; a fictional representation which nevertheless highlights the prime motivation for language learning for the ESOL learners interviewed here. Their learning process and practices were, unbeknownst to them, underpinned by Foucault's Technologies, and existed ultimately so that they might take their place 'in this world' as functioning members of society, whether as a university student, as a mother who negotiated and made use of the National Health Service, or as the full citizen who has completed, and passed, the Life in the UK test.

Foucault's thinking continues to resonate with any study of the practices of power as it is woven through our 21<sup>st</sup> century 'human experiences' (Deacon 2002: 90). In considering the discourse which the participating migrant ESOL learners employed to express and make sense of their progress through learning, and the obstacles with which each had to negotiate or comply in order to reach their individual goals, it is striking that Foucault's 'Technologies of the Self' have illuminated these different learning journeys, all of which were undertaken within the power structures in the college sector. It was the route to each particular, and shared, 'telos' which was often beset with challenges for



individual ESOL learners. What makes Foucault's 'Technologies of the Self' a standpoint for considering ESOL learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is his notion, and exegesis, of the *process* by which one becomes what one has set out to be. The nouns 'subjection' and 'compliance', in their presumptions of conformity and even subjugation, are not only relevant but wholly apt when one considers the place of ESOL learners in Scotland and their 'journey' towards fluency, or in many cases, to reaching *sufficient* fluency to support them in fulfilling their aspirations.

It is necessary, now, to consider the corollary: the discourses of those people and structures providing that support and challenge, and to consider ultimately the particular implications for both learners and teachers which may arise within the learning context.

## **6. Chapter 6 – Examining the staff discourses**

### **6.1 Introduction**

It became clear from the analysis of the learner discourses that the capillary nature of power ‘inserts itself into [individuals’] actions... [and]... their discourses’ (Foucault 1980: 39). An analysis revealing the ways in which such power weaves through collegiate relationships and becomes embedded within discourses has offered insights into learning practices and, specifically, into migrant learners’ experience within a college. The analysis of the staff discourses reveals tensions that impact on learning and teaching practices, and the ways in which they affect individual practitioners, their motivations and thus departmental practices and, consequently, the ESOL learner experience.

### **6.2 Who and what determines the ‘ethical substance’?**

In discussing Foucault’s ethics, Gillies (2013: 16) refers to its ‘supreme relevance for the professional lives of educational leaders and managers, as well as for their staff and students’. The ‘Technologies of the Self’ framework, which describes ‘the four aspects of ethics’ (ibid.) can be traced in the following analysis of interviews with educators at the site of the study. They clearly considered their contribution to ESOL students’ learning to be fundamental to their role(s) as teachers. The data illustrates their passion and concern for their students’ progress and welfare, which could be considered their motivation, or the ‘prime material of [their] moral conduct’ (Foucault 1980: 39); in other words, it is what determines each teacher’s ‘ethical substance’.

### **6.2.1 The teachers' focus group (see Appendix)**

This group of teachers had a very clear sense of responsibility, and a motivation for their roles which was evident in the shared discourse which arose from the teachers' focus group, where they discussed their roles with the researcher.

Darius, a teacher of the Advanced class, spoke of his teaching as being a 'kind of a bridge between ESOL and the real world', his metaphor highlighting the responsibility he felt within his role in supporting ESOL learners towards a particular 'telos'. At the same time, the use of the phrase 'kind of' underlined in its tentativeness the lexical search to describe his particular ethical substance; he wanted to get it right, to do justice to the students. In describing their intended 'telos' as 'the real world', he was aware that their ongoing progress towards a place in the wider social environment contained a prime motivator for himself as a teacher: the enabling of the achievement of that goal. He continued, referring to the methods he uses to support their progress, by commenting that: 'it's all about extending what they can do; they... all communicate [are] pretty fluent... but can they do it with... sophistication... can you say it more naturally?' This rather hesitant description, and his apparent confusion of pronouns, reflected his enthusiasm in articulating his passion for teaching and the reason why he planned to encourage the students to extend their language 'naturally', that is, to develop in them real language which could be used to participate in the 'real' world.

This conversation was extended by three women teachers, as follows:

Cleo: it's (1.2) helping them have (.) some confidence to sort of (.) stand in front of the class =

Atalanta: = at the lower levels (.) it's much more subtle =

Cleo: = yeah

Atalanta: = much more (.) combined with the general stuff

Juno: it's about understanding the particular needs

This interactivity in their co-creation of the discourse highlighted their ease, in that they were used to working together and discussing their practice. Cleo, a quiet and very experienced teacher, explained that with lower level students: 'it's... helping them have... some confidence to sort of stand in front of the class. These pauses, shown also in the sentences above, reflect her struggle to put her practice into words, and demonstrate that support for an individual's 'confidence' is fundamental to her language lessons. When asked what she meant by the noun confidence she hesitated a little but explained 'This means that the learners, encouraged in this way, would ultimately be empowered in using English rather more than being simply helped 'to sort of stand in front of the class''. The teacher, in her tentative lexical choice 'sort of' to express such considered practice, was aware of what she wanted to achieve in her classroom practice but reluctant to attribute a grander purpose to this building of self, of learner 'confidence' and of her own ethical substance through her practice.

Atalanta, another member of this focus group, echoed her colleague's intent: 'at the lower levels, it's much more subtle'; when asked to explain further, she

continued: 'it's helping the learners, quietly, to build their belief in themselves as learners, but through the work in class', a comment which was echoed by Cleo's 'yeah'. This was further explained by Atalanta as being 'much more combined with the general stuff', stressing that she too acknowledged that, in enabling students to acquire and develop their language skills, the teachers were unobtrusively contributing to this support for the learner's sense of self, quietly building a 'confidence' in their students. Her colleague Juno summarised her colleagues' rather tentative syntax which aimed to explain their ethical substance, evident from their shared discourse. By stating clearly that 'it's about understanding the particular needs' emphasising 'needs', she offered a lexical support for their practice while her interactivity within the conversation made it clear that she included herself in this discussion of their shared ethical substance.

### **6.2.2 Individual interviews**

In an individual interview subsequent to the focus group, Jason, an experienced ESOL teacher, gave an insight into the teaching and learning process as he explained his own motivation in planning the work of his class: 'the profile of the class will dictate the... writing of materials', thereby illustrating why a teacher supports a particular student group in a certain way. At the same time he defined how he was continuing to develop as an educator because, in his words, 'you quickly gain an understanding of what the students like, activity-wise'. Here, there was an implicit ethical substance within the desire to tailor his teaching material so that his students would enjoy but also enhance their learning.

The Head of School, Julia, insisted in an individual interview that ‘staff really care... will help out students with anything’, where the emphasis on the adverb ‘really’ was a genuine acknowledgement of their involvement. This was substantiated by the apparently generic ‘with anything’, which served in its lack of specifics to cover the list of activities in which an ESOL teacher is involved. She commented further on what might be referred to as the ethical substances determined by the teachers: that new staff, in particular, were ‘professional, enthusiastic’; and referred to ‘new blood’ with their ‘flexible attitude’. This phrase, however, in its omission (or Derrida’s ‘not said’) of any reference to those who were *not* the ‘new blood’ appeared to distance this ‘new blood’ and their ‘flexible attitude’ from other, longer-serving departmental members. In describing further their ‘malleable quality’, in other words their willingness to learn, she made an oblique reference to a collective, departmental ‘ethical substance’ of co-support of what or who is ‘malleable’. This implies that such motivated new teachers are supported in their determination of their own ethical substances by the environment and practice of the more experienced, ‘long-serving’ departmental members who help to ‘form’ the new teachers. However, it is interesting to consider at this point ‘how individuals set about rationalizing their own conduct in the light of different imperatives’ (Gillies 2013: 16); it is possible that there may be conflict within this apparently co-supportive department, as is evident in Julia’s choice of lexis (‘malleable’; ‘flexible attitude’) which hint at tensions within the department which she, as the manager, does not refer to directly.

Such possible tension within the department is also evident from the way in which the Senior Lecturer, Athene, continued to discuss this theme of the

teachers' involvement with their students. In her discourse she made use of the comparative and the present continuous tense to describe the teachers' continuing and accrued development in supporting their learners, saying: 'we're getting *increasingly more aware* of what works for our learners... we've got *better* at recognising what they need' (my italics here, to highlight her stress patterns). This emphasised not only her positivity but also her pride in the collective 'we' and the shared ethical substance, noted by the Head of School, which was held within this group of teachers. However, even the 'not said' within 'increasingly' and 'we've got better' led to the researcher's question: 'better from what?' at which point Athene acknowledged that 'it took a while to get our support right'. Again the inclusive 'we' aligns her with the team ethic, but her language is an example of what Foucault refers to as 'savoir', as it 'defined not only her participation in the power relations, but also how she understood herself in relation to them' (Jackson and Mazzei 2012: 60). Athene's power is evident, within this discourse, in her role as departmental 'supporter', in which she aims to highlight the best practice effected by this group of teachers, and this is acknowledged in her inclusive and positive language. However, this is also an example of where such overt language of inclusivity often masks a truth, in this case that the support referred to has not been perfect, a fact which is not directly stated by Athene.

These teachers from this ESOL department believed that they were functioning effectively in their roles. However, it became evident from a continued examination of the discourses that they had rather more to do than simply determine their ethical substances. There were a variety of tensions to be resolved, both extrinsic and intrinsic, and issues to be negotiated in relation to

the work of the ESOL department, before such work could be done. Their discourses illustrate 'the importance of the language we use as educators, not only in a reflective and reactive way, but in a pro-active and constructive way as well' (Biesta 2005: 55).

### **6.3 The mode of subjection: negotiating the webs of power**

The 'mode of subjection' is Foucault's term for the way in which individuals, in this case ESOL teachers, negotiate particular conditions, individuals and practices which might inhibit their working practices or cause tensions within them. Within the context of this research it is important to be aware that 'power is present in our approach to others' (Andersen 2003: 3), as is evident from the Head of School's discussion of new staff and her perception of their 'malleability', and also from Athene's rather misleading discourse of inclusion. All the staff within a college setting have to negotiate, and perhaps even accede to, the overt and covert rules and discourses of both the classroom and of the college itself, but they also have to adopt the expected behaviour involved in being a staff member in a Scottish college which has been learnt, or subsumed, as indicated above, from a variety of factors, situations, and more established colleagues. All of this 'co-ordinated cluster of relations' (Foucault 1980: 198) is potentially difficult for teachers to negotiate, either individually or collectively, but it is essential that they do so if they are to be effective in determining and pursuing their own ethical substances.



### 6.3.1 Teachers and their practices

Teachers have their own locus within a hierarchy of power while they review and evaluate their own practice so that students can learn as required, or can go beyond requirements; such practice is, however, enacted within context-specific power structures or 'rules' which regularly include the constraints of a curriculum, a syllabus or a timetable. Layers and interweavings of power underpin the personal endeavour, or the ethical substance, determined by teachers, and these can affect practice on a daily basis. Teachers are not only subject to these layers of power, but within them, he or she becomes a central player. In other words, there are structures which, and individuals who, contribute to the determination of the 'ethical substances' *for* the teacher. Such particular conditions or tensions can be considered as 'mode[s] of subjection' and can inhibit the development or delivery of the ethical substances. An indication of the existence of some of these can be gleaned from the language of the teachers themselves.

Athene, the Senior Lecturer for ESOL in the case study college, spoke of the 'limit to what you can do as an ESOL teacher', thus articulating, in the lexical finality and bleakness of the noun 'limit', the frustrations inherent in the role within this specific college context. Although she appeared to distance herself by her use of the second person pronoun 'you', she is in fact using it to include herself in the embrace 'the ESOL teacher' in her empathy with the travails of this role. Her language thereby illuminates her own position as both teacher and manager and herself as someone who evidently understands the tensions

inherent in the practice of being an ESOL teacher. Examples of such 'limit(s)' were discussed within the teachers' discourses. When Jason was first interviewed individually he described his own mode of subjection. His reluctance to discuss decision-making in his own department was made clear through his intonation and syntax, specifically the pauses and the hesitant elongation of some of his vowels in the words he chose: 'Weeell... we do have... syllabi now... ehhh... personally I think it (sic) comes from the course books... a lot I think is just... weeell, I've done my own course, really'. The hesitation, noted by the ellipses (...), the use of the dual 'I think' and 'personally', as well as the explanatory and rather diffident 'really' hanging at the end of the sentence, emphasised his unease as well as his determination to distance himself from certain collective practices of his ESOL department. Jason was therefore critical, but uncomfortable with voicing this directly, aware that he had to be cautious; that it was not usual behaviour to openly criticise the practices of one's department. This meant that his discomfort evidenced both his awareness of what needed to be negotiated, but also his determination of this specific ethical substance: not only did he work in a department in which he felt uncomfortable with all the practices, but he worked hard ('I've done my own course') to develop, and to make his situation more comfortable while developing, his *own* ethical substance and indeed his ethical work, discussed later, within such a context.

Several examples emerged of the wider, or 'meso', discourse within this ESOL department which illustrated the unique power relations at play and which helped to determine one of the influences which accumulate on motivated teachers such as Jason and Darius. This illustrated a particular unspoken

tension, highlighted by the Head of School, within a large ESOL department and which ESOL teachers must negotiate to function fully within such a department. Cassandra, one of the lecturers interviewed within the focus group, stressed that her role was 'making sure *they've* got the confidence to speak out... *giving* them confidence...' (my emphasis, to reflect her stress and intonation during the interview). She was tentative, initially, as noted above by her use of ellipsis (...), but she also repeatedly referred to the learners as a collective body, not as individuals, and distanced herself from any one learner throughout her answer, by her use of the collective pronoun. Her attempt at distance was further illustrated by the verbs 'making sure they've got... giving them', which privileged herself as subject or actor, but not the learners, who were, in this instance, the object of her first-person verbs. The overt text could therefore have been considered as innocuous and supportive, but the grammar, in which the learners were objectified, pointed to a covert 'thread' within her discourse in which the learners are referred to as vulnerable and needy, while at the same time removed from herself, the 'helpful' teacher-as-subject who was enacting support *upon* or *for* them. When asked by her colleague Juno what she meant by her emphasis on '*giving* them' and '*making sure they've got*' she sighed and said, 'Well, they can't do it for themselves' which resulted in a moment of quiet tension within the group; there was no immediate interactivity or support for Cassandra's utterance. Her statement is contrary to good ESOL practice which has developed over many years from Krashen's (1981) notion of 'L+1' or 'comprehensible input' where the language of the classroom is just a little more difficult than a learner can comprehend; that is, he or she has to work *with* the teacher to acquire and develop fluency.

Her discourse was quite different from the thoughtful language used by Cleo when she was describing her support for and co-creation of ('helping them') students' confidence, above, evident in her use of both the verb 'help' and the involvement of the object 'them' where the tentativeness of the syntax and the pauses create a discourse in which confidence-building is considered and enabling. In Cassandra's utterance, less contribution was made to developing an emergent learner identity with the learner than the 'confidence' building Cleo referred to. This is an example of Foucault's explanation (1982: cited in Ball 1990: 2) that 'discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance...a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy'. Preece (in Morgan Klein and Osborne: 2000) criticises 'an unhelpful focus on the perceived deficits of individuals... in order to facilitate participation in education'. This analysis is useful in considering the discourse of this particular teacher, where the learners were alluded to as somehow less than capable; her description and its language was neither challenged nor supported within the focus group but was allowed to continue. This discourse type, voiced in such a specific educational setting constitutes an example of a 'mode of subjection' which other teachers had to negotiate if they were to function effectively within a department where some discourses appeared not to empower learners, while others did. This illustrates Ball's concern (1990: 2) that 'meanings... arise not from language but from institutional practices, from power relations' and gives an insight into the workings of a department in which this long-standing member of staff has not, in this context, been challenged by her colleagues.

### 6.3.2 Kindness as power

Juno, as has been noted above, referred to the learners' 'particular needs' in the discussion with the same focus group. A discursive 'thread' was subsequently initiated on how sensitive this particular group of ESOL lecturers were in comparison with other college staff. Cassandra offered the view that: '*We're* more sensitive to *them*' (my italics to emphasise her intonation) which was echoed by 'Yeah' from the other teachers. This short exchange illustrated how collective discourse can be potentially negative in its comparison of two groups of college staff members; the 'yeah' was voiced in agreement with Cassandra in her casual undermining of the rest of the staff, but was also evidence of a particular mode of subjection, that of the language of some of the teachers themselves.

Ecclestone and Hayes (2009: 153) reflect that 'we... know colleagues in FE... who have this quiet superiority and feelings of power', a comment which resonates with the 'quiet superiority' at the heart of the Cassandra's discourse. Her choice of language reflects her own linguistic 'capillary of power' in an apparent dissonance within the collective language of this department, as alluded to by Athene. It illustrated a particular dichotomy between the individual and the group discourse, and did not chime with, for example, Jason's language, as used in a separate, individual interview, of support, inclusion and sincerity. Foucault's work helps to situate such a process of apparent care and transparency as an example of increased intensifications of power, its practices and effects prevalent within our society and specifically within this context. Nealon (2008: 38) clarified Foucault's explicit references to 'intensification' by

explaining that, according to Foucault: 'power regulates *relations*, not *objects*... if power can successfully regulate the relations, it gets the objects for free' and also that 'power... acts on actions or potential actions rather than primarily on bodies or other nouns' (ibid.). In other words, the power lies in the actions of the teachers which relate directly to the learners.

Preece (in Morgan and Klein: 2000) makes the point that a focus on an individual's deficiencies can mask issues of inequality, an idea which further explained this particular discourse: there may have been attitudes and behaviour within this particular department which, although not prevalent, caused tension with other members of the department, as illustrated by Jason's unease when questioned about the department and his place in it. As such, this is an example of the challenge one teacher had in determining and managing his own self-development, and 'how power shapes our knowledge of the self' (Hutton 1988: 135) within and beyond such discourses. It did appear that Jason and Darius, in contrast, were in the process of managing their own self-development as teachers and of negotiating the tensions exemplified by this particular mode of subjection.

This tension between discourses of kindness and power, or perhaps of power manifesting itself as 'kindness', was further illustrated by Julia's comment that she had recognised that ESOL staff had been 'for years... going over the border into Social Work', an observation which expressed her unease within this particular mode of subjection: that the care evident within her department could have become, as she put it, 'condescending'. However, in her use of 'going over... to Social Work' she made it clear, in a similar way to Athene had done, that within her own overtly inclusive discourse there was a lack of inclusivity in

her assumption that Social Work is somehow inferior to Education, and that it is not where her teachers should be 'going'. In this respect, some of their utterances can be considered examples of inclusion as 'casual and empty cant' or thoughtless language which does not reflect the 'Discourse' of the ESOL department.

Julia continued her use of metaphor to express a contingent concern, referring to ESOL teachers 'living in the bubble of ESOL... in a culture not well informed about the whole college', emphasising her awareness that some teachers within the department considered the personal needs of ESOL learners too closely without focusing, as Darius clearly had been doing, on their 'telos', or broad future plans, and on how areas of the college might have supported these, for example in terms of shared dialogue concerning progression to further college courses. Her specific use of the present continuous, 'going over', linked to the adverbial phrase 'for years', was evidence that she had been aware for some time of the issue and of the potential danger of teachers being too separate in their own 'bubble', when collective, departmental dissonances of discourse or behaviour were not being addressed. It is this tension, which is evident in the language used, rather than the overt support for the teachers and their work, which is of interest here. It forms an example of the conflict that, by referring to Social Work in negative terms, Julia is colluding with such negative language, undermining her own attempts at inclusivity and thus perpetuating the very 'bubble of ESOL' which she purports to discourage. However, it could be that she is not negative in terms of comparing the two fields and deciding social work is inferior but simply that she, as an ESOL practitioner, wishes to

see other ESOL teachers stay committed to ESOL provision rather than losing them.

Tensions were also evident in the context of the learning itself, a further potential inhibitor of the ethical substances determined by the teachers. Biesta (2009: 1) states that 'Education, in its widest sense, is about how we welcome 'newcomers' into our worlds', but he has a concern that the shift towards... the 'production' of a particular kind of individual, is worrying' (ibid., p.9). This is entirely apposite when one considers the education of ESOL learners who are negotiating themselves within such a context. The difficulty is that this process has to be enacted under the guardianship of teachers who, as has been shown, had been using divisive language, and in doing so may, perhaps unwittingly, have contributed to perceived flaws in the learning and teaching process. It would have been difficult for an ESOL learner to feel included, confident and valued when distancing language was evidently being used by her own educators. But, as Jason's discourse indicated, it was also difficult for members of staff who did not share colleagues' collective views on, for example, contextualised syllabi. Indeed, Jason is an example of the unease one teacher was feeling in relation to a capillary of power which operated as mode of subjection within which he had to function.

### **6.3.3 Support staff and their particular power**

Within a college, teachers are, of course, not the only individuals who have a core role in supporting ESOL students' learning. Student or learner support staff also have 'a direct responsibility to ESOL learners in ensuring access to



'learning opportunities... and... qualifications' (College website: 2012). Here, too, there were discourses which illuminated not only the ethos of the wider college but also areas of tension which existed both for the ESOL teachers and potentially for the learners themselves. The MIS (Management Information Systems) manager expressed his opinion that 'ESOL is a demanding area... but... students have seen the college through difficult times'. This comment was a reference to the 'SUMS' (Student Units of Measurement), that is, the money the students attracted which supported the college when the need for finance was particularly acute. Even though he saw the students as 'demanding', he felt they had supported the college financially. Such language may be understandable from someone whose concern is with finance, but it appears, at the same time, to objectify the students who were 'allowed' to be demanding because of the finance they brought; so their perceived demanding behaviour was accepted. The discourse of the Head of Student Services further reflected this language as she referred throughout to ESOL students as 'they and them', without reference to individuals, their class or subject groups, thus distancing herself from the learners. As Head of Student Services this language could be argued to be an entirely reasonable overview. However, her apparent negativity is highlighted by her syntax, too; in using the conditional 'if there was a demand', omitting references to specific instances of support or practice. She also used vague verbs, in 'we *attempt* to include ESOL', and removing herself and her practice from direct involvement with the students: 'we've *never been asked*' (my italics). She gave no examples of her direct involvement with or support for the students at all. Her control of language faltered as she could not remember an instance of support for ESOL learners: 'you get sort of peculiar

requests [from ESOL learners] talking about gas being cut off... I was kinda... it was quite difficult to... where we were... so I just... phoned the gas company'. Her language, in its attempt at 'repair' and use of linguistic 'fillers' to suggest her unease, provided an example of a specific mode of subjection in which teachers, and the support staff themselves, were required to negotiate student services to provide a supportive learning experience for the learners. As the commentary of Medea, an experienced ESOL teacher, attested, in an individual interview 'if we do send them... downstairs [to Student Services] they don't get the... attention they need'; her hesitancy reflected her concern about 'blaming' this specific area of the college, but also emphasised practices whereby a teacher had to negotiate with support staff to function effectively in her role. In this instance this teacher refers also to students as 'they and them' but in this context her meaning is clear from the context, the lexis and the syntax: that she is concerned that the students do not get the support they are entitled to.

The particular discourse within Student Services was echoed by the college bursar who also referred to ESOL learners objectively; his use of the third person pronoun 'them' throughout, accompanied by his choice of lexis such as 'demanding' resulted in a discursive pairing which linked the negative 'them' with objective grammar, resulting in the bursar apparently distancing himself linguistically from what might have been a helpful discussion of their needs or the support which he might have been able to provide. He appeared to objectify the learners with his distancing, second person grammar to refer to himself noting that: 'when money's involved... you're the bad one', which, with its superficial jocularly, removed responsibility from himself as an actor who could have supported the learners, and therefore the teachers, more effectively.

Through his distancing discourse on this occasion, he represented a specific mode of subjection which teachers were required to negotiate in order to ensure that their students were financially supported which in turn ensures that they are free of worry to develop their learning effectively.

#### **6.3.4 Assessment as a disciplinary technique**

The process of assessment, which can be considered to be one of the required hurdles which ESOL learners have to negotiate, can also be considered as a 'mode of subjection'. This can be exemplified by analysing the practice of assessment and the 'power', in this case the strictures around assessment, which regulates the assessment process.

A prime illustration of such power and its 'intensification' can be seen in the 'assessment opportunity' which relates to the process of internal assessment. Jason, in his individual interview, referred to an 'Assessment Opportunity' within the departmental syllabus with a response containing some sarcasm: 'Are you going to have an assessment opportunity in week one?' where his tone reveals the fact that assessment permeates the syllabus. The term 'assessment "opportunity,"' from the teachers' perspective, made clear in the focus group, refers to moments or 'opportunities' to assess learners, even during the first week of the course. In Foucauldian terms, the necessity that learners 'fit in to' the structure or departmental practice illustrates that they are being objectified further, constrained into an existing college timetable and syllabus upon which such 'opportunities' are placed. An 'Assessment Opportunity' may appear to be a route to a potential level of class for the learner, but in reality it is another way of ensuring conformity, as all students will be measured and placed in classes

according to their 'achievement'. This process, however, ignores the potential for collective anxiety on the part of both learners and teachers that learners will not succeed, will not move through the levels, and will, hence, be unable to move from the college to a place of work or further study to function as users of the English language in the social context of the 'real world'. There may be a hint of reciprocity or even of implied success within the noun 'opportunity', but in fact none exists; the assessment is done, ticked off, noted, and the teacher's mind moves on to the next one, as illustrated by Jason's reference to his Advanced class: 'with the Higher class, the exam itself is right in my mind... all we'll think about is getting the assessment.' His use of the inclusive personal deixis 'we' illustrates his involvement in his learners and the requirement that they take the assessment.

Nealon (2008: 39) further elucidates Foucault's notion of 'intensification' which resonates precisely with this practice of continuous assessment, where:

It gains... greater 'market share' in a given socius, successfully linking itself to... transforming, myriad other practices, and finally functioning to remake the very objects to which it had initially attached itself.

In this case, the market share is the omnipresence of such assessment methodology and practice in every school and college across Scotland, where learning and teaching, and classroom management on the part of the teacher, have been constructed to ensure time and space for these assessments. The 'objects remade' can be regarded as the timetable, the classroom setting and even the learners themselves, who through both language and practice become not individuals but 'objects' in the process.

Specific ESOL qualifications, as developed in line with the 'The Adult ESOL Strategy', do indeed support ESOL learners, as attainment can support their progression and thus their developing learner identity within, and beyond, the college sector. However, there is a dichotomy: these qualifications and their associated assessments which are intended to support can also be considered, in Foucauldian terms, as normativity or biopower, in its crudest form. Medea, one of the teachers interviewed individually for this study, was vehement in her views regarding the assessment process: 'qualifications lead the teaching, absolutely, and in a negative way'. In her view, the power or attendant biopower is wielded not only throughout the assessment processes but has also become fundamental to the learning and teaching process. In parallel, the teacher's own success as an educator is highlighted by the student's success: the 'discipline' has therefore resulted in benefit to both student and teacher and thus the status of the college itself. The developed language, learner progression, the place of the teacher as a 'bridge' to the real world for the migrant ESOL learner, and the resultant strong learner retention and progression statistics, can combine to produce positive results so that this particular assessment system, although it can be considered as 'disciplinary', can be argued to have resulted in positive outcomes for the individual learner.

At the initial focus group, Atalanta stated that 'Learning Outcomes are a key issue', a comment which was expanded by Cleo, who had been previously been very quiet, when she added that 'we go from assessment to assessment... there's a lot of coursework... lot of pressure'. The narrative nature of her discourse 'we go from...', the repetition of 'lot of' reflected an articulate woman who was so dispirited by the process, and so tentative in sharing her concerns

after having sat quietly, that she could not function grammatically. This was further evidenced by the missing article before the reference to 'pressure', which reflected her unease. Jason echoed her concerns, thoughtfully placing the requirement for Learning Outcomes (LOs) in context by referring to 'certain expectations' in that 'HMIE and the British Council focus on LOs because that's what they want to see... we have to respond...', referring to additional, extrinsic modes of subjection and linking this to the specifics under discussion. Atalanta, however, noted that: 'I don't have a problem with Internal Assessment. It's better... for our students... 'cos it can affect visas and such'. Perhaps her response is understandable within such a context where 'success' is driven by such a powerful, extrinsic force as the Citizenship test which, as Rebus made clear, can affect students' futures.

Teachers are therefore caught in something of a 'double-bind' here: some, like Medea, are aware of the constant pressure or 'discipline' of assessment, while others, like Atalanta, can see that the attainment of the relevant qualifications can lead a student to his or her 'telos', which is often associated with the teacher's own 'telos' since the teacher has achieved a certain success as an educator.

#### **6.4 Self - practice or ethical work: 'Compliance' and the discourses**

It was the continuous effort and motivation of this group of teachers which ensured that they were able to support their learners effectively despite the myriad modes of subjection they encountered. Goodson and Dowbiggin (1990: 126) refer to 'the ever-increasing control exerted by examinations, syllabuses,

textbooks and teacher-training' which is a 'process of disciplining subjectivity into 'docile bodies'' (ibid.) but this group of teachers worked to circumvent challenges in their way and did not behave like subjugated docile bodies. Foucault refers to 'Self-practice' or 'ethical work' which is exactly what such lecturers have undertaken, individually and collectively within their ESOL Department, to ensure that they have been able to function as teachers within the constraints of their role and thus offer a better learning experience for the students in their care. The ESOL lecturers worked, in their own 'micro' context, to try to assimilate their experience and prior training to function within 'the modes of subjection', that is, to negotiate the tensions and the expectations of their roles, and to transform themselves, or to transcend the status quo, by their own efforts within and upon their environment. These efforts were reflected in a complex set of practices within which some teachers were able to work with the tensions, and to accomplish a 'balance' within the modes of subjection, more successfully than others.

Crowther (2004, cited in Morgan-Klein and Osborne, 2007: 131–132) asserts that that lifelong learning is 'part of a hegemonic project to internalise compliance', an idea which resonated with the experience of the staff member who functions by negotiating within such inherent relations of power, tensions or modes of subjection. Medea clearly found it difficult to negotiate the structures embedded within student support, but did not give up: 'I was [at Student Services] all the time... we go down, smiling and everything... and something usually gets... solved. With teacher intervention.' Again, the simple, self-effacing 'smiling and everything' masked a teacher determined to get the best for her students, someone who really did have her students' wellbeing at

heart and who has been negotiating her own path, by way of such ethical work, through the existing and often complex layers of power. She referred to her work as involving 'quite a lot of pastoral care... lots and lots of extra guidance... definitely... they need to know where they're going'. She was modest in the reference she made to what she did ('quite a lot') to support her students, and the lack of guidance time which required 'lots and lots... extra', an oblique reference to the paucity of time allocated and the 'extra' which had to be done by 'we', herself and her colleagues, to obviate this particular mode of subjection. She was careful, however, to include her colleagues, as she continued: 'the teachers here anyway do much more than their job... guidance time... often goes well over half hour but that's ok; I think most teachers accept that's part of the job'. The simple 'but that's ok' summarised this woman's motivation, as did her inclusive language in support of her colleagues, within the strictures both of the ESOL department and of the college's hierarchical regulations and discourses. She emphasised that they were doing 'much more', evidenced by the double comparative, and referred to their ethical work as one of the ways in which they negotiated the modes of subjection. In a similar way, they 'accepted' that this extension of the guidance role, which resulted in more work for them, was one of the ways in which they could work to overcome the challenges confronting them.

Medea also made reference to the 'sensitivity' required in her role and described how 'I try to get students interested in each others' cultures and countries. Sensitivity is important... you have one class with so many cultures and backgrounds together.' Medea offered a context for her ethical work which included her colleagues and their determination to work for the benefit of their



students; her reference to 'sensitivity' does not try to compete with that of other colleagues as it is couched in language which supports both the diversity and the difference of the students and is not self-referential. This particular 'ethical work' was undertaken to actively involve the diverse backgrounds and learning experiences of the learners. In this way she worked within her department where language such as Cassandra's was not challenged but had no recourse to it herself; indeed, she transcended it. She further described the 'lovely group of people... I like to see them working so well together. They come from countries where women aren't equal but in this class... they are.' Her language was simple but underpinned her interest in her students and her attention to potential barriers, as well as her efforts, through 'ethical work', to surmount them.

In a similar way, Jason made clear, in his individual interview, that he was able to use and negotiate the confines and strictures of power existing within the existing syllabus. His 'moral self' was effective despite the existence and interplay of the layers of power, and he was honest in observing that: 'it's quite a difficult thing to design a syllabus and we don't have that much expertise'. He was fluent and assured, albeit lacking expertise in this area, in contrast with his hesitation and unease at distancing himself from his department. His fluency developed when he referred to the 'ethical work' he did in order to separate himself from this collective 'unit' of power. It was evident from Jason's discourse that he had been constrained by the practices of other teachers, and from Medea's that she had tensions with structures which were extrinsic but tangential to the work of the ESOL department, but the two teachers resolved them in their own ways for the benefit of the learners and their learning. Medea

had also enabled staff in student services to work within these strictures, as by her thoughtful and good-natured approach, 'smiling and everything', she enabled them to support the students without any tension. In fact, her 'ethical work' provoked, in the gentlest of ways, a change in behaviour, which represented an easing of the strictures. In contrast, Cassandra's discourse suggested an imbalance with the mode of subjection. Her emphasis was on her own power, not on a resolution to benefit the learners and the development of their identities. It was interesting to note that Julia, the Head of School, was aware of such language and its potential effect on both the students and indeed the morale of members of the department in her references to certain members of staff and 'going over... to Social Work'. In articulating that she acknowledged this, Julia used her position as observer and manager to comment on this particular pattern. By doing so, she made it clear that she was aware of the generic ethos, and discourse, of care bordering on condescension in her department, and was able, as manager, to challenge this behaviour and to effect change if she chose to do so. This was a sign that there was perhaps a tension within a tension; that the Head of School had commented, without further action up to this point, that many of the ESOL staff 'exist in a culture where they're not as informed about the whole college as they ought to be... that's my problem'. In its acknowledgement of the issue and also her self-awareness that 'that's my problem', she noted that action was required, but made it clear that she was operating 'under new, financial constraints' which were 'just taking up all [her] energy. The fact that this manager had not taken time (or 'energy') to inform the ESOL department of their place within 'the whole college' is an example of another mode of subjection with which the teachers

had to negotiate: the lack of managerial effectiveness, in this instance, and the hypothetical difference an intervention might have made to the departmental discourse. On the other hand, Athene, the Senior Lecturer, actively conflated her role with that of the ESOL teachers, but not simply in her apparently supportive language for her department. She also worked with the teachers to counteract a specific, extrinsic mode of subjection, that of the role of assessment within the teaching of ESOL, which was in itself evidence of the efficacy of this particular 'self-work'.

It is clear that some teachers felt thwarted in their classroom practice by the nature and volume of assessment within ESOL. Jason's summarising comment, expounded in the focus group, and tentatively phrased as an opinion, 'so I think LOs permeate the whole of ESOL', went to the heart of much of the concern over assessment within the department. As a mode of subjection centred in external examination bodies it might have been considered insurmountable, but Athene led this ESOL department in its ethical work to make assessment more relevant to the work of the department as a whole, explaining that 'we wrote a Unit'; and that 'our Internal Verification is well embedded', and linking this to the 'taster classes we've started' to support progression. By using the word 'we' she continued with her customary discourse of inclusion; this may previously have had more to do with publicity, but here is an example of her own 'signature' ethical work.

Athene, then, in her Senior Lecturer role, was able to work ethically to balance the specific tensions inherent in departmental concerns about assessment, but in doing so ultimately effected a balance in the department's relationship with the qualifications body. Furthermore, this initial work allowed her to contribute to

the collaborative design of future qualifications which supported the assessment of existing and current ESOL candidates. This ethical work, which was initially instigated by one person to support colleagues, is an example of how systems can be changed by a willing, motivated individual working with others within an existing system to effect real change if a specific mode of subjection proves extremely challenging. As Medea said, 'whatever she does, she does the magic' thereby emphasising the respect afforded to Athene for negotiating such modes of subjection, which made it easier for the teachers to do their jobs. The teachers recognised her self-work and its efficacy and the resultant respect, in its acknowledgement of the importance of Athene's role, was in itself further evidence of the cumulative nature of this particular 'self-work' and its impact, in turn, on the work of the teachers.

Such development and use of a collective discourse can ensure that, where possible, teachers are supported in practice. They can therefore be effective in their key role as English language teachers who also enable progression within and beyond learning to the particular and personal 'telos' for each student.

## **6.5 The telos or end-point**

Individual contributions such as Athene's are the reasons why a department functions. It became evident that Athene's support for her colleagues had prompted her own ethical work, which ultimately made a difference to the practice of assessment and at the same time supported the 'teloi', or in Darius' words, the routes to 'the real world', of the students in her care. Similarly, Medea's ethical work provoked a change in the practices of Student Services which enabled students to be supported both financially and practically in their

learning, further developing more direct routes to each learner's individual 'telos'. In this way, the teacher, who had been enabling the students' progression routes were taking part in a cohesive community of learning, of co-support and practice. When asked, teachers referred to their goal or 'telos' as being to support the ESOL learners as best they could. The individual 'telos' of the ESOL department was stated in wider college documentation (2012) quite baldly as being that it 'enables students to gain qualifications recognised both in the UK and internationally. It prepares students for further study or employment.' This, in its use of stark, official third person and present-tense verbs, diminishes the individual and collective practice and resultant success of such a department by its omission of any reference to the continuous and ongoing work done to enable such progress.

Similarly, there could be no reference within such official discourse to an individual teacher's 'telos' as articulated by Darius or Medea. These two teachers understood that to be effective meant more than simply stating that they wanted their students to succeed; rather, their own 'teloi' were evident in their practice and their behaviour. They did what was right or 'ethical', they instilled confidence and developed a sense of self in and for their students, and they were each a particular type of teacher whose motivation not only permeated their discourses but ultimately influenced their students' learning and lives. Jackson and Mattei (2012: 60) state that: 'what was most interesting to Foucault was how it is possible for subjects to understand themselves in relation to others'; following this line of thought, it was clear that teachers such as Jason, Cleo and Medea, while furthering relations with their students as well

their colleagues throughout the college, displayed the *savoir* necessary for the transformation, en route, to their own, individual, telos.

Juno, a new member of this department, mused within the focus group that: 'I think that to be an ESOL teacher... it's something different altogether... I think it's about being very respectful'. This respect for their students, for each other, as noted in Medea's genuinely inclusive language, was central to both the discourse and the work of this ESOL department, and allowed insight into why they worked as they did, as well as insight into their own telos. The 'respect' was at the heart of the determination or motivations of these teachers, unspoken, but evident in the articulation of their ethical substances; it was a respect for themselves, their colleagues and for their learners but also for the work they did to make the department effective. Respect underpinned their practice and so made the learning context and experience better, and more supportive for their students.

Medea acknowledged that 'I enjoy the variety... and the job satisfaction at the end of a year... the challenge'; her hesitancy illustrated how varied a job this could be with its resultant and ultimate 'at the end of a year' satisfactions. It did seem that the teachers, some of whom were self-effacing, committed and hard-working, saw their own 'telo'i' as more than simply support for the students in theirs; it was rather, intrinsic to their motivation. Jason was hesitant: 'Emm... it depends... it's my job and... it's not to say that I'm always successful 'cos I'm not. But I love it'. Medea thought carefully and commented: 'It's good to learn English anyway to live in this country together. And I just help them'. This succinct and positive response, seemingly tentative with its use of 'anyway' to

summarise what was 'good', was indicative of Medea's affirming commentary throughout.

The practice of teachers such as Jason and Medea illustrated the cyclical nature of the impact of good teaching. Darius had an awareness of the potential impact of his role as he spoke of his role as a 'bridge' supporting language learning for the 'real world'; Medea referred to 'the joy of seeing young people who've come from fractured backgrounds... making something of their lives, working in a shop, doing hairdressing, going to Uni... when you meet them – and you do! – a couple of years' later'. This 'joy' in her work, which was similar to Jason's expressed 'love' for his job, was clear in the teachers' commitment, as their shared energies contributed to the co-creation of an effective and respectful department where teachers 'cared', as Julia noted. This shared discourse developed and underpinned the morale, ethos and practice among these teachers and contributed to the core value of respect which was central to both the teaching and the efficacy of the department; the result was a cycle of respect which supported both teachers and learners, and from which each benefitted and progressed.

From the teachers' 'micro' narratives it has been possible to learn about the 'macro': the impact of the respect that teachers had for their students. Jason commented that, 'In fact... to be honest, I think they bring more than we give them. If anything maybe we boost their confidence...', a rather self-deprecating reference to the 'boost' given to the students in their progress and their iterative learner identities referred to by Cleo in the initial focus group. This in itself was evidence of the 'care' evident within the department, and of the 'telos'-in-action of these teachers. Medea's reflection on Athene's 'magic' is indicative of the

thoughtfulness arising from such practice, as she recognised the impact of Athene's work not only on the work of the department but on the lives of its students.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 57) offer the reflection that 'practices take on significance... for the ways in which they disrupt or sustain relations of power and advance knowledge'. What is clear from the analysis of the staff discourses offered in this chapter is that there has been, and remains, conflict within this ESOL department which manifests in two main ways. Firstly, in the language used by the teachers to describe themselves in relation to the learners; and secondly, in the different strengths and indeed weaknesses of the managers and in how this has, or has not, been used to disrupt relations of power, particularly with regard to assessment. Within these constraints it is clear that not only have the teachers considered the impact of their own practices and worked as far as possible and, in general, collectively, to be a more effective ESOL department, but that the knowledge gained therein supports, respects and develops both the learning and the learners in their care. Such practices (specifically, the ethical work of the teachers) have indeed 'disrupted' relations of power within the learning context in the most positive way. They have further 'advanced knowledge': of themselves, their colleagues and of the learning context which has simultaneously enabled learners to advance their own knowledge of English and of themselves, so that ultimately they can progress towards the 'telos' they have chosen. As Ball (1990: 3) asserts, 'the world is



perceived differently in different discourses...[it] is structured by assumptions within which any speaker must operate in order to be heard as meaningful'.

## **7. Chapter 7 - Conclusion: Challenges and Implications**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This study investigates and reflects on the learning experience of migrant ESOL learners and their teachers in the college sector. It is an account of some significance, as the research is underpinned by Foucault's framework of the 'Technologies of the Self' (1982, 1984, 1985), and its application to this group of ESOL learners and their learning is unique. Having located the research within this framework, the students' and teachers' practices of the self were uncovered and clarified further with the help of Foucault's work on disciplinary techniques and practices. This particular work, considered specifically with regard to the disciplinary nature of knowledge and language, helped to examine the students' broader learning experiences and the associated practices, as discussed within the discourses generated in the interviews carried out with learners, teachers and other relevant staff at the college site.

As a result of this research it has become clear that the work of Foucault is relevant to learners in a current educational setting, specifically that of the college sector and its related practices, which situate and affect the learning, progression and the emergent learner identities of migrant ESOL students. It was possible to discern from this Foucauldian approach to the learner and staff discourses that individual students work within their own ethical codes to make appropriate choices regarding their progression through learning towards their

chosen destinations in life. Perhaps one of the most interesting strands of the learner discourses is that each was managing to steer their own lives regardless of the manifestations and layers of power which they had to negotiate to achieve their goals. They showed themselves to be active learners, not 'docile bodies', and were co-creators of their own learning, despite the number of strictures in their way. The research illustrates that ESOL learners trust the process of learning and progression underpinning the Scottish education system and have an associated respect for their teachers who, they believe, will work hard to deliver the best learning experience for them. They also appeared to be sophisticated in their ability to discern the patterns of behaviour which help them progress in (and beyond) their learning. Their discourses illustrate that they were mimicking the rather 'therapeutic' language of some of the teachers and that they appeared to be doing this in order to build some investment in the connected practices which would enable them to further their own goals, and to transcend the status of 'learner' to succeed in their new lives. In addition, they reflected on the ways in which language learning had affected their identity as both learners and individuals, and the ways in which this was manifested.

Their lecturers appeared to be juggling imperatives associated with their individual 'telos' or goal. In general, most were motivated by a duty to support the learning process, and thus enhance the prospects of their learners, as well as by a sense of working towards their own goals as ethically as possible. The process of teaching, and the associated progress of each teacher towards her own 'telos', is bound up in layers of potentially tentative practices. Such progression appears to depend on the practices and even the whims of

individuals, whether they are students, colleagues or individuals representing internal or external forces. What became clear is that the teachers working within this web of conflicting practices and strands of power have to negotiate the best 'telos' for themselves and, at the same time, support their students within these different and potentially changing demands. Throughout, the teachers exercise care towards the learners, as was evident in the discourses of individual teachers, and which also appeared to have become a practice of the ESOL department itself where the teachers were working collectively to support their learners. Their own work and personal 'path' towards its associated 'telos' is evidenced by references to an awareness that colleagues throughout the college need to work together, and in an ethical manner, to enhance opportunities for their learners no matter what obstacles are in the way. It appears that certain teachers embody the transformative process inherent within each individual's route to a 'telos', an idea which is reminiscent of Foucault's advice (1982: 216) that 'we have to imagine and to build up what we could be'.

The intention throughout this research has been to present an analysis of the discourses of both learners and teachers in order to benefit the future learning and teaching of ESOL migrants and, in so doing, to represent all teachers and students accurately and with integrity. This has been done within the confines of the research brief and the interpretation of the Foucault's framework. During the process of the data collection and analysis, it has been possible to answer the research questions as well as ensuring that the research might 'make... a difference in struggles for social justice' (Lather 1996: 18).

Some reflections on the conduct of the research and on its process and outcomes are now presented in the following sections.

## **7.2 The main findings of the research**

The study aimed ‘to understand how a college supports its migrant ESOL learners in their learning and progression through the college context’. Its results provided an understanding of, and insight into, the staff practices in the college and its support for migrant learners and their progression. It is clear that the college is effective in providing this support as the structures, as discussed by the staff interviewed, combine to support its migrant ESOL learners in a variety of ways, while the staff work within these structures to enable learners to succeed, despite the layers of power which appear to constrict or limit their practices in some respects. It became evident through the interviews that staff are motivated to work through such ‘modes of subjection’ for the benefit of the learners in their institution.

The study’s associated objectives were ‘to investigate how the discourses of a college frame the migrant ESOL learner’s experience and contribute to the construction of their learner identities’, as well as ‘to examine the success of the learning experience for the migrant learner in college’. These are considered within a discussion of how each research question was answered, as follows:

1. How do the discourses and practices of the college frame the learning experience of individual migrant students?

This question is answered through an examination and discussion of the practices and discourses of the participating migrant ESOL learners and college staff, as presented in the previous chapters. It is clear that the practices of the college, as discussed within the discourses, support individuals' learning experience, as students commented on the support that they were given for their studies, both in and out of the classroom. Learners had positive experiences of the learning and teaching, and illustrated the ways in which they were able to progress to their 'telos' because of this. In discussing the college practices regarding learning and support, the learner discourses framed the experience as one which enabled their own potential; this was evident from the language of the learners' individual and shared discourses. The learners appeared to have developed a collective language of praise when referring to the teachers and their practice, which was illustrative of the positivity of their learning experience but might also have been used to help them to negotiate the previously unknown, and specific, linguistic practices of the college and its teachers, a way in which they thereby 'complied' with what was expected of them in order to progress to their 'telos'. Moreover, the more negative aspects of the staff interviews, from members of the support staff, were overcome by the positive practices of some of the individual teachers interviewed, for example Medea, so in this respect her behaviour has obviated the negative discourse and helped to create an overall college ethos which is capable of enabling students' learning and progression. Similarly, any potential impact of 'exclusive' language embedded in the discourse of both managers was in part resolved by the individuals themselves, within much more supportive and inclusive language and indeed practice.

2. How do ESOL teachers understand and construct their practices through their discourses?

The analysis of the staff discourses, based on Foucault's 'Technologies of the Self', provides an answer to the above question. It is clear that the class teachers interviewed worked mainly in a supportive manner to co-construct a collective identity and practice within the ESOL department. This seems to be one of mutual respect for both the staff and the learners, thus enabling both learning and teaching, and therefore viable routes of progression, for their learners. Julia's reference to the 'malleability' of new staff can be considered as rather contradictory, however: it seems that these staff are being 'developed' by the existing members of the department in order to enable students' learning, but within such a practice they do not appear to have agency; they are almost 'constructed' by their colleagues. This is, however, refuted by the discourse of Juno, the newest member of staff, who has come to understand that 'respect' is fundamental to the practice of an ESOL teacher, so that her own opinions are made despite any attempt at her 'formation' as a department member. It is also refuted by the discourse and practice of Medea, an established member of the department, who does not appear to 'construct' individuals but whose discourse, in its inclusivity, embraces her colleagues. Through her discourse, she is able to work collaboratively across the college and adapts her practice to effect change on either 'micro', or classroom, level or in a 'macro' context to circumvent potentially inhibiting practices which are part of the wider college structure.

The collective discourse of the staff interviewed for the focus group is not shared by one of the lecturers who displays a rather condescending attitude to her learners. Nor is it shared wholly by the two managers, as is illustrated by Athene's inclusive grammar while she 'excludes' from the discourse what she considers to be less successful. She is, however, honest in expressing that there is a 'limit' within the ESOL department's practice in her discussion of the challenges in which they work. Athene has, furthermore, used her position to effect change and better learning and teaching experiences for both students and teachers in her positive intervention to the SQA over assessment; in this way, she shows that her own actions can affect the practice of the department as a whole. In contrast, the Head of School, who holds more responsibility, seemed reluctant to inform her colleagues about the wider college practices, an action which might have supported his colleagues. Her discursive 'shrug' 'that's my problem' is perhaps hopeful; that she is aware that this needs to be done but is hampered, currently, by wider political and social constraints.

The discourses outlined above give the impression of a department which aims, overall, to be respectful and inclusive, and which is developing an ethos of care which emanates from individual teachers, but whose collective ethos is being restricted by its insularity resulting from its leader's lack of action. In contrast, the Senior Lecturer has directly intervened in national assessment to support practice within and beyond the college.

Such practices (specifically, the ethical work of the teachers) have thus 'disrupted' relations of power within the learning context in the most positive way.



3. To what extent do the practices of the college support the identities, learning and progression routes of the migrant learner?

The discussion addressing this question is located throughout the data analysis chapters, and reflects the fact that the students' identities, learning and progression routes are, generally, well supported within the case study college. It is clear that the values at the heart of the ESOL department, such as respect for learners and their goals, have been supported by its practices in building learner confidence and shaping learner achievement through the tailoring of teaching material or in the encouragement of learner engagement in the classroom. This is generally supported by the discourse of the non-academic staff and, with a few exceptions, and after some intervention on the part of ESOL staff, contributes to practices by which learners feel supported. This is evidenced by the pleasure expressed in the learners' discourses at receiving bus passes, good service in the canteen and a sense of belonging in the library, and has contributed to their positive descriptions of their learning in the college. This positive feeling has enabled them to progress and, for example in the case of Hermes or Remus, to believe that the learning is taking them towards their goal which, in turn, is contributing to the building their identity as learners and future citizens of the UK. Much of the learners' discursive practices evidenced their negotiation of their learning and their goals, while at the same time having to adapt themselves, their learning behaviour and language, and in turn, their learner identities to challenges encountered. They expressed their positive attitudes to their acquisition of English, and the ways in which the learning and teaching has prepared them for a future in the UK.

4. How are current assessment practices constituted and how do they operate within the college?

Foucault's work on disciplinary practices, as it is applicable to the current practices of ESOL assessment and their effect on the learning and teaching within the college, is central to this question and is discussed within the chapters focused on the data. It was clear that the students interviewed all had to reconsider, or even renounce, their prior experience of assessment as learners whose attainment would be considered according to the UKVI or university and college entrance requirements. As such, they have been 'measured' according to new standards and assessed in a very different way, to the amusement of some and the consternation of others. It is evident that such assessment practices are, at the same time, necessary for students' advancement, as the attainment of specific qualifications ensures progression, for example to an HNC course or to support the return to the learner's previous profession, as discussed by both Philo and Hermes in individual interviews. It is also apparent that teachers feel somewhat constrained by certain assessment practices, but evident that teachers' agency can disrupt the more 'disciplinary' nature of such practice, as was achieved by Athene.

### **7.3 Limitations of the research**

Although it has been possible to answer the research questions, and also to have provided insights into the learning experience of ESOL learners who

participated in this study, the research has some limitations. These are now discussed in turn.

### **7.3.1 The framework itself**

In using this framework, there was no opportunity for either the researcher or the participants to return to review each 'telos', if required. It was clear from the data that the learners were very sure of their goals and their intended progression routes. However, within other contexts, this framework, in which goals have to be reviewed regularly, might not have worked. Philo's discourse in relation to his goals and his description of how they were almost subverted by inaccurate guidance can be considered as an example of how the individual, in this case in collaboration with the Engineering staff, is sometimes required to return to negotiating the modes of subjection and thereafter their ethical work in order to achieve their 'telos'. It is not clear, from his various writing on the 'Technologies of the Self', if this is the way in which Foucault intended his theory to be used. As the researcher, I had the temerity to wonder whether Foucault might therefore have 'missed a step' in his framework.

It was also clear that this framework might be better used with teachers, whose motivation and 'ethical substance' is more evident, or at least perhaps easier to define, than that of many of the learners. With this group of learners, whose ethical substance is perhaps easier to articulate because it is linked so inextricably to identity, language and culture, situating the framework seemed reasonable in order to illustrate their motivations. This might not be possible when working with, for example, a diverse group of secondary school pupils or

university students. The potential use of this framework with educators, or prospective educators, is discussed below.

### **7.3.2 The researcher**

Perhaps the most obvious limitation lies with the researcher. The most difficult activity, which in itself is an example of the researcher's 'ethical work' during the process of this study, has been that of the intellectual archaeology, involving the attempt to uncover and interpret Foucault's 'Technologies' as rigorously and as clearly as possible and, thereafter, to offer this analysis a locus in a modern educational setting. In situating the research in a Foucauldian 'frame', it was necessary to grapple with the philosophy while trying to access the language and perambulations of Foucault's thinking, particularly as few concrete examples were offered in the original sources. This may be considered by some as a 'limitation', as the study itself is one researcher's analysis of the context and discourses within such a framework.

An associated, and serious limitation, is that Andersen (2003: 2) suggests that 'it is not possible... to draw out a coherent discourse theory from [Foucault's] work'. This view has required the present researcher, and will require any future researchers, to be absolutely rigorous in both the intellectual archaeology referred to above, as well as the application of the theory to a specific context while being convinced of the appropriateness of the theory which has underpinned the research.

### 7.3.3 The strong Foucauldian basis

It could be argued that this study is limited by the strong Foucauldian basis. It is true that a study can only be as strong as the theory which underpins it, and Foucault has his critics. 'The major critique levelled against his work is that he tends to absorb too much into 'discourse'' (Hall 2001: 78), which is elaborated by Wetherell, who asserts (2001: 390) that:

those influenced by Foucault tend to take an all-embracing definition of discourse as human meaning-making processes in general....His notion of discursive formation...thus encapsulates broad social strategies and their institutional and administrative manifestations.

As one 'influenced' by Foucault I can only cite context in my defence for the use of this framework: the discourses at play within this college context are of interest specifically because they are spoken by migrant learners who are developing as both individuals and language learners with this specific host community; to ignore the 'institution' and the 'administrative', as represented by Student Services, within the discussion would seem to me to dislocate the learners' discourse from influences which help both to situate and to form it. Wilkin has argued (1999: 200) that 'for Foucault it is the malleability and lack of fixity to human identity that is crucial...[which is] an area of some controversy' but the ESOL learners interviewed for this study have explained the ways in which their identity and associated behaviour is 'different' and thus not fixed. Later writers such as Norton (1997), West (1996) and Gallacher et al. (2002) have underlined, for this researcher, the need to examine the iterative nature of identity particularly when this is concerned with a major transition, whether this

be to, or through, education or beyond borders. Wilkin (1999: 201) explains that: 'for Chomsky we... [have] a rich innate inheritance from which and in conjunction with existing social forms we are able to generate diverse practices, beliefs, and understandings of the world.' Chomsky had his own, very public, disagreement with Foucault, in 1971, but his belief that we are not separate from 'existing social forms' but must work to understand them and how they influence our 'understandings' of our world seems to me to chime with Foucault's view that the linguistic element of a discourse cannot be separated from its context.

Hoskin (1990: 46) asks, 'How did Foucault go so wrong?' with reference to the specific context of examinations. He continued, 'he erred by confusing the invention of formal academic examination with the invention of modern formal academic examination'. I would argue that my use of Foucault within this study is informative; he did indeed refer to a previous era, but his reflections can also be considered thought-provoking for this study and its reference to the 'modern formal academic examination' within which test systems such as IELTS, so relevant to many ESOL learners' lives, are situated. In a similar way, his focus on the examination also leads to a congruent discussion of the place of the (continuous) assessment 'opportunity' and its resultant effect on both teachers and learners.

Finally, there are other theorists whose work I could have used and discussed, but my interest is in discourse in the context of learning. I am concerned with what a discourse reveals about the learner or teacher, his or her learner identity and the context in which he is learning, as well as the ways in which, linguistically, these revelations are articulated and developed. These are some

of Foucault's own concerns. In my position as an educator, this information has helped to inform my understanding of the use of language and thus my own practice which is something of a 'by-product' of this research. I am therefore, convinced, that this study has benefitted from, and has not been limited by, its strong Foucauldian underpinnings.

## **7.4 Implications of findings**

The research contributes to the knowledge of the discipline of ESOL because it is situated in the established academic literature of the field and, perhaps more importantly, it illustrates that the work of Foucault is relevant and indeed central, to this context, and specifically to its staff and its learners. In this way, it is a means of encouraging ESOL professionals to reflect on their practice from a different perspective and to think deeply about the areas of learner progression and identity which have been discussed in this study.

### **7.4.1 Potential impact on practice**

For the present research to be of value, it must in some way open a dialogue so that 'funders and users... recognise the modest practical contribution that [it] offers' (Hammersely 2002: 9). If so, the research might result in a change of practice which will ultimately improve the learning experience for both teachers and learners. Allan has suggested (2008: 126) that 'Foucault's framework of ethics could be used by teacher educators to try to interrupt the machinery... and create more inclusive practices.' This suggestion is wholly pertinent both to this study and the context in which it was written: the staff of any college should consider that not only do ESOL learners have to negotiate a new language within a new country, but they must also negotiate the unique power relations

within the institution of learning itself. For this reason, it is important to consider new ways of locating Foucauldian ethics within the practice of a college, both among teachers and to support learners within an initial induction framework, in negotiating the learning process and the college itself.

One possible way of embedding the Foucauldian ethics is that college teachers would have timetabled sessions to discuss learning goals with the learners, using Foucault's framework as a prompt to discuss progress. Such a discussion of learner goals, potential and actual obstacles and the 'ethical' work that the students might do to enable these goals should ensure that the learners are more focused working individually, with timetabled support, to progress their own learning. Encouraging them to consider the work they do as 'ethical' in this way would enhance each individual's self-awareness and develop their learner identity, which should contribute to learner confidence. For this to be effective, it would be necessary for a lecturer, such as Jason or Medea, to be given the role of facilitator of this unique approach to guidance. In so doing, the results of this thesis could be discussed, along with the potential benefits it could bring to each student and his or her progression through learning. The results of such an exercise would, further, contribute to shaping learning and teaching practice.

There is a need for discussion with both teachers and student services staff regarding viable, supportive induction processes for learners. Foucault's framework could be used to provoke debate which would influence induction practice. It could be used within the existing internal college review process by working with facilitators to review and adapt existing course review materials in such a way as to allow focus on the learner-centred 'telos', as well as on potential obstacles and ways to deal with these, where students are



encouraged to take responsibility for their own 'ethical work'. If, as has been argued, educational research's 'main function... is to inform public debates about educational issues' (Hammersely 2002: 25), then this study could feasibly be used in discussion with ESOL teachers, particularly at this time of deregulation of Scottish colleges where staff are required to rethink practice in relation to revised finance, in addressing how best to support the learning experience of migrant ESOL learners. The study and its focus on Foucault's framework could be discussed with members of a college's policy group in order to consider the language of college policy on equality and inclusion, and the associated language used throughout the college in relation to ESOL learners.

It is clear to this researcher that Foucault's Technologies of the Self framework could be discussed also within induction and training programmes in the university sector, where it could be used to support new ESOL and English as a Foreign (or Second) Language (EFL) students, in collaboration with lecturers, to consider the 'ethical' construction of their goals and progression towards them. It is envisaged that such practice could be disseminated at ESOL and TESOL conferences to encourage debate with colleagues around how best practice in real educational contexts can arise based on research such as this.

However, within the above suggestions there would continue to be some concern over issues of power and the disciplinary practices associated with, and arising from, Foucault's theory. It is vital that this research is applied after prior discussion with the learners, as imposing such a framework would still be an imposition of power from above which the students would have to follow. To obviate this, I would suggest that the students themselves are involved in

setting goals; in addition, it is vital that they decide on the 'ethical substance' as otherwise the practice would result in a discussion of disciplinary practice which is itself undermined by a form of the same disciplinary practice. As Biggs advises (1999: 60), it should be 'clear to students...where they are supposed to be going' but within this framework the discussion, rather than the imposition of a practice, would be of crucial importance.

#### **7.4.2 Implications for my practice**

As the researcher on this study, and a new lecturer in the HE sector, I can see enormous potential for the use of 'Technologies of the Self' framework in the sector. My particular interest is in internationalisation within this sector, so I envisage the framework as being used with both learners and teachers in the following ways.

The framework could be used with all staff to establish the support required to enhance their knowledge of the international context and the ways in which they could embed an international context and its related content in the curriculum. They could be asked to describe their current context, what they want to do to enable internationalisation, and how they are going to do this. The framework would also be particularly helpful if it was used with all staff within continuous personal development (CPD) sessions, and within the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGHE), to discuss the role of the lecturer and how each individual might be supported towards further internationalisation as the opportunity to 'grow' professionally and to engage in 'a collaborative environment', considered by Wildman and Niles (1987, cited in Moon: 2000) as essential to 'facilitating reflective practice' (ibid.). Lecturers could be

encouraged to challenge themselves within the framework and to fully consider what needs to be negotiated and how to reach the required 'telos' in line with Daniels' advice (2013: 244) that: 'developing reflective practices in relation to the international students they teach will go a long way towards facilitating constructive and influential participation' because it is 'the educators' responsibility... [to] participate in developing the international learning environment to provide equitable learning opportunities to all students' (ibid.).

Within my own professional context, Foucault's framework could be used with new or developing teachers within the Masters in Education in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MEd TESOL) programme at UWS. I intend to use Foucault's work as the basis for learner journals in order that the students are encouraged to consider their own professional 'telos' while reflecting on their reasons for joining the programme and indeed any challenges which might arise. They will be encouraged to reflect on and revise those goals throughout the programme as a way of supporting their professional development and practice. This would be, in addition, an introduction to relational learning, that 'deep approach' (Mathieson, 2015: 64) through which they would be able to 'engage meaningfully' (ibid.) with, and beyond, their learning.

Such reflection, rooted in the practical and proven benefits of this theory, could only benefit emergent educators as they review and reflect upon their practice. In a similar way, in the specific context of the UWS, the framework could be used with student teachers as they begin any module, but I can see a place for this framework specifically within the 'Bilingualism' module which I teach: students would be encouraged to consider their own 'ethical substance' or

motivation at the beginning of the module while analysing the modes of subjection and the ethical work they need to do to be an effective teacher of bilingual pupils. Such an exercise would, at the same time, encourage self-reflection and discussion of language and associated issues which could affect the learning experience of young bilingual learners.

### **7.4.3 Suggestions for further research**

There are several ways in which this research, and its basis in Foucault's 'Technologies of the Self' framework, could be extended to examine and provide support for learners and educators in other educational contexts.

As the researcher who has conducted the study situated in this framework, I am convinced that research conducted in other sectors within the field of education would be beneficial to both learners and teachers. I envisage separate studies conducted, for example, in the area of English as an Additional Language (EAL) within the primary or secondary school sectors or with lecturers who are themselves 'international' members of staff teaching in the higher education sector. EAL teachers are in a similar position to that of ESOL lecturers in the college sector but have to negotiate the additional challenge, or 'mode of subjection', of supporting their learners' language across the curriculum, a study of which would be interesting and useful for practitioners. Research into the discourses of HE staff from a variety of international backgrounds could provide an insight into the particular challenges associated with teaching in the UK, as well as the varieties of English encountered, and used to teach in, an institution. This might be a very interesting and useful comparative study between institutions but, of necessity, would need more research time as well as resources and access, underpinned by the universities' ethical policies.

Finally, this framework could be adopted for use by practitioners within an institution which has recognised areas of concern around the teaching and learning of migrant ESOL learners. In such a context, Foucault's theory could be applied in a study which could provide a basis for discussion among learners, teaching and support staff in order, potentially, to mediate and resolve any tensions arising from either institutional discourse or practice.

## **7.5 Lessons learned from the research**

What struck me during the research process was that effective learning is often dependent on the goodwill or energy of an individual, whether he or she is a lecturer or the head of a particular area within the college, and that I therefore had a duty to be respectful and represent all participants fairly. I realised from the outset of the research that I had been unprepared for some of the disquieting comments I received from a participant which, consequently, led to the revision of my questions and methods, but I also began to understand that as I was interviewing a wide range of individuals who held, accordingly, wide-ranging perspectives, I had to be prepared for some element of the unexpected.

According to Coffey (1999: 1), 'fieldwork affects us, and we affect the field... [it] is personal, emotional and identity work'. This strikes a chord with me as the researcher, as the whole process of research has had an impact on my life and practice; I have felt that my outlook has changed, that my professional conscience has been disturbed, and that my practice cannot continue as before. There has been a gradual and delicate shift in my own thinking and even in my writing but through the research process, en route to my own 'telos',

I have recognised how individuals and institutions operate, and what they have been going through during this process of political and (micro) societal change. The result is that I seem to have been involved in some quite profound ethical work of my own, which has reconfigured my telos: the writing of the research has been less judgmental and more considered, particularly of the context and the related efforts (or 'ethical work') done by the teachers. In addition, my own 'telos' has developed into a study about whose final iteration I am more confident. This research, having arisen from my 'ethical substances' and having been developed through my own, and others' ethical work, must surely raise some questions: of how ESOL is taught, about how progression is linked, currently, to attainment, and about how the processes and structures within a college are related to the development of each individual student's emergent learner identity. This research is rooted in a different way of looking at the most pressing issues concerning ESOL and equality, inclusion and, ultimately, social justice. There is now scope through this research to offer the opportunity to the college ESOL community to examine their practice.

### **7.5.1 Using the Foucauldian framework**

Biesta (2008: 197) noted that:

What Foucault is arguing for is not only a different 'style' of critique but also a different 'audience' for critique, not the ones who try to solve problems and make things better, but those who are struggling to make possible different ways of being and doing.

This echoes Foucault's claim (1991: 83) that '(t)he only important problem is what happens on the ground' . Both these statements refer to the importance of

those 'on the ground' who 'struggle' to effect change within their practice and who, as has been illustrated in this study, are the teachers themselves. It is my experience that the 'Technologies of the Self' framework is useful in this context as it can assist the researcher in ensuring that their research is relevant, practical and of value to such educators, as advised by Bastalich (2009: 12): 'the potential for change that lies within scholarship arises from its ability to open the field of the possible'.

Foucault (1994: 288) himself disliked prescription stating, 'I take care not to dictate how things should be'. It is my belief, however, based on the research for this thesis, that the results from the research will prove both thought-provoking and useful as a basis of discussion of ESOL practice for practitioners in this field.

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## **Appendix – Schedule of Interviews**

### **ESOL Staff Focus Group: 22.10.2010**

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Length of teaching experience</b> |
|-------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| Atalanta    | F             | 20+ years                            |
| Cassandra   | F             | 15 years                             |
| Cleo        | F             | 20+ years                            |
| Darius      | M             | 8 years                              |
| Jason       | M             | 17 years                             |
| Juno        | F             | 2 years                              |

### **Advanced ESOL Learners**

#### **Focus Group 1: 20.01.2011**

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Country of Birth</b> | <b>Learning English</b> |
|-------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Apollo      | M             | Afghanistan             | 5 years                 |
| Aurora      | F             | Pakistan                | 8 years                 |
| Charis      | F             | Hungary                 | 6 years                 |
| Cronos      | M             | Poland                  | 6 years                 |
| Demeter     | F             | Poland                  | 5 years                 |
| Diana       | F             | Poland                  | 6 years                 |
| Hera        | F             | Iran                    | 4 years                 |
| Hermes      | M             | Iraq                    | 3 years                 |
| Minerva     | F             | Ukraine                 | 4 years                 |
| Philo       | M             | Somalia                 | 3 years                 |
| Remus       | M             | Indonesia               | 3 years                 |
| Vulcana     | F             | Poland                  | 4 years                 |

## **Advanced ESOL Learners**

### **Focus Group 2: 06.06.2012**

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Country of Birth</b> | <b>Length of Learning English</b> |
|-------------|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Ajax        | M             | Palestine               | 3 years                           |
| Ana         | F             | Spain                   | 3.5 years                         |
| Basha       | F             | Poland                  | 5 years                           |
| Pepe        | M             | Spain                   | 4 years                           |

### **Intermediate Focus Group: 14.06.2011**

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Country of Birth</b> | <b>Length of time learning English</b> |
|-------------|---------------|-------------------------|--|
| Creon       | M             | Poland                  | 3 years                                |
| Selene      | F             | Algeria                 | 4 years                                |
| Thetis      | F             | Iran                    | 2.5 years                              |
| Violetta    | F             | Poland                  | 3 years                                |
| Flora       | F             | Pakistan                | 8 years                                |
| Ariadne     | F             | Pakistan                | 4 years                                |

## **Individual interviews**

### **Advanced learners: 02.02.2011**

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Country of Birth</b> | <b>Length of time Learning English</b> |
|-------------|---------------|-------------------------|--|
| Diana       | F             | Poland                  |  |
| Hermes      | M             | Iraq                    |  |
| Philo       | M             | Somalia                 |  |
| Remus       | M             | Indonesia               |  |

## College staff

### i.) Individual interviews - Teaching staff

| Name  | Gender | Level taught | No. of years at college | No. of years teaching | Date of interview |
|-------|--------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Jason | M      | Advanced     | 3                       | 5                     | 01.06.2011        |
| Medea | F      | Intermediate | 8                       | 20+                   | 14.06.2011        |

### ii.) Individual interviews – ESOL Staff Managers, 27.02.2011

| Name   | Gender | Role            | No. of years at college | Date of Interview |
|--------|--------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Athene | F      | Senior Lecturer | 7                       | 19.05.2011        |
| Julia  | F      | Head of School  | 20+                     | 17.02.2011        |

### iii.) Individual interviews - Support staff

| Name                     | Gender | Role | No. of years at college | Date of Interview |
|--------------------------|--------|------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Bursar                   | M      |      | 6                       | 30.03.2011        |
| Head of Online Systems   | M      |      | 12                      | 15.02.2011        |
| Head of Student Services | F      |      | 2                       | 30.03.2011        |