Uprooted and Exiled: Experiences of displacement, learning English, and social exclusion in the lives of refugee Arab Muslim women living in London

Nsreen Saleh

Department of Educational Studies
Goldsmiths, University of London

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Abstract

Conflicts and wars in some Arab states have forced millions of Arab Muslim women to leave their home countries and resettle in other countries in the world. Before displacement, many Arab Muslim women experience the atrocities of wars, the dangers of flight, and the loss of their homes and countries. After resettlement, they still need to adapt to a new society that is culturally and linguistically different and to face the challenges of becoming socially included. In the UK, social inclusion is reflected in an ability and willingness to learn and use English and to access employment and contribute to the nation's economy (DIUS, 2009; Home Office, 2018). Yet, there are challenges and factors that inhibit refugees learning and social inclusion. Predominant perceptions of Muslim women associate them with negative stereotypes which often undermine their willingness and ability to integrate into British society. Along with that are prevalent Islamophobic and anti-immigrant sentiments which affect refugee Arab Muslim women's intercultural encounters. Thus, this research study explores the three migratory stages, pre-migration, trans-migration, and post-migration (Fazel and Stein, 2003) of refugee Arab Muslim women, with a focus on their experiences of social inclusion in British society.

The study draws on postcolonial perspectives (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988; Hall, 1996, Holliday, 2011) and Bourdieusian concepts of capital and field as theoretical frameworks. Both lenses illustrate perceptions of Western and non-Western people and cultures and relations of power in society, which affect the intercultural communication experiences and social inclusion of refugees.

This qualitative research adopts both narrative inquiry and ethnographic methodologies. For the narrative enquiry, life history interviews were conducted with three Arab Muslim women who came to the UK as refugees from Iraq and Syria. The ethnographic part was carried out in a women's learning centre in East London where I worked as an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and Functional skills teacher. Within the ethnographic study, I used semi-structured interviews with four ESOL teachers, as well as ESOL classroom observations, and field notes.

Findings highlighted the challenges that refugee Arab Muslim women face when accessing ESOL provision. Some of these are related to cuts in government funding for ESOL, the lack of training to address special learning needs, and other factors related to cultural competence and ethnocultural empathy in classroom encounters. Research findings also revealed that, adopting a monolingual approach in language teaching, the underrepresentation of minority ethnic communities within ESOL teachers, the lack of proper training to promote fundamental British values, and the securitisation of ESOL through embedding the Prevent Duty have been factors that affected ESOL learners' well-being and English learning experiences. My research study also uncovered factors that negatively affected the participants' social inclusion in British society. These are related to Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslim women in employment and promotion opportunities.

This study sheds light on the lives of refugee Muslim women from Arab countries. There is no research, to date, that addresses their experiences of displacement, learning English and social inclusion and, as a result, these women remain alienated and marginalised from the society with their stories being unknown. Their stories provide knowledge that could help understand the circumstances that forced them to leave their countries and live in exile. These stories could alter predominant preconceptions and stereotypes about them. On a practical level, ESOL teachers and curriculum leads could benefit from this study to develop ESOL learning as it points to the challenges and barriers that many Muslim and minority ethnic women face. This could improve their intercultural experiences and capacity to learn English.

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Chapter 1

Lives That Matter

1.1 Introduction

> *It is true that all lives matter, but it is equally true that not all lives are understood to matter which is precisely why it is most important to name the lives that have not mattered, and are struggling to matter in the way they deserve.*
>
> *Judith Butler (2015, n.p.)*

This research sheds light on the experiences of displacement, movement, and resettlement of Arab Muslim refugee women living in London. Millions of Arab and Muslim people have fled their countries because of wars, conflicts, and political unrest that have been afflicting the region since 1948. All of them have endured the hardships of flight and becoming refugees and forced migrants in different countries in the world, as well as the challenges of resettlement and integration into new societies. The UK along with other countries in Europe has received refugees from war-torn Arab countries such as Iraq since the 1990s, and Syria since 2014. In the UK which is the context of this study, Arab Muslim refugees, women and men, were affected by public perception and political rhetoric about refugees and migrants, which have shaped policies on migration. Debates about multiculturalism, monolingualism, Islamophobia, and terrorism are also a focus of my research study.

Muslim women are often associated with 'negative connotations' and reductive stereotypes, for example, they are perceived as 'passive, submissive, conformist, and homebound' (Joly, 2017, p. 13). These stereotypes associated with the image of Arab and Muslim women undermine their ability and willingness to integrate into British society. 'Integration', which was used interchangeably with community cohesion in official documents, is often viewed as a ‘one-way street’ and is an 'ill-defined' and problematic term mainly because it is migrants who are blamed for any lack of community cohesion (Cooke and Simpson, 2009). Integration would be demonstrated, according to official statements, by learning English which is considered fundamental to integration (Casey, 2016; Home Office, 2018) and by accessing employment and contributing to the economy (Denham, 2009). Yet, there are substantial obstacles that limit accessing ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision and employment. This research explores in depth the experiences of three refugee Arab Muslim women in London, and brings to light their stories and their struggles to make meaning of their lives in 'exile'.

1.2 Predominant perception of Arabs and Muslims in the British society

> *The terrible reductive conflicts that herd people under falsely unifying rubrics like "America," "The West" or "Islam" and invent collective identities for large numbers of individuals who are actually quite diverse, cannot remain as potent as they are, and must be opposed.*
>
> *Said (2003, p.xxii)*

One of the factors that is impacting the lives of Arabs and Muslims in the UK is the growing sense of anti-Muslim sentiment, or what has been known as 'Islamophobia'. 'Islamophobia', is not a new phenomenon in Britain, but it has become 'more complex and entrenched' (Warsi, 2017) and is affecting the lives of Arab Muslim women and their engagement in British society. A definition of Islamophobia along with policies to tackle it has not been endorsed by the UK government yet (Runnymede Trust, 2017) despite calls from academia, civil society organisations, and national authorities in Britain and in several countries in Europe for a working definition of 'anti-Muslim hatred/Islamophobia' (European Commission, 2019). A working definition is needed for several reasons including, to raise public awareness and increase official recognition of Islamophobia, and to address any denial of the phenomenon (European Commission, 2019). However, a definition of Islamophobia developed by the Runnymede Trust, which is the UK's leading independent race equality think tank, has captured and explained anti-Muslim sentiments, interestingly since 1997. Thus, Islamophobia has been defined in the UK as 'unfounded hostility towards Islam', 'the unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, 'the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs', and 'any…restriction towards or preference against Muslims' (Runnymede Trust, 1997 p.4; 2017, p.7).

Anti-Muslim racism has grown 'further and wider' in the UK in the past two decades particularly after 11 September 2001, 7 July 2005 events, and the 2017 terrorist attacks after which, Islam has been conflated with terrorism, and Muslims have become the focus of UK media and policy makers (Elahi and Khan, 2017). After these events, Muslims were presented in the global media as 'the enemies of the world' (Schmidt, 2014, p.). It is argued that the bias in the global media, and the systemic silencing of counter-voices all fostered a perception that ‘the Arab is not merely Arab or Muslim anymore, he/she has become the incarnation of a stereotypical terrorist’ (Schmidt, 2014, p. 162). Baroness Warsi (2017, p. v) explained the effect of the media in the UK on public perception by pointing out,

> *Of all the challenges to a cohesive Britain at ease with its Muslims, the hostile press environment is the most worrying. The daily poisoning of the discourse around British Muslims has intensified … It informs dialogue across the country, from Parliament to the local pub.*

It is noteworthy here that a study conducted by the Centre of Media Monitoring (CfMM) which analysed more than 10,000 articles in British media between October and December of 2018 revealed that 89% of articles reporting about Muslim communities were rated “Biased”, while 82% were rated “Very Biased”, and 86% were rated “Antagonistic” (CfMM, 2019, p.14). Additionally, news outlets such as *The Mail for Sunday, The Spectator, The Sun*, linked Muslims with terrorism, associated them with negative behaviour, misrepresented them and made generalisations about Islam and Muslims (ibid). Moreover, the declaration of the 'War on Terror', after September 11 2001 had a negative impact on Muslims living in Western societies. This is because the U.S. corporate media allowed right-wing politicians to express extremist views. For example, Fox News presented the UN former Ambassador who argued that America is at war with Islam and the West needs to be defended (Kellner, 2007, p. 623). In the UK, the war on terror ‘was a key moment’ that unified the discourse on Islam, and constructs of Muslims as terrorists, fanatics, radicals, and extremists became embedded in the press’s stories of Muslims (Sian et al., 2012, p. 236). Hence, the mainstream media ‘became weapons of mass hysteria that created tremendous fear in the population, which made the public look anxiously to the government for protection, rendering the population malleable to manipulation’ (Kellner, 2007, p.627). Thus, propaganda and policies against Muslims in the name of anti-terrorist legislation were justified, which on the one hand, led to increased anti-Muslim bigotry, and on the other hand caused fear to spread among British Muslim communities who were often held accountable for the attacks, and were considered 'collectively guilty' (Joly, 2017, p.167). It is undeniable that anti-Muslim prejudice has grown in British society and 'there is a need for greater awareness of how Islamophobia and all forms of racism affect people's lives in modern Britain' (Elahi and Khan, 2017, p.3).

While it is argued that Islamophobia emerged after the 11 September 2001 terror attacks, anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiments existed in British society as well as in many Western societies before the year 2001. Conflicts in the Arab region and Western media coverage of stories that reflected the ‘Western version of the narrative’ (Cainkar, 2009) strongly impacted the way Arabs were perceived in public discourse. The 1967 Arab-Israeli War and later the Gulf War in 1991 were accompanied by ‘media wars’ and ‘one-sided stories’ in Western media, which represented Arabs as ‘barbaric’, ‘treacherous’, and ‘bloodthirsty’ (Cainkar, 2009, p. 88). For example, mainstream media in the US such as, CBS and NBC TV networks framed the Gulf War as an ‘exiting narrative’ that provided stories on dangers encountered by allied troops, ‘evil perpetuated by villainous Iraqis’, and the war was projected as ‘a battle between good and evil’ (Kellner, 2004, p.144).

Although these national and international events influenced the way Arabs and Muslims were perceived, they do not explain all aspects of the issue of Islamophobic sentiments. In fact, anti-Muslim prejudice cannot be separated from a broader 'historical and social context of racial discrimination and racism' in the UK (Alexander, 2017, p.13). To illustrate, concepts and stereotypes that emerged during the expansion of Europe and during colonialism are still used to explain events and cultural differences involving Arabs and Muslims. For example, the tradition of Orientalism through which the 'Orient', who is mainly the Arab and Muslim, is represented in Western media and art, and in historical, political, and scholarly texts as someone who is backward, irrational, and violent (Said, 1978, 2003). Such representations have influenced imagery and knowledge of Arabs and Muslims. This is also illustrated in Hall's (1997) concept of the 'West' and the 'Rest', which allowed for the classification of societies as either 'Western' or 'non-Western', wherein Western societies represent 'images and ideas' such as civilised, developed, industrial, and secular, whereas the West's 'Other', or non-Western societies are imagined to represent the opposite undesirable characteristics (Hall, 1997, p. 186). The idea of the 'West' and the 'non-West' led to the construction of a demonised imagined ‘Other’ or 'them' and an idealised image of 'us' or ‘Self’ (Holliday, 2011). In that case, the demonised image of the Other is 'applied to all members of the group or society which is being Othered' (Holliday, 2011, p.69).

Western representations of the 'Orient', the classification of the world into either West or East, and division of people into 'us' and 'them' are used to affirm the West's superiority which became the symbol of enlightenment and democracy (Said, 1978; Hall, 1996). They are also used to justify an essentialist view of non-Western people wherein their individual behaviour is 'defined and constrained by the cultures in which they live so that the stereotype becomes the essence of who they are' (Holliday, 2011, p.14). In this regard, 'anti-essentialism' becomes a necessity to challenge Islamophobia and racism, as it is a way to counter dominant ideas about Muslims that are not true, but have been ascribed to Muslims because 'the ascribers are more powerful than the ascribed' (Modood, 2017, p.66).

However, it is noteworthy that these concepts and perceptions of the world and their cultural products continue in the present time (Said, 2003; Sharp, 2009; Allen, 2017). Examples of the persistence of such mindsets are evident in the baseless suspicion of an entire faith group (APPG on social integration, 2017), the positioning of all Muslims as a 'suspect community' and the increased surveillance and securitisation policies that target them, and by viewing 'the Muslim community' as a homogenous group whose culture is unchanging and outdated and is understood through stereotypes of misogyny, criminality, underclass, and poverty (Alexander, 2017). Such positions are also reflected in assigning negative attributes to Muslims such as being obsessed with religion, patriarchy, and acting in extreme or violent ways with regards to religion or politics (Modood, 2017). This is also evident in viewing the different Arab Muslim through the lens of Orientalism, for example, Muslim women are represented in the media in the UK as oppressed, passive, and submissive objects who 'live in societies with poor records of women's rights' (Mekay, 2018). These misconceptions about them have had 'an enormous impact on the experiences and engagement of Muslim women' (Joly, 2017, p.166), as they are more likely to face challenges in the labour market, regardless of their qualifications and language proficiency (Hussain, 2017). Given this atmosphere of predominant anti-Muslimism, it becomes necessary to explore the influence of Islamophobia on the social inclusion and engagement of Arab Muslim women in British society.

1.3 The context of ESOL in the UK

Learning English is one of the most important needs for refugees arriving in the UK. However, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision has been affected by new policies and decisions that have influenced refugee learners’ ability to access the provision. This research study will explore the impact of ESOL policies and classroom encounters on the learning experiences of refugee Arab Muslim women. For example, ESOL provision has been afflicted by a series of cuts in funding that represented 57% of reductions between the academic years 2009/10 and 2016/17 (Higton et al., 2019). Funding cuts have impacted refugees severely as they have affected the supply of courses and resulted in hundreds of refugees waiting for several months, sometimes years to be afforded an ESOL course, and in some cases turned away (Refugee Action, 2017, Marsden, 2018). The decrease in the supply of courses and the cuts in funding have resulted in a decrease in the number of learners who could enrol in accredited courses. Thus, the number of ESOL learners fell from 179,000 in 2009/10 academic year to only 114,000 adult learners in the academic year 2017/18 (Higton et al., 2019). These cuts in funding have negatively affected ESOL learners who are mainly refugees and who are already experiencing disadvantage, isolation, and loneliness which are exacerbated without being able to access ESOL (Refugee Action, 2019)

In fact, the provision has also been affected by the government's changing policies towards ESOL. Through these policies funding was 'refocused' so that only learners who were seeking jobs would benefit from fully funded courses (Foster and Bolton, 2018). Then it was decided that funding would be provided to learners if there was evidence they were progressing in courses (Foster and Bolton, 2017). However, learning would be co-funded with the government contributing to 50% of the course fees once a learner becomes employed (Higton et al., 2019). These policies have negative effects on migrants/refugees as many of them, particularly the poorly paid, would not be able to continue going to ESOL classes because they would become unaffordable.

Additionally, turning ESOL into an employment-led provision rather than a language discipline, resulted in pressuring ESOL departments to provide limited and decontextualised technical material (Cooke and Simpson, 2009) instead of focusing on addressing the differentiated needs of the diverse group of ESOL learners (Discussed in Chapter 3). Turning ESOL into an employment-led provision has kept most ESOL learners trapped in a vicious cycle. On the one hand, learners who progress to work after Entry Level 3 (lower intermediate) usually work in low paid jobs, since work at that level is usually a low-income type of work (Court, 2014). On the other hand, they would be unable to continue learning English since workplace ESOL is not funded (Higton et al., 2019) and they would be unable to afford course fees (Schellekens, 2019). Eventually they would not be able to continue learning English and this would impede their ability to access better work opportunities as a result (Higton et al., 2019).

Moreover, ESOL provision has been linked with political concerns such as social cohesion, national unity, and security. While learning English is necessary for social mobility and employment, it has also been considered 'fundamental' for integration, and without it, community cohesion would be threatened (Casey, 2016). It has been argued that the implication of such an assumption is that refugees/immigrants would be integrating into a perceived monolingual society, without consideration of the role of the existing society in the process of integration and the reality of the multilingual and multicultural society in Britain (Simpson, 2019). Poor English was considered the reason for community tensions (Blackledge, 2006), and became the theme in political speeches about integration, community cohesion, and preventing terrorism (Cooke and Peutrell, 2019).

Recently, ESOL provision has been used to identify potential links with extremism and terrorism. In this respect, ESOL teachers became obliged to emphasise fundamental British values in ESOL classrooms (DfE, 2014). Furthermore, the Prevent Duty (referred to as Prevent from here on) was introduced and was made statutory in ESOL learning centres (DfE, 2014). This happened after the education system was pressured to contribute to the government's security agenda (Starkey, 2018). Emphasising British values and introducing Prevent was viewed by the government as essential in forming a cohesive society and necessary in preventing radicalisation, terrorism, and non-violent extremism (HM Government, 2015; Maylor, 2016). However, promoting British values was criticised for advancing an imperialist construction of Britishness (Lander, 2016), and for implying that only White/British values are acceptable while undermining ethnic minority communities' values, particularly Muslim communities' values, which became essentialised and ‘Othered’ (Maylor, 2016). Similarly, Prevent which targets all forms of terrorism and 'non-violent' extremism has also attracted much public criticism in academia and in the University College Union (UCU) and the National Union of Teachers (NUT) for targeting Muslim learners and positioning them as potential suspects, for posing serious violations to human rights, and for breaching the Education Act 1986 which protected freedom of speech in educational contexts (Open Society Justice Initiative, 2016).

Other factors such as cultural competence, ethnocultural empathy, and power relations which impact classroom encounters also affect refugees' language learning experience. Language classrooms are sites where identity can be negotiated and reconstructed, particularly for refugees who suffer among many things, the loss of social, cultural, and linguistic resources, and therefore have to use new linguistic and social resources to adapt to the new environment (Simpson and Gresswell, 2012). They invest in learning the dominant language of the new society to access new resources and gain linguistic capital and social power (Darvin and Norton, 2015). However, despite learners' motivation to learn the language and gain membership into the new society and negotiate new identities, they could face obstacles related to dominant ideologies and stereotypes. Thus, language classrooms can become places that 'marginalise and disempower particular individuals or minority groups' and this, will result in resistance to protect identity (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004). Learners could be highly motivated to learn English, but if classroom practices are racist, this will be detrimental to investment in language learning, resulting in slow progress, and consequently, in labelling learners as unmotivated, slow, etc. (Norton, 2016). For this reason, it is argued that what happens in the classroom (learning environment, impact of teacher, the curriculum, the peer group) will have an impact on the learners' motivation, and is more important than learners' beliefs or attitudes (Dornyei, 2009; Ellis, 2014).

It is noteworthy that patronising stereotypes of Muslim women, particularly in relation to learning English, were affirmed by political discourse. In 2016 former Prime Minister of the UK, David Cameron, announced that the British government would provide funding to help migrant women improve their English, but Muslim women soon became the focus of this policy (Janmohamed, 2019). Cameron stated in an interview that not being able to learn English is linked to an inability to integrate and to the possibility of being susceptible to extremist ideas adopted by ISIS (BBC, 2016). He also criticised multiculturalism in the UK in a previous statement presented at the Munich Security Conference in 2011 and accused this stance of encouraging separation and behaviour that is against British values (BBC, 2011).

1.4 Rationale and questions of the study

The Arab world has been afflicted with wars and instability that have forced millions of individuals to leave their home countries or become internally displaced (Yahya and Muasher, 2018). The uprooting of Palestinians between the years 1948 and 1967 resulted in the expulsion of 1.2 million Palestinians from their homeland - approximately half of the population after the establishment of the Jewish State of Israel in 1948 (Pappe, 2006). The outbreak of the civil war in Lebanon in 1975 between Maronite Christians on one side and Muslim and non-Muslim groups on the other side, and later the Israeli invasion of the capital city of Beirut in 1982, forced 990,000 Lebanese to flee their country permanently (Bel-Air, 2017). The last decade of the twentieth century marked the US-led strikes against Iraq that started in 1991, the UN imposed sanctions between the years 1990 - 2003, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 which caused the fall of the former Ba'athi regime, the subsequent sectarian violence that rose between different religious and ethnic groups, and the emergence of the terrorist group ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria), all resulted in the displacement of millions of Iraqis (Chatelard, 2009; Ali, 2013; Jenkins, 2016). It is argued that it is difficult to have an accurate estimate of the number of Iraqis who fled their country either temporarily or permanently. Many of them came from an urban background and were not in need of assistance. Therefore, they did not register with the UNHCR and were not housed in camps, and remained hidden in exile (Harper, 2008). However, the UNHCR estimated that 4.5 million Iraqis fled their country to countries in the Middle East and Europe between the years 1990 and 2003 (UNHCR, 2020), and near 3.4 million Iraqis were forced to leave after the emergence of the so-called 'Islamic State' in 2014 (IOM, 2018).

Revolutionary events which started in the year 2010 were the results of Arabs protesting the rulership of long-term dictators and authoritarian rulers, and because of unemployment, economic inequality and political oppression (Haas and Lesch, 2017). However, revolutions in Yemen, and Libya led to widespread civil wars in these countries, resulting in the displacement of millions who either fled the country, or became internally displaced and vulnerable, leading to the creation of a humanitarian crisis (UNHCR, 2018). In Syria, what started as a peaceful protest seeking economic reforms was brutality crushed, and as a result, developed into a nationwide revolution, which turned into a civil war that has torn apart the country and the lives of millions of Syrians (Reid, 2020). The conflict in Syria has forced 6.6 million Syrians to flee their country and become refugees, besides another 6.7 million who are displaced but trapped inside the country (UNHCR, 2020), resulting in what has been known as 'the Syrian refugee crisis' (Reid, 2020).

Many of these refugees and forcibly displaced people are women who might have had different hopes and plans for the future in their countries before the wars. The hardships and despair that they went through before being forced to leave their countries, the fear and life-threatening dangers that they experienced during flight, and the challenges, frustrations, and estrangement they live with after resettling may remain unknown. Moreover, they often become alienated and neglected in exile with their experiences being marginalised and their voices being silenced (Langer, 2004). They may be rarely approached closely enough to be understood. As Ressler (2009, p.3) has remarked,

> *They remain hidden in the shadows of society. Unless one is invited into the private sanctuaries of their confidence, built to preserve their safety, they appear faceless and the breadth of their reality remains unknown.*

Yet, Arab Muslim women who settled in the UK, or other Western countries, face additional challenges. They are usually stereotyped in global news coverage and in public discourse and have been considered an embodiment of the 'barbaric Muslim other' (Mirza, 2013).

Homogenising all Muslim women and believing misconceptions about them 'ignores the diverse realities and experiences and the social reality of a Muslim woman's life on a global scale' (Marandi and Tari, 2014, p.19). Stereotypes about Muslim women include: terrorist, oppressed and veiled, submissive, unable and unwilling to speak English, and lacking agency (Janmohamed, 2019).

In this regard, Schmidt (2014) contends that the lack of personal experience with Arabs in diaspora alongside Western news coverage and political influence on public perceptions gives way to multiple frames and stereotypes about them and makes it difficult to draw distinctions between Arabs in general and images of Arabs living in the West. This is evident from the last conducted YouGov survey to investigate British public attitudes towards Arab refugees which revealed that the majority of voters believed that the number of refugees entering the UK from war-torn Syria and Iraq was too high. It was also perceived that Arabs had failed to integrate themselves into British society and preferred to live in isolated communities, and a total number of 55% of voters supported racial profiling against Arabs by the police (Caabu, 2017). However, most voters (81%) reported knowing little to nothing about the Arab world. Yet, this showed a slight improvement since the last poll of this kind which was conducted in 1967 which revealed the figure to be 98% (Doyle, 2017). For these reasons, and because of increased anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiments, and because of the prevalent stereotypical perceptions of Arab Muslim women, it is important to listen to their stories and to have a deeper understanding of who they are, the circumstances that brought them to the UK, their experiences of becoming refugees and how they are negotiating integration in the British society.

According to 2011 census, there are 230,600 Arabs in England and Wales, of which Arab women make 42% (Home Office, 2018, 2020). There is almost no research that explores the lives of Arab Muslim refugees in the UK. That is why I consider it important to hear their stories and to shed light on their experiences. This study therefore fills a gap in the research field by providing a study on the three migratory experiences of three Arab Muslim refugee women in the UK. This research study also contributes to the existing literature on ESOL and teaching English for different immigrant groups, and studies that focus on the refugee experience. Some of the existing research in these fields focused on investigating the construction of social identities of Arab Muslim women in the UK (Al-Saud, 2009), presenting narratives of British Muslim women on subjects such as religious interpretation and practices (Contractor, 2010). Other studies examine how the discourse on Muslim women is constructed (Rashid, 2013), and how the Islamic attire is portrayed in print media and politics, in the UK (Bijdiguen, 2015). A comparative study is conducted to compare between Bosnian and UK Muslim women’s construction of religious identities (Bilic, 2013). Another comparative study probes the experiences of young Muslim women's experiences of faith, culture and community within UK and US education systems after 9/11 attacks (Vincent, 2016). In the field of ESOL, a comparative study compares between the provision of English as a Second Language (ESL) in New York and the provision of ESOL in London (Julios, 2003). Another study examines the provision of ESOL for immigrant mothers with bi/multilingual children (Macdonald's, 2013).

The overarching research question of my study is:

How do the experiences of refugee Arab Muslim women living in London affect their capacity to learn English and their social inclusion?

The study focuses on the three stages of the refugee experience (discussed in Chapter 4) through which my participants experiences of displacement, flight, learning English and social inclusion will be explored.

Three sub-questions were added to understand the three migratory experiences.

- To what extent do refugee Arab Muslim women's life histories and stories of displacement affect their adaptation to life in the UK?
- How do refugee Arab Muslim women negotiate the learning of English once in the UK, and what forms of intercultural communication affect their capacity to acquire the language?
- What experiences do refugee Arab Muslim women encounter when living in the UK and how do these influence their social inclusion?

It is argued that individuals or groups whose voices are not heard could remain in the margins of the society, which consequently could result in their alienation and estrangement (hooks, 1992). Not having marginalised voices heard could emphasise stereotypical ideas (hooks, 1992), or Western knowledge produced by 'subalternists' who claim to speak for them (Spivak, 1992). It is necessary for Arab Muslim refugee women not to accept 'projections' of dominant groups, but to 'challenge how they are (mis)perceived and seek to not be defined by others' (Modood, 2017, p.66). Through this research study, the participants will tell their stories about displacement, flight, and settlement. However, they are only three Arab Muslim refugee women from two Arab countries, Iraq and Syria. This is because having more participants from other Arab countries was challenging for different reasons which are discussed in chapter 5.

1.5 Positionality

> *Do we exist? What proof do we have? The further we get from the Palestine of our past, the more precarious our status, the more disrupted our being, the more intermittent our presence. When did we become a people? When did we stop being one?*
>
> *Said (1984, p.34)*

I was born into a Palestinian-Jordanian family who fled Palestine after the occupation of the Palestinian territories in 1967. Before that year, my grandparents fled the city of Java when Palestine was first occupied in 1948, which is the year known among Arabs as 'Nakba', meaning 'the catastrophe', as it witnessed the first occupation of Palestine and horrific massacres and the complete demolition of villages and towns by the Zionist militias (Khalidi, 1992; Bregman and El-Tahri, 1998; Pappe, 2006; Sa'di and AbuLughod, 2007). My family was forced out of Palestine in 1967 and were among 200,000 people who left their homes and lands and walked all the way to the Jordanian border with nothing except the clothes on their backs. Members of my family were soon scattered in different countries of the world and had to start their lives from scratch, like the majority of the Palestinian diaspora. Some of them stayed in Jordan, and others travelled to the United States, Canada, and the Arab Gulf countries, and for those who stayed close to the Palestinian border, hopes of returning back soon faded away.

Although I have never seen Palestine or experienced the trauma of fleeing the homeland and leaving everything behind, the memories of historic Palestine, the painful experiences of loss, trauma, and injustice were transferred to me by my parents and grandparents. Like many children and grandchildren of forcibly displaced Palestinians, I listened to descriptions of the massive olive groves, the two-story houses with spacious balconies that overlooked the mountains, the backyards with lemon and fig trees, and the Jewish neighbour or co-worker or newcomer who eventually had all that. I listened to stories about childhood memories, schools, teachers, colleges, work, big cities, cinemas, and lives that were torn apart. As I grew older, I watched the Palestinian cause become gradually a forgotten one, and Palestinians or those who believe in their cause become silenced in the media, the symbols of Palestinian culture claimed to be Israeli, and 'Palestine' being removed from all maps, as if the country and the people never existed.

The story of my family and many Palestinian people in exile, wherever exile could be, is similar to the stories of my research participants. Like them, I experienced the horrors of wars and the pain of flight and loss, albeit through my parents and grandparents, as well as exile, which become an unalterable fate.

Although my family's history of displacement is the reason for my interest in studying the lives of refugees in exile and is the main impetus for my study, my career in teaching has also had a significant impact on my research interests. I had been teaching ESOL before beginning my PhD research and during those several years, I became interested in theories that called for a rethinking in classroom teaching which aimed to create meaningful learning experiences for students. Moreover, being a practitioner in the field made me more aware of the various challenges that teachers and learners of English as a second and foreign language face. I also became aware of "deeply-buried preconceptions about language teaching" (Thompson, 1996, p.14) among teachers which affect their teaching practices and their learners' experience in classrooms. This is in addition to other issues related to inadequate or a lack of useful teacher training, the curricula, the examinations system, and power relations in ESOL/EFL classrooms, which have serious implications on the learning experiences of students. Therefore, I was interested in exploring the context of ESOL in other countries, such as the UK.

1.6 Overview of the thesis

Although this research is situated within the field of educational studies and second language acquisition, exploring the life histories of refugee Arab Muslim women in London entailed drawing on other disciplines such as intercultural studies, refugee studies, sociology, and postcolonialism to throw light on their experiences of learning English and social cohesion.

This thesis consists of nine chapters. **Chapter 1** sets the scene by introducing the context in which Arab and Muslim women live. It provides an overview of how Arabs and Muslims in general, and women in particular, are being perceived and represented in media, in public and political discourse and discusses the reasons behind such representations.

Chapter 2 situates the research within the field of intercultural communication wherein different concepts of culture as well as factors that hinder or promote intercultural competence are considered. Within this chapter, the theories of postcolonialism and concepts of capital, which this research draws on to illustrate relations of power that affect intercultural communication experiences, are discussed. Also, a section on predominant perceptions of Islam in the West and factors that led to the rise of Islamophobia and how it is influencing the lives of Muslims in Britain is included in the chapter. This chapter comes first among the chapters that discuss theoretical frameworks and a review of the literature (Chapters 2, 3, and 4), as it discusses the three key concepts that frame this thesis, namely interculturality, postcolonialism, and concepts of capital.

Chapter 3 explores the context of ESOL in the UK. A history of the development of the provision, and the different decisions and policies that affected/limited access to the provision are looked at. A critical discussion of topics such as linking ESOL with integration, the securitisation of ESOL, and ESOL for social justice, as well as other contested topics such monolingualism, translanguaging, employment of ESOL teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds is included in the chapter. The chapter also provides a discussion on some language learning theories that explain power relations in classroom encounters and their impact on the learning experience of learners.

Chapter 4 provides a history of forced and voluntary migration to the UK and Immigration Acts since the 1905 Aliens Act within their contexts. In the last section, the chapter discusses the presence of Arab refugees from Iraq and Syria in the UK and the circumstances around the conflicts in these two countries.

In chapter 5, I discuss the two qualitative methodological approaches and the research methods I used to address my overarching question and sub-questions. I also explain the process of engaging with gatekeepers and the challenges of finding participants. Since this research is mainly dealing with a vulnerable group and tackling sensitive issues, the chapter provides a discussion of power relations and ethical considerations. In the final sections of the chapter, I detail the processes of data analysis in which I followed a narrative style of data presentation and reporting.

Chapter 6 presents data obtained from semi-structured interviews with four ESOL teachers. Here I explored their perceptions towards their Muslim female learners as well as their views on the various topics related to ESOL teaching and practices. These interviews provided an in-depth understanding of ESOL provision and threw light from a different angle on Arab Muslim refugee women experiences of learning ESOL.

Chapter 7 presents data gathered from ethnographic field work during the year I worked as an ESOL teacher in the women's program of an adult education centre. Field work allowed me to contact different people involved with ESOL provision, and to meet and teach different ESOL learners, to observe classes, join meetings and share concerns, and to have a first-hand experience of living as an Arab Muslim woman in British society

Chapter 8 is the last among the chapters that present data collected for this study (Chapters 6, 7, and 8) and discusses data from life history interviews with Arab Muslim refugee women. It provides narratives that open a door into the lives of the participants, allow for a deeper understanding of their experiences of loss and problems with integration, and concludes the data discussion chapters with powerful stories of marginalised and silenced voices.

Chapter 9 combines findings discussed in the three data analysis chapters, addressing the three sub-questions of the research and answering the overarching question of the study. Contributions to existing literature and research methodology are highlighted in the chapter. Finally, implications for ESOL provision and recommendations for future research are outlined.

Chapter 2

Arab Muslim Women in the West: Interculturality and Perceptions of Non-Western Societies

2.1 Introduction

Many people nowadays are being exposed to multiple cultures and multicultural experiences have become part of many individual's lives (Benet-Martinez and Hong, 2014). Our societies are becoming increasingly culturally diversified as a result of economic globalization, migration, and nationals and minority groups demand for distinct cultural identities (Council of Europe, 2007). As a result, the possibilities of intercultural encounters are greater than ever before (Noels et al., 2012; Jackson, 2014) in our contemporary societies where there is no one ethnic group, no one language, or one cultural identity (Berry, 1999; 2014). This can cause unavoidable conflicts between "culturally diverse people" (Ketthoff and Spencer-Oatey, 2009), therefore, the need for effective communication is more central than before (Brabant et al., 2009).

Britain is a multi-racial and diverse nation (Home Office, 2001). According to the Office of National Surveys (ONS), London is considered the most diverse city in the UK. The over 8 million inhabitants of London speak over 300 languages (Cox and Narayan, 2008; Blackledge, 2009) and there are at least 50 ethnic/national communities (Rahman, 2013). According to the latest census conducted in 2011, an approximate of 13.5% of the population in London identified themselves as Muslims (ibid). Boroughs with the highest percentage of Muslims are Tower Hamlets with 40.8% Muslims, Newham with 34.2% Muslims, and Redbridge with 24.9% Muslims (ibid).

Given the aforementioned factors, there has not been a time more important to study intercultural communication than today, because the need to expand our knowledge of other people and other cultures is necessary in order to be able to communicate effectively, and to be able to cultivate a sense of tolerance and appreciation of other people and other cultures (Jandt, 2014).

This chapter will consider concepts that are relevant to the theory of intercultural communication which I will draw on in my research. I start with the theory of postcolonialism and related concepts of the 'Other' and 'centre and periphery' which I discuss to explain power relations between the ‘West’ and the ‘Rest’, and how non-Western societies are perceived. A discussion on predominant perceptions of Muslims in the West and factors that contributed to the domination of such perceptions are included in this chapter. Concepts of capital and what counts as ‘legitimate’ capital in the ‘field are tackled. Different views of culture that tend either to essentialise cultures or promote the idea of diversity within one culture are highlighted. There is also a discussion on promoting intercultural communication in second language learning contexts and ways to enhance cultural and intercultural competence in language classrooms, as well as factors that hinder intercultural communication in second language classrooms. Finally, I tackle the issues related to promoting fundamental British values and embedding Prevent in ESOL classrooms.

2.2 Postcolonialism

> *No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still colonizer, the speaking subject and you are now at the center of my talk.*
>
> *(hooks, 1990, p. 343)*

This section discusses Western representations and knowledge of the different Orient, as well as power relations between Western and non-Western societies. It also includes critiques by postcolonial critics who challenged Western knowledge and imagery of the ‘Orient’, and who sought to intervene and introduce an alternative to Western knowledge and system of thought.

Postcolonialism is a theory that examines the cultural products of colonialism, challenges Western assumptions, ways of knowing and stereotypes, and seeks to include into their work the voices that were previously excluded, often referred to as the voices of the ‘others’ (Sharp, 2009). In other words, postcolonialism seeks to intervene and introduce alternative ways of knowing and understanding that are ‘developed outside the West’, to change the way people think, and to produce more equitable relations between Western and non-Western people (Young, 2003, p.6).

Postcolonial literature as Barry (2009) has noted examines the representation of other cultures in colonial Western literature and seeks to show its limitations and inability to empathise with cultural and ethnic difference. Barry suggested that it is important to ‘reclaim one’s own past’ that has been devalued by colonialist ideology. As Barry (2009, p.194) has put it,

> *Characteristically, postcolonial writers evoke or create precolonial version of their own nation, rejecting the modern and the contemporary, which is tainted with the colonial status of their countries. Here, then, is the first characteristic of postcolonial criticism - an awareness of representations of the non-European as exotic or immoral ‘other’.*

Although postcolonialism refers to the period that marked the end of colonialism, postcolonial critics contend that countries might be physically decolonised, but other effects of colonial period, such as subordination to Western powers, continues (Sharp, 2009). In addition, colonial legacies, mindsets and understanding of the world continued, though expressed in different terms and forms (Said, 2003; Sharp, 2009, Allen, 2017).

Intercultural communication studies and postcolonial studies are two related disciplines. The former is concerned with interactions between different social groups and cultures, whereby such interactions could be difficult because of misunderstandings of cultural differences and because of unequal power relations. The latter seeks to intervene and raise consciousness about essentialist knowledge and dominant discourses of old colonial ideologies which led to communication issues between nations of ‘the North’ and poorer nations of ‘the South’, without such interventions, certain dominant rhetoric and essentialist ideas would persist (Allen, 2017).

Postcolonialism is important to the context of my study as it highlights the flaws in essentialist ideas and knowledge about the ‘other’, who is in my research the refugee Arab Muslim woman. It is also relevant to my research because it seeks to include the voices and stories of refugee Arab Muslim women as told by the women themselves, without the constraints of colonial and Western knowledge and understanding of the ‘other’.

2.2.1 The ‘Other’

One concept that postcolonial critics discuss is the representation of the West’s different ‘Other’ in historical, political, scholarly, etc. texts and paintings. Those representations reinforced the notion of differences during colonialism, but they continue into the present, though in different forms (Said, 2003). It is noteworthy that the notion of ‘otherness’ started in Middle Ages Europe as a result of exploration voyages and writings, where the ‘other’, who was often imagined and expressed through medieval art, referred to races of people who were not European, and who lived in mysterious and exotic places outside Europe (Sharp, 2009). Sharp also points out that during Middle Ages Europe, it was thought that Europeans were seen as the reference point and represented what was right and normal, so races of people whose physical appearances and social practices deviated from European normality were seen as ‘monstrous’ and ‘bizarre’ and were considered ‘Europe’s other’.

Later in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, orientalists used the wide literature about the ‘Orient’ that was inherited from the European past to perpetuate an ‘earlier tradition of Orientalism’ through which an assumption was made that the Orient and everything in it was inferior and in need of ‘corrective study’ by the West (Said, 2003, p. 41). Notions about the ‘strange’ and ‘irrational’ Orientals, Arabs, Muslims in which they were said to lack the accuracy, clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race were later reinforced, as Said has discussed, when Europe’s colonial domination expanded in the twentieth century. The concept of the Orient and the West according to Said, are fictions that are made up by traditional Orientalist dogma for the purpose of the self-affirmation of the West, which is made as an enterprise and a symbol of modernity, enlightenment, and democracy, and for the identification of the Other, who is made to look backward, uncivilised, degenerate, weaker than the West, etc. Moreover, Western knowledge about the East (Orientalism) imposed constraints on any real knowledge about the Orient and divided the world into two unequal halves, as Said (2003, p. 44) explained,

> *Orientalism ... promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, “us”) and the strange (the Orient, the East, “them”). The vision in a sense created and then served the two worlds thus conceived” (2003, p.44).*

Said has contended that the influence of Orientalism is persistent, as he has put it, “its scope, as much as its institutions and all-pervasive influence, lasts up to the present. In the same sense, Hall (1996) discussed the classification of societies into the ‘West’ and the ‘Rest’ and suggested that “the West is as much an idea as a fact of geography” (Hall, 1996, p.186). The formation of the idea of the West and a Western sense of identity, Hall explained, emerged with the beginning of the ‘modern age’ and the expansion of Europe through colonisation and annexation of countries in the East to Europe. The concept of the ‘West’ made Western societies appear ‘unified and homogeneous’ despite its many internal differences, and according to this concept, the West described itself as ‘developed’, ‘industrialized’, ‘urban’, ‘secular’, ‘good’, and ‘desirable’. Any society that shares these characteristics can be considered ‘Western’ regardless of its geographical location on the map. The different, Other, Rest, which is any other society that is different from the West, is described as ‘under-developed’, ‘agricultural’, ‘rural’, ‘bad’, and ‘undesirable’ (Hall, 1996). Hall argues that the classification of societies into ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ condenses the different characteristics of societies into an either/or model of comparison; they are either Western or non-Western, civilised or uncivilised, developed or underdeveloped, urban or rural, etc (ibid). This division of the world according to this simple dichotomy produces certain knowledge and attitudes and functions as an ideology, as Hall discussed, and makes the discourse of the West and the Rest destructive and obscene. It also presents an over-simplified concept of difference. This ‘oversimplification of complex realities’ has been criticised by other critics such as Holliday (2011) who has stated that it is ideology that leads to an essentialist view of foreign cultures, which results in “Othering” and imagining non-Western people as “collectivists”, “homogeneous”, conformists, inferior and simple, and in need of help from the modern and sophisticated West. Whereas according to a critical cosmopolitan, non-essentialist view, cultures are complex, changeable, and are not constrained by national boundaries (Holliday, 2011). However, the discourse of ‘the West’ and ‘the Rest’ though being a formation of the past, is still alive in the modern world and operates powerfully across the globe (Hall, 1996).

The concept of the Others can be seen in many contexts in Western societies, where people who are non-Western are stereotyped, undermined, avoided, and Othered, such as Muslims, particularly Muslim women. The common view of Muslim women is that they are generally inferior and oppressed (Soltani, 2016). There is also a tendency among non-Muslims to put all Muslims under the same umbrella and view them as radicals. As Alexander (2017, 15) notes, the dominant cultural perception of Muslims is linked to “beards and burqas, forced marriage and FGM, sharia law and jihadi outlaws”, while at the same time ‘the Muslim community’ is perceived as homogeneous, poor, underclass, and misogynistic. Said (1997) has discussed earlier that ‘Islam’ is used as the only way to describe forty-five Islamic states and over one billion Muslims around the world. The reason for that is what Spreckels and Kotthoff (2007) explain, the need to categorize.

They state, ‘we must categorize in order to make the world understandable, for categorization means simplification’. However, they go on to say, ‘But it is precisely in this simplification that we find a danger of stereotyping and thereby as a consequence the danger of developing prejudices’ (p. 422).

2.2.2 Centre/periphery

Another concept that postcolonial critics discuss is related to the power relations between people in the centre and people in the margins. Spivak (1988) discussed that people in the margin, who she named ‘subalterns’ cannot have their voices heard in the society. A ‘subaltern’ according to Spivak, is not synonymous with oppressed or Other, or with someone ‘who’s not getting a piece of the pie’, they are people who have limited or no access to cultural imperialism (1992, p.45). Cultural imperialism, according to Spivak, is the domination of the culture of the coloniser, while undermining the culture and knowledges of those who are ‘located low down in the hierarchy’ of power (1988, p.76). She stressed that speaking means being heard, and subalterns are people who cannot speak, or have their voices heard. As she puts it, ‘when you cannot speak, it means that if speaking involves speaking and listening, this possibility of response, responsibility, does not exist in the subaltern’s sphere’ (1992, p. 46). Instead, they have people in the centre who she called ‘subalternists’, namely the historians, intellectuals, and Western scholars who claim to speak for the subaltern, and instead of bringing the subaltern to the centre to speak, they keep her silent in the margins and speak for her. In this regard, Spivak spoke about ‘epistemic violence’, which is knowledge that the Western colonisers create that supports the production of ideology, imperialism, the ‘Other of Europe’, and the ‘Subject as Europe’ (1988, p.76).

hooks (1990) discussed the difference between being in the centre and being in the margin of a society. She realized that being in the margin provides a different vantage point through which one can see and understand the world in a way that people in the centre cannot. Though she referred to being in the margin as being an outsider ‘to be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body’. Yet, she saw marginality as more than a site of deprivation that one wishes to leave and move to the centre; she saw it as a place where one can have profound awareness and new perspectives, can reject oppression, imagine and create new alternative worlds. Moreover, hooks explained how people in the margin are made ‘Other’ and often struggle to have their voices heard by the people in the centre. She emphasised the necessity for people in the margin to speak themselves and for themselves and to stop having people in the centre speak for them. She referred to that as a process of re-writing people in the margin and explaining their experiences from the perspective of people in the centre; they are not able to see things from the perspective of people in the margin, which would result in the further silencing, estrangement and alienation of people in the margin. As she put it,

> *We fear those who speak about us who do not speak to us and with us. We know what it is like to be silenced. We know that the forces that silence us because they never want us to speak, differ from the forces that say speak, tell me your story. Only do not speak in the voice of resistance. Only speak form that space in the margin that is a sign of deprivation, a wound, and unfulfilled longing. Only speak your pain. (p. 341,343).*

A similar point is discussed by Hall (1996) who states that the formation of the Western cultural identity placed itself in the centre and marginalized everybody else. However, the voices of the marginalized and "de-centred" that were not included in the major structure of the Western cultural representation were beginning to be heard, causing a direct threat to the voices of the dominant and the centred, who do not wish to see the marginalized empowered or moving to the centre.

One strategy that was used to place Western cultural identity in the centre is ‘cultural hegemony’. Drawing on Said’s discussion of Orientalism, Kramsch (1998) states that there is an ‘exercise of power and control’ in every culture, there are the unheard voices of those who lack power, and the dominant and ‘hegemonic’ voices of the powerful and influential, whose voices play a significant role in shaping an individual’s culture, and other individuals’ cultures and how people should view them. Cultural hegemony, as Said (2003) explains, is an ‘enterprise’ which aims to establish Western domination over the Orient not by coercion, but by the dissemination of European ideology, such as ‘the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all non-European peoples and cultures’, and ‘the civilizing mission’ (p.7), which could affect the Orient’s view of themselves and perception of colonisation. Thus, domination is achieved by the Orient’s consent without the use of political and economic pressure (Said, 2003).

In addition, there is also an exercise of power in the language use. In his discussion of linguistic habitus, Bourdieu (1977, p. 653) argues that the ‘efficacy of a discourse’ depends on the authority of the person and his accent. Bourdieu (1984) contends that language is the product of a set of social, historical, and political conditions that make one language an official language. Bourdieu (1984, p.5) contends that there is an "illusion of linguistic communism", as a completely homogeneous speech community does not exist in reality. Rather, there is an idealization of a particular set of linguistic practices due to historical and social conditions, which made a particular language as dominant and the sole legitimate language (ibid). Other languages or dialects were devalued or subordinated (Bourdieu and Thompson, 1991). Those who speak the 'legitimate' language have power and authority in communicative situations (ibid).

The concept of centre and peripheral positions in societies has also been discussed by Shils (2002). Though his argument partly draws a comparison between centre-periphery relationship in Western and non-Western societies, but I would argue it is useful to highlight how a person's position in a society, whether in the centre or in the margin, affect the level of her/his participation in a society. He has stated that in the structure of every society, there is a 'central zone' where the central institutional system of a society is run by the elites/ruling class who have authority, and who through their roles in institutions maintain and affirm the values and beliefs which are central to that society. Key positions in institutions are given exclusively to persons who are usually appreciated for the 'qualities' that are ascribed to them such as, ethnic, political, economic, familial, class provenance, etc., and thus, their key roles in the central institutional system are made legitimate because of their qualities. As Shils has put it, the value system in a society

> *legitimates the existing distribution of roles and rewards to persons possessing the appropriate qualities which in various ways symbolise degrees of proximity to authority... By implication, and explicitly as well, it legitimates the smaller rewards received by those who live at various distances from the circles in which authority is exercised (2002, p. 49).*

Moreover, Shils has pointed out that the power of the elites or ruling class comes from their possession of key positions in central institutional system which they maintain by exerting control on the appointment of persons in key positions. This creates an unequal distribution of power and authority among the population, resulting in a sense of being perceived as 'outsiders', and being 'excluded from the vital zone' among the persons who have been alienated. Alternatively, Shils argues, there would be more harmony in society when the central institutional system becomes more inclusive so that larger proportions of the population are included.

Additionally, Orientalism had its impact on how Western and non-Western cultures were perceived, in that it made Westerners and Western cultures appear superior to the Orient. With the beginning of the twentieth century and the expansion of European colonialism of the East, a theory that Orientals were inferior, and incapable of self-government was put to rationalise colonialism (Said, 2003). As Said *(2003, p.36)* has put it,

> *There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated, which usually means having their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled, their blood and treasure put at the disposal of one or another Western power.*

In modern times, ‘modern Orientalism’ as Said has called it, continue to exist in studies about Arabs and Islam especially after the Arab-Israeli wars, after which the Arab Muslim became a figure in the political and academic world. Some of the principles of such Orientalism are represented in the dogma that the Orientals, Arabs, Muslims are incapable of representing themselves, and are either something to be feared, or to be controlled by pacification or occupation, whenever possible (Said, 2003). As Huntington (1993, p.14) has argued, non-Western civilisations will be a source of threat to Western civilisations if they become ‘actors and not simply objects’ in international relations and in the ‘game’ that is historically played out within Western civilisations. Huntington also stressed the necessity for Western civilisations to keep itself strong by maintaining military superiority in the East to limit the expansion of economic and military strength of non-Western civilisations, if their strength approaches that of the West. This explains why ‘(ex-)imperial countries’ continue to dominate countries through indirect rule, despite decolonisation, ‘any country that has the nerve to resist its former imperial masters does so at its peril’ (Young, 2003, p.3).

In addition, Said (2003) has contended that imperialism distorted the lives of the people who were considered ‘lesser’, generation after generation, and has raised the question of whether ‘modern imperialism’ has ever ended, as it continues to affect the lives of people in the Arab states such as Palestine and Iraq. He argues that while the Holocaust has affected and changed collective consciousness, however, the impacts of imperialism and Orientalism and what they have done in the lives of Arabs, Afghanis, Congolese, etc., and continues to do to Arabs and Muslims, has not produced the same collective awareness. This fundamental point is further explained by Butler (2003), who has discussed power relations that exist even in experiences of loss and suffering among nations. She has remarked that there are certain losses and griefs which become recognised nationally and internationally, while other losses cannot receive similar recognition. As she has put it,

> *Some lives are grievable, and others are not; the differential allocation of grievability that decides what kind of subject is and must be grieved, and which kind of subject must not, operates to produce and maintain certain exclusionary conceptions of who is normatively human: what counts as a livable life and a grievable death?* (2003, p. xiv).

Being in the periphery is evident, I would argue, in the situation of Muslims in Britain, who are as Muslims, not protected against discrimination by law (Vertovec, 2002). The Race Relations Act established in 1976 made discrimination based on racial grounds unlawful. The act considered Sikhs and Jews ethnic groups and are therefore protected by the act; however, Muslims are not considered to constitute such a group, and are therefore not protected by the act (ibid). Several campaigns and high-profile activities demanded to include Muslims in the Race Relations Act or other race protection laws in the following years, all of which were rejected on the basis that current legislations were sufficient to protect Muslims from discrimination (ibid).

2.2.3 Predominant perception of Muslims in the West

This section will briefly discuss Western perceptions of Muslims. It will highlight some of the factors that led to the demonisation and 'othering' of Muslims in Britain, which as a result affected their inclusion in British society.

The current perception about Islam as an 'essentialized, violent, and changeless religion'(Haddad, 2002, p.5) and as a threat to the West (Khan and McMahon, 2016) is largely influenced by the negative kind of media reports about Muslim communities in Britain. One important event in the 1980s that influenced the way Muslims were seen was the 'Rushdie Affair' in 1989. This issue was about the book *The Satanic Verses* (1988) which was written by an author called Rushdie and published in the UK, but was considered offensive by many Muslim believers because of the 'blasphemous' description of the prophet of Islam (Vertovec, 2002). The nature of the media coverage of this issue transformed the general perception about Muslims in Britain (Parekh, 1990). It did not give attention to the issue or to letters, marches, and petitions to ban the book, but when protesters were advised to burn some copies of the book, 'Britain's media (soon followed by the world's) suddenly sat up and took note' (Goodhart, 2014, p.157). Ironically, a very similar incident done by a non-Muslim group did not catch the media's interest. In fact, there was very little coverage of Christian fundamentalists who burned Harry Potter books because they claimed that the books promoted witchcraft (Sharp, 2009). However, after that affair, the media created an image of a ‘Muslim community’ that is homogeneous, antimodern, and against the ideologies of Britishness (Mufti, 1991), and Muslims were positioned as antagonists to the West's values, particularly the freedom of speech (Hussain, 2017).

International developments in the 1990s such as the allied coalition against Iraq and questioning Muslims' loyalty to that coalition, terrorist activities that targeted some American embassies, and the rise of a movement called ‘Islamic fundamentalism’, focused public attention on Muslims in Britain and created a derogatory image of Islam (Vertovec, 2002). As Said (1997, p.26) has put it,

> *it is only a slight overstatement to say that Muslims and Arabs are essentially covered, discussed, apprehended, either as oil suppliers or as political terrorists.*

This later led to growing patterns of anti-Muslim prejudice and Islamophobia in Britain (ibid). 'Islamophobia', is a term coined by Runnymede in 1997 and has led to some confusion. As Elahi and Khan (2017) discuss, the suffix 'phobia' refers to mental illness rather than referring to discriminatory attitudes and behaviours. Nevertheless, Elahi and Khan argue that social phenomena are often defined by terms that do not correspond to the literal, dictionary meaning. Islamophobia is defined as

> *Any distinction, exclusion, or restriction towards, or preference against, Muslims (or those perceived to be Muslims) that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.*
>
> (Runnymede Trust, 2017, p.7)

Since the 11 September attacks, the UK and the US aligned their propaganda campaigns to justify the ‘War on Terror’ and the invasion of Iraq, and to control internal civil liberties (Miller, 2006; Miller and Sabir, 2012). These propaganda campaigns fuelled acts of aggression and harassment against Islamic communities in Britain (Purkiss and Winkler, 2002). For example, there were reports by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (2002) of very serious attacks against Muslims in the UK, and Muslim women wearing the hijab were targets of verbal abuse, were spat on, had their hijab torn from them, and were physically assaulted (Allen and Nielsen, 2002). In Britain, after the 7/7 attacks, Muslims became the focus of policy makers in the UK and were framed as terrorists and a threat to civilization (Elahi and Khan, 2017). Such attacks are a threat to all individuals, and Muslims and non-Muslims alike are being murdered (Khan and McMahon, 2016). However, media coverage continued to represent Muslims as a threat to British security and values (Poole, 2006).

Media coverage focused on reports about radical Islamist groups' claims and demands, such as *Hizb ut-Tahrir* which announced it was no longer possible to be both British and Muslim and that Muslims had to choose between nationality and faith, and the *Muhajerun* group which claimed that Islam excuses acts of violence (Afshar et al., 2005; Modood and Ahmed, 2007), asserting this way Islamophobic stereotypes about Muslims. Yet, 'other less sensationalist Muslim voices were mainly overlooked' (Allen and Nielsen, 2002, p.29). In addition to the 'abuse by the media' (Warsi, 2017), abrasive declarations were made by some politicians such as Kilroy-Silk who claimed that Arabs are cold-blooded murderers and suicide bombers (see Halliday, 2006). In addition, publications by scholars such as Huntington who claimed that a clash of civilisations between Islam and the West is inevitable (Afshar et al. 2005, p.263) raised debates about such claims. Campaigns by some far-right parties such as, the British National party which launched an Islamophobic campaign that stressed the 'inability to co-exist with Islam, and reasserted Christianity as being under threat from Muslims in the UK' (Allen and Nielsen, 2002, p. 29) had an impact on public sentiments towards Muslims. Islamophobia has become a widely spread phenomenon and must be resisted. As Esposito and Kalin (2011, p.xxxiv) note,

> *Islamophobia, which is becoming a social cancer, must be recognized and be as unacceptable as anti-Semitism, a threat to the very fabric of our democratic pluralistic way of life … A fine line must be drawn to distinguish between the faith of Islam and those who commit violence and terror in the name of Islam… Blurring these distinctions risks the adoption of foreign and domestic policies that promote a clash rather than a co-existence of cultures.*

2.3 Concepts of capital

Bourdieu's concepts of capital, field, and habitus have helped understanding power relations in intercultural communication situations between individuals of different ethnic, religious, social, and cultural backgrounds (Nowicka, 2015; Joy et al., 2018). This section will discuss Bourdieu's 'three thinking tools' (Joy, et al., 2018) in relation to intercultural encounters.

A 'field' as Bourdieu (1998) describes, is a social structure that has its own laws and relations of power, and its own agents occupying particular positions in it. Agents in a field share a number of common interests and points of agreement about the field, the game, the stakes, and the presuppositions, usually at the level of 'what goes without saying', and struggle to preserve what is produced in the field and to reproduce belief in the values and stakes of the field (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 73). As Bourdieu (1998, p. 40,41) remarks, a field is

> *a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant permanent relationships of inequality operate in which various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field.*

It is useful to note that there are many different fields such as the business field, the academic field, the medical field, etc., with each one of them having its own laws of functioning, norms, specific traditions and interests, and networks of relations (Bourdieu, 1984). It is also important to know that within these fields, 'habitus' is developed as a product of what is considered common sense and relevant to that field (Beams and Telford, 2013). That is to say, in order for a field to function, there have to be people who are prepared to "play the game", equipped with the required habitus as well as knowledge of the stakes and laws of the field (Bourdieu, 1993).

Habitus as Bourdieu (1977, p. 72) contends is a "system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures". In other words, 'habitus' is an individual's dispositions, attitudes, inclinations, and behaviours that are the result of past and present circumstances, which help shape one's present and future practices (Maton, 2008). Habitus is also durable in that it "generally stays with us across contexts", but it is also transferrable because when individuals move into different fields, each with its own values and dispositions, they "tend to incorporate into their habitus the values and imperatives of those fields" to improve their standing and capital within a specific field (Webb et al., 2002, p.36, 37). Thus, there is a close relationship between habitus and field as dispositions (habitus) influence actions that in turn contribute to the social structure (field) (Maton, 2008).

Therefore, to enter a field, one must possess the habitus, the knowledge, or skill to be accepted as a legitimate player (Huhn et al., 1993). However, in the case of a sudden or 'catastrophic' change of a social field, as in the case of refugees/migrants who enter a new field without any knowledge of the rules of the field, habitus might lag behind this change and as a result might 'misfit the field', as the newcomers might not be equipped with the attitudes and practices needed to occupy positions in that field (Nowicka, 2015). New newcomers consequently will feel like 'fish out of water', as they are forged in a different social world and their dispositions are not expected to change at the same rate (Maton, 2008).

Yet, our understanding of the effect of habitus to position-taking in the field is incomplete without consideration to the concept of 'capital', as those with more capital are granted more power and success in the field, besides other profits such as prestige (Bourdieu, 1993). There are three distinct types of capital according to Bourdieu (1986), these are economic capital which is capital convertible to money, social capital which is made up of "connections" or recognition in a social context, and cultural capital which can exist in three forms, embodied, objectified, and institutionalised. Embodied cultural capital consists of knowledge, dispositions, and linguistic competence acquired through long exposure, whereas objectified cultural capital refers to the cultural goods such as books, instruments, etc., and institutionalised capital which is the educational qualifications which accord its owner recognition in a specific field.

Bourdieu considers capital as the basis of power. However, this turns our attention to a crucial point which is that power is not distributed equally among agents in the field because those with more capital are often more powerful and consequently, are able to influence the rules and decide what 'authentic' capital is (Joy et al., 2018). This leads to a condition of oppression where agents live under the pressure of the limitations imposed over them because their educational background, social connections, class position, etc. are not acknowledged (Web et al., 2002).

If Bourdieu's discussion on the relationship between capital and power is right, then we need to think about how that might impact on newcomers to the field such as immigrants/refugees. Here you can see that power relations in the field affect their lives mainly because they usually lack embodied and institutionalised cultural capital. For example, they may have a different ethnic identity, taste, lifestyle, accent, and foreign academic credentials which may not be formally recognised in the host country/country of settlement (Tikka, 2010). Therefore, they struggle to acquire positions in the field because they are not members of the dominant group "which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a credential which entitles them to credit" (Bourdieu, 1986, p.294). In addition, when newcomers try to improve their own value and place in the field to eventually gain more capital, their attempts will most likely fail because of misrecognition, unequal opportunities (Web et al., 2002), and the established dominant actors of a field who try to maintain control over the field and keep out competition (Bourdieu, 1993). As Bourdieu (1984, p.151) has argued, "Those aspiring to or holding a position may have an interest in redefining it in such a way that it cannot be occupied by anyone other than the possessors of properties identical to their own".

Bourdieu's discussions on field, capital and habitus can be usefully linked to the participants in my research, who during the several interviews conducted with them, expressed experiencing exclusion and alienation. Though on the surface they may seem integrated into the UK society because they are either employed or are joining ESOL courses and family learning sessions, their habitus and cultural capitals are not valued and are not helping them become full members of the British society.

2.3.1 Transcultural capital

This section will discuss how the knowledge, skills and competencies of refugees, or what is known as the cultural capital that refugees bring with them to the host countries can be transferred and considered 'legitimate' in their various new fields. As mentioned earlier, Bourdieu suggests that capital can be classified under three ‘fundamental species (each with its own subtypes)’ these are economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital (Bourdieu and Wacqant, 1992, p. 119). Bourdieu also has argued that capital is ‘context specific’; what is considered capital in one social field may not be in another (Beams and Telford, 2013), as Bourdieu (1993, p. 73) puts it, ‘capital is effective in relation to a particular field, and therefore within the limits of that field’, and this is why the same capital may be considered invaluable and meaningless in different fields (Bourdieu, 1984). However, Meinhof and Triandafyllidou (2000) adapted another form of capital, 'transcultural capital', which includes Bourdieu's forms of capital (economic, social and cultural) and which explains how migrants can employ their local and transnational ties (social capital) to widen their options in countries of settlement rather than restrict them, and as a result, maximise their economic and professional advancements (Meinhof and Triandafyllidou, 2000). Transcultural capital is defined as ‘the strategic use of knowledge, skills and networks acquired by migrants through connections with their country and cultures of origin which are made active at their new places of residence’ (ibid, p. 202).

The concept of transcultural capital can also be applied to refugees who bring with them cultural, social and economic capital from their countries of origin, and which may be transferrable to the host countries. Many of them may have been educated and/or have had professions, and may have had high socio-economic status in their countries of origin, especially those who come from far away countries, since the long journey to safety requires funds (Rutter and Jones, 1998). This describes the majority of the Arab community (migrants/refugees) in the UK who come from urban middle-class families, such as Iraqi migrants/refugees (Harper, 2008). Nevertheless, there are instances when migrants/refugees are faced with institutional policies in host countries which do not recognize or support the transcultural capital that they bring with them, in other words ‘their own very special 'capital', their transcultural capital that natives do not possess’ (Meinhof and Triandafyllidou, 2000, p. 218). This is what Bourdieu points out to as 'symbolic violence' which occurs when agents are subjected to a form of violence where they are ‘treated as inferior, denied resources, limited in their social mobility and aspirations’ (Web et al., 2002, p. 25). This leads to very little opportunity for integration and active participation of migrants/refugees- as is the case of the participants of this research and I would claim a majority of Arab and Muslim women in the UK, and causes the intensification of their sense of exclusion and marginalization (Kosic and Triandafyllidou, 2000).

2.3.2 Bonding and bridging social capital

Other two forms of social capital that can be useful to migrants/refugees in their new communities are the 'bonding and bridging social capital'. The two forms of social capital were developed by Putnam (2000) who defines social capital as ‘social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them’ (Putnam, 2000, p. 19). He argues that bonding is inward-looking, aims to reinforce ‘exclusive identities and homogenous groups’, and is good for fostering reciprocity and solidarity among groups such as ethnic groups; while bridging is out-ward looking and involves people from a broad social spectrum, and helps to provide links with external local organizations in the host community (Putnam, 2000, p. 22).

Although Putnam (2000) argues that the society could benefit from bonding and bridging, his ideas received criticism. His notion of helpful and friendly community interactions ignores the negative aspects of community life where inequalities exist in community relationships and the motivation to help each other is based on self-interest, though on the surface relationships seem to be based on trust and reciprocity (Leonard, 2004). Moreover, while Putnam contends that exclusive bonding capital is necessary for ‘getting by’ and inclusive bridging capital is good for ‘getting ahead’, making the transition from bonding to bridging social capital may be complicated as only individuals possessing economic and cultural capital would be able to make external links with outside elite groups (Leonard, 2004). In addition, long term political discrimination and marginalization of some communities may result in deeply-rooted distrust of wider state institutions (Dumas, 2009). The policies and social attitudes of countries of settlements which classifies and categorizes migrants/refugees reinforce ethnic segregation and an unwillingness to make community ties with dominant or diverse cultures (Meinhof and Triandafyllidou, 2000). Other factors that prevent bridging is the political discourse and policies that do not ease integration and require the newcomer to assimilate to dominant culture, emphasizing by that social injustice and the unequal recognition of newcomers (Tikka, 2010). Thus, social, economic and political inequality may hinder bonding and bridging social capital and the transition between them (Leonard, 2004). This discussion links to the participants in my study and many Arab and Muslim women in the UK who struggle with bridging because of issues of racism and inequality, as well as the national and international discourse about multiculturalism and refugees which links them to issues of integration and social cohesion.

2.4 Concepts of culture and interculturality

As mentioned before, the aim of this study is to explore Arab Muslim women's experiences of interculturality in London and how these experiences affect their inclusion. It is useful at the beginning to discuss the different concepts of culture and intercultural communication in relation to this study.

Among the various, old concepts of culture, ‘culture’ is defined as ‘a way of life’ a group of people share; it is all the knowledge, convictions, views and values that a group agrees with and accept undoubtfully (Alasuutari, 1995; Bocock, 1996). Fay (1996, p.55), states that according to a standard view, ‘culture is a complex set of shared beliefs, values, and concepts which enables a group to make sense of its life and which provides it with directions for how to live'. Fay believes that according to this view, people acquire their identities by incorporating the belief system of a specific culture with its accompanying way of interacting and feeling.

Moreover, Agar (2006) also points out that the old concept of culture assumed that it is,

> *a closed, coherent system of meaning and action in which an individual always and only participated…It stayed the same from one generation to the next. What people did could be described, explained, and generalized by their membership in that single, shared culture. (p. 3).*

Culture, as Bocock (1996) has discussed is a community that has the same linguistic and cultural representations with set boundaries for that community to determine who belongs to that community and who does not. Individuals who do not share the same values and beliefs are banished or are not treated as 'full members' of that group, and this is true in prehistoric and in modern societies (Bocock, 1996).

However, Agar (2006) points out that this is an oversimplification of the way we think about 'culture'. For example, two people could be members of the same culture, but they would also be members of different regional, linguistic, religious, generational, gender, etc. cultures (ibid). In this sense, Hannerz (1999) has also noted, there is more than one way of being a Muslim, or a Christian, or a Confucian, and in the meanwhile being many other things.

Fay (1996) has also criticised the narrow perspective of what a culture is, because any one culture can have varieties of inconsistent values and ideas, and paradoxical beliefs among its people, mainly due to different interpretations of rules, events, and histories, and because of the different positions of power among the people in one culture. According to Agar, there are several ways to define what culture is. Among these definitions, culture is a 'working assumption' that seeks to make sense of what he calls 'rich points' - these are situations unknown to an outsider who is constantly trying to interpret what they could mean. Culture is also 'relational', it is the same as translation of a text which differs according to how the translator made the translation of it. As Agar (2006, p.6) has put it,

> *There is no culture of X, only a culture of X for Y. How much and what needs to go into that cultural description depends on which X and which Y define the boundary.*

Agar's definitions of 'cultures' reveals that they are dynamic, fluid, and needs to be continually negotiated. Likewise, Kramsch (1998) has also pointed out that cultures undergo changes, and every culture is diverse and has members who have different histories, ethnic backgrounds and political views.

Having discussed different concepts of cultures, I now consider the definition of intercultural communication. ‘Intercultural’ is the interaction between two cultures outside the boundaries of the states (Kramsch, 1998); intercultural can also mean the interaction between different social groups, classes, and cultures within the same state. Spencer-Oatey and Kotthoff (2009) define it as ‘communication across cultures’. They state that there are instances when intercultural communication can be difficult and unattainable, but it is not always because of cultural differences, but rather because of political and economic disputes and inequalities in a society, and because of discrimination of the more powerful against the less powerful, such as citizens of a country against ‘foreigners’, the discrimination against ethnic minorities, or marginalized groups in a society, specifically women (Reisigl, 2009).

Zegarac (2009) states that the difference between "intra-cultural" communication and "inter-cultural" communication is that the former is defined as communication between people who share common cultural beliefs, while the latter is the communication between individuals who do not share similar cultural beliefs. Therefore, this study is concerned with intercultural communication between Arab Muslim women in the UK with the British community, and the various conflicts that arise as a result of not sharing similar cultural beliefs and values, and because of inadequate knowledge of the dominant language (Spencer-Oatey and Kotthoff, 2009).

2.4.1 Promoting intercultural communication skills

This section will discuss some ways to promote intercultural communication skills. Some of the means will be through raising cultural awareness, and by avoiding cultural prejudice and countering a common idea that intercultural communication is ‘problematic’ because of the cultural differences that are manifested in forms of different communication styles and values (Holliday, 2011).

Hannerz (1999) has discussed the idea of ‘cultural celebrationism’ or ‘multiculturalism’ which is similar in meaning to ‘cosmopolitanism’ or ‘collective ways of life’ and which celebrate cultural diversity and change. However, Hannerz argues that adopting the concept of ‘celebrationism’ might not be the ultimate solution to difficulties and clashes caused by everyday unavoidable interactions, as it conceives cultural differences on a superficial level. Therefore, the biggest effort lies on people who should manage to find a way to live together, and to handle cultural differences the way one would handles differences between generations, genders, parties, etc. Byram (2014), also states that ‘multiculturalism’ has been criticised in Europe because it only encourages groups of people with different cultures and different languages to live beside each other in one community while maintaining their different cultures and languages. In many cases, those groups remain limited and constrained by their own languages and cultures. ‘Interculturalism’ on the other hand, encourages communication and bringing of people together, and limits division on the basis of religion, ethnicity, or language, such notions were the basis of ‘interculturality’ that were promoted in the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, in 2008 (ibid).

Similarly, Modood (1992, 2015, 2017, 2019) states that factors such as racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia are damaging to multiculturalism and need to be challenged as they are affecting how the public in Britain perceive multiculturalism. He contends that in order to promote multiculturalism, mere multicultural co-existence is not productive, but that inter-group contact, co-operation and everyday encounters are important. Moreover, Modood advocates a new concept of Britishness, one that moves away from ethnocentricity, and allows for ethnicities other than 'English', 'Welsh', 'Scottish', and 'Irish' to gain conviction. Modood promoted the need for multicultural citizenship to be recognised, other than the static ‘mononationalism’, such as multiple or hyphenated nationality in Britain without viewing it as a half nationality or a minimized patriotism. He has stated,

> *it is seen as the claiming of an ethnic identity within the framework of a common nationality that is open to all forms of ethnic differences that do not challenge the over-arching bonds of nation and citizenship. 'British' by contrast is virtually a quasi-ethnic term, and being closely identified with 'whiteness', it excludes other ethnic terms, so it is not surprising that descriptions such as British Black or British Pakistani are at present not much more than courtesy titles and carry limited conviction. (1992, p.5).*

Holiday (2011) suggests ways to foster intercultural communication between people from different cultures. He states that essentialist descriptions of cultural differences must be replaced with critical cosmopolitan skills such as, thick description which is delving deep to analyse the complexity of the cultural act and looking for the hidden and unexpressed in social interactions. The two other skills are bracketing and ‘making the familiar strange', which mean 'putting aside established descriptions', suspending assumptions and judgements, countering prejudice and 'non-critical easy answers', and the 'taken for granted' way of explaining things (p.30). Holliday suggests that such techniques will be useful to construct cultural awareness that will provide people from different cultures with the possibility to put aside 'chauvinism', to 'dialogue' with one another, and to view cultural differences as enriching resources rather than differences.

Another key for effective long-term intercultural communication is emotion regulation, as suggested by Matsumoto et al. (2009). They discuss intercultural adaptation and adjustment as processes connected with intercultural communication. They define adaptation as the process of 'altering one's behaviour to fit in with a changed environment or circumstances' (p. 77) and point out that adaptation is useful for immigrants and refugees. On the other hand, they explain adjustment as the personal experiences that result from trying to adapt, and as a result, encourage further adaptation. Adapting to a new culture, according to Matsumoto et al., can result in positive outcomes such as, the development of multicultural identities and multiple perspectives. They state that intercultural communication experiences consist of continuous adaptation and adjustment efforts to overcome difficulties in everyday engagements. Such engagements are not easy because of the inevitable misunderstandings due to cultural differences and stereotypical way of thinking. They propose an approach to intercultural adaptation and adjustment which consists of four main ingredients, these are emotion regulation, critical thinking, openness, and flexibility. These four main components are important determinants of intercultural communication success or failure, especially for refugees and migrants. To explain, being able to regulate negative feelings that intercultural encounters might cause and not to act directly upon them will help people engage in critical thinking about the differences and the causes of misunderstandings and go beyond their own cultural lenses to understand differences (ibid). Once being engaged in critical thinking about cultural differences, people become more open and flexible to new ways of thinking, add schemas and develop an ability to interact with the diversity (Matsumoto et al., 2009).

The Council of Europe's White Paper on intercultural dialogue (2007), emphasized the need for 'intercultural dialogue' with the main objective of learning 'to live together in peace and constructively in a multicultural world and to develop a sense of community and belonging'. Among other objectives are sharing different visions of the world, identifying differences and similarities between different cultural practices and perceptions, agreeing that disputes should not be settled by violence, making adjustments, bridging the gap between those who see diversity as a threat, and those who see it as an enrichment, promoting social cohesion democratically, and the joint developing of new projects.

This section discussed the many models and skills to foster successful intercultural communication. It is important to continue to promote and raise awareness of the importance of intercultural communication, and to flag the dangers of refusal of diversity as it may provide 'fertile ground for rejection, social exclusion, extremist reactions and conflict' (Council of Europe, 2007). It is also of similar importance to acknowledge modern realities such as that we live in a completely different word and societies are becoming increasingly diverse, and that dynamics of diversity and collective identities are changing as a result of many influences (Antonsich, 2015). Instead of reinforcing the notion that majority identity is under threat because of migration, plural identities should be allowed, as such identities are not in conflict or competition with one another, but rather complement a person's identity through the recognition of her/his heritage, history, and personal story (ibid).

2.4.2 Cultural competence in classrooms

Cultural competence is defined as 'the ability to work across cultures in a way that acknowledges and respects the cultures of the person or organisation being served; (Hanley, 1999, p. 1). It is important, as Hanley has noted, to understand the cultures and histories of minority ethnic learners, and to have more than cultural awareness or sensitivity to be able to help them. This will be important to avoid 'unwitting', 'unintentional', or 'unconscious' racism, which as MacPherson (1999, p. 44) has stated,

> *can arise because of lack of understanding, ignorance or mistaken beliefs. It can arise from well-intentioned but patronising words or actions. It can arise from unfamiliarity with the behaviour or cultural traditions of people or families from minority ethnic communities.*

In this regard, Steele and Aronson (1995) has also discussed the 'stereotype threat' which they refer to as a predicament whereby minority ethnic learners become at risk of confirming a negative stereotype of their groups. Anything they do or any feature they have could make the stereotype more plausible and could beset the members of their group. 'Racist' stereotyping and prejudice as Scarman (1981, p.64) has stressed, 'does occur and every instance of it has an immense impact on community attitudes and beliefs'. The danger in being a target of prejudice and stereotypes as Steele and Aronson has discussed, is that learners are more likely to internalise an 'inferiority anxiety' which after a prolonged exposure to society's negative views about their abilities, can impair their intellectual performance and could translate into poor life success. As Modood (1992) has pointed out earlier, an individual's self-esteem relies on the group status and dignity, therefore, it is difficult for members of a community to sense any kind of self-worth if the group they belong to is constantly derogated and underestimated.

On the other hand, empathy has become a significant quality in language teaching and learning. Mercer (2016) states that teachers must have the ability to relate to and connect with their students before they can hope to teach them anything. She contends that teachers nowadays work in multi-ethnic and multicultural classrooms, and they need to be able to empathise to interact appropriately with understanding and respect for diversity. It is also essential for teachers to have socio-emotional skills and sensitivities in classroom encounters (Underhill, 2013). Moreover, having empathy is important in social interactions [such as classroom settings] for its role in reducing intolerance and discrimination, and in increasing understanding, tolerance and respect between people with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Wang et al., 2003).

The term ethnocultural empathy, which is also known as cultural competence was coined by Wang et al. (2003), is different from general empathy as they discuss, in that it stresses the need to control one's own prejudice and subjective judgements against people with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Ethnocultural empathy as defined by Rasoal et al. (2011, p. 8) is "feeling, understanding, and caring about what someone from another culture feels, understands, and cares about". There are several obstacles that hinder having empathy for people from different cultures such as lack of knowledge about different cultures, lack of practical experience of being in different cultures, and lack of ability to understand similarities and differences between one's own culture and other cultures (Rasoal et al., 2011). It is like living in a 'cultural vacuum' where there is an absence of comparative information on the cultural lives of others, and people perpetuate stereotypes they have of other people (Hanley, 1999). Conversely, ethnocultural empathy can be achieved through having practical experience with other cultures, as it is challenging to take the perspective of people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds if one has not experienced social interactions with people from other cultures, has not been in similar situations, or has not lived in other countries for prolonged periods (Wang et al., 2003). In other words, cultural competence can be achieved by experience, as Hanley (1999, p. 4) has stated, “the best teacher is first-hand experience with a culture, if not immersion in it”. It is noteworthy that cultural competence has replaced other ideas such as cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness that were embraced without involving change in behaviour (Hanley, 1999).

Considering ethnocultural empathy entails also understanding the reasons for a general reluctance to speak during speaking activities amongst ESOL learners. While ESOL teachers value participation in speaking activities, there is a general resistance by ESOL students to participate. Research in this area reveal that students’ reluctance to participate in speaking activities is because of conflicting values of the teacher and the learners, where learners hesitate to express an opinion that does not match the teacher’s expectations (Johnston et al., 1998), and because of cultural reasons, as in some cultures students are strongly discouraged from speaking up in classroom settings (Li and Lui, 2011). Other reasons are related to shyness, fear of being wrong, and not having enough time to form ideas about the topic (Littlewood, 2004). There are other factors that may stem from reasons other than differences in culture, values, or learning epistemologies between the learners and the teacher, but from factors related to postcolonialism, Occidentalism, and neo-imperialism, which affect the way learners perceive their teachers, and affect their willingness to engage with them (Diallo, 2014).

To encourage ESOL learners to interact and speak, it is important to reaffirm learners’ identities in language classes. Byram (1997) criticised a model for intercultural communicative competence presented by van Ek which made the ‘native speaker a model for the learner’. One reason for his criticism of van Ek’s model is because learners should separate from their cultures, identities, and languages in order to become accepted as native speakers in another language. Byram argues that it is important for learners not to see themselves as ‘imitators of native speakers’ or feel that their knowledge and use of their language is inferior to that of the native speakers' (Byram, 2008), but rather as active ‘social actors’ who are able to engage in a social interaction and able to manage the different identities and cultural beliefs both speakers bring to the interaction.

There are ways to prepare learners to be interculturally competent people as well. Byram (2008) introduced elements of intercultural communication competence for learners, which describe how learners obtain the ability to understand and communicate with people from another culture. These elements consist of attitude which entails openness to other cultures and the willingness to communicate with others on an equal basis, and the ability to question one's values and meanings in one's culture (ibid). In addition, it is necessary to be knowledgeable of other people's cultures as much as of own, their modes of interaction, and reasons for miscommunication, and applying that knowledge in real situations of communication (ibid).

Encouraging learners to become interculturally competent people is far from making the learners feel inferior or marginalised because of their ethnicity, gender, and class (Norton, 2000), or threatening their identities or cultural beliefs. As Kim (1999) puts it, educators need to develop strategies to promote intercultural communication skills as they are as important as other functional skills in any area. Communicative competence as Franklin (2009) have stated, is necessary in order to prepare learners to live as intercultural knowledgeable citizens, and to improve their integration.

2.5 Promoting fundamental British values

The term fundamental British values (FBV) was coined in 2011 when it occurred within the definition of extremism in the government's Prevent Strategy document (Richardson and Bolloten, 2015). Extremism is defined by Home Office as,

> *Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas (HM Government, 2011, p.107).*

The context of the term when it first appeared was not educational; it was discussed in policy discourse about the prevention of terrorism, but then entered education in 2012 with the publication of Teachers' Standards that year (Richardson and Bolloten, 2015). Teachers' Standards defined the minimum level of practice expected of trainees and teachers from the point of being awarded qualified teacher status, and specified methods to assess the performance of all teachers and trainees. In part two of the Teachers' Standards, under Personal and Professional Conduct section, it is stated that teachers maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour inside and outside schools through a number of conducts, one of them is by 'not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' (DfE, 2011, p.14).

Later, the Department for Education obliged schools to promote fundamental British values as part of its program to promote spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and society in its departmental advice document published in 2014 (DfE, 2014). It is noteworthy that in the non-statutory advice from the Department for Education document, it is stated that promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils in schools ‘relates specifically to the requirements to actively promote fundamental British values in schools and explains how this can be met through the general requirement in the 2002 Act’ (DfE, 2014, p.3). However, there is not any reference to fundamental British values in section 78 of the Education Act 2002 ((Parliament of the United Kingdom, 2002; Richardson and Bolloten, 2015). Nevertheless, learners’ ability to understand fundamental British values will be considered when Ofsted inspectors evaluate and make judgements on the effectiveness of the learning provision (Ofsted, 2019).

The promotion of fundamental British values through a whole school ethos came after pressures that the education system should contribute to security agendas and to include schools as public bodies in the anti-extremism Prevent strategy, after government concerns about terrorism (Starkey, 2018). The emphasis on fundamental British values in teaching and teacher education could be viewed essential in forming a cohesive British society, and the expectation that teachers will respect and tolerate different faiths is considered positive as it reflects the government’s commitment to support a multi-cultural British society (Maylor, 2016). However, it is argued that British values are viewed by the government as much more than ideologies that govern human behaviour; they are instead considered necessary in preventing radicalisation and terrorism among pupils, and that is why British values are found in policy documents and in the Prevent Strategy that was introduced in 2011 (ibid).

There are factors that resulted in the construction and promotion of British values as being British and as being the only values that are acceptable, one of which is essentialising Muslims as different and against British values in politicians' speeches, such as Cameron’s speech in 2011 at the European security conference in Munich where he posed questions such as, “Do they [Muslims] believe in universal human rights - including for women and people of other faiths? Do they believe in equality of all before the law?” (Maylor, 2016). In addition, national and geopolitical incidents related to terrorism, the so-called Trojan Horse affair in Birmingham, the rise of the so-called ‘Islamic State in Syria’ (ISIS), and the flight of young British Muslims to join it, have led to increased security requirements (Lander, 2016). An example of increased security requirements is reflected by replacing the statement in the Teachers' Standards 'not undermining British values' with 'actively promoting fundamental British values' in schools, in order to safeguard children and young people from radicalisation and extremism (Richardson and Bolloten, 2015).

On the other hand, promoting fundamental British values in schools and educational contexts along with the lack of training in how to teach British values has led to positioning teachers 'as the discursive subjects of the securitised neoliberal imaginary' in which they rely on imperialist construction of Britishness (Lander, 2016). Emphasising the Britishness of the British values is also a way to assume that only British/white values are acceptable, and minority ethnic communities are required to assimilate (Maylor, 2016). It has also undermined teachers' professionalism through state control and constrained educational policy and the diminution of critical spaces, has also made teachers subjects of a hegemonic discourse, and instruments of surveillance of the 'Other' Muslim children (Lander, 2016, p.4). Equally important, research conducted in this area suggest that Ofsted, and DfE should consider the impact of fundamental British values on Muslim children, parents, communities, and Muslim teachers, and to support the restoration and renewal of a curriculum that reflects and promotes fundamental human values (Richardson and Bolloten, 2015).

2.6 The Prevent duty in classrooms

Prevent duty is part of the overall UK government counter-terrorism strategy which was revised and published in 2011 with the aim to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism (HM Government, 2011). Counter-Terrorism and Security Act which was introduced in 2015, included a 'Prevent duty' under section 26 of the Act which has placed a duty on local authorities to participate and to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" (HM Government, 2015, p.2).

Prevent, which targets all forms of terrorism and non-violent extremism, is a required duty in educational institutions (HM Government, 2015), but it attracted much public criticism. According to Open Society Justice Initiative (2016), Prevent is under a serious risk of human rights violations, and breaches of Education Act 1986 as it created a 'chilling effect on freedom of speech' in schools and universities, for example some university conferences on Islamophobia have been cancelled. Moreover, targeting non-violent extremism and 'indicators' of being drawn into terrorism 'lack scientific basis', as much as the paradoxical relationship of safeguarding children at risk on one hand, and reporting risky children on the other hand (Open Society Justice Initiative, 2016, p. 16). Moreover, the claim that nonviolent extremism or religious ideology is an antecedent to terrorism has been discredited by the British government itself and numerous scholars (Weaver, 2015). Also, the statutory duty of Prevent creates an opportunity to over-refer individuals, however, figures from the National Channel Referral Figures show that about 80% of referral cases –majority targeted Muslims- were set aside, revealing that thousands were wrongly referred (Open Society Justice Initiative, 2016). Numerous Muslim students have been reported for the most mundane of reasons such as engaging in anti-racist or pro-Palestine activities (Cohen and Waqas, 2017). Prevent, is described by Khan and McMahon (2016, p.20), 'as toxic. A perception exists that it seeks to criminalise British Muslims, spy on Muslim children and close down debate within school classes'.

In addition, the term 'radicalisation' is referred to in the government's revised Prevent duty guidance, wherein it is stated that specified authorities are required to deal with radicalisation and 'should demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the risk of radicalisation in their area' (HM Government, 2015, p. 3). However, it has been argued that the term 'radicalisation' is a relational concept and dependent on the subjective perception of people on normality (Dudenhoefer, 2018). Also, schools are required to address radicalisation, but the list of radicalisation indicators provided by Home Office is highly misleading, and detecting radicalisation, especially among youths, is a complicated endeavour as it could result in reporting teenagers for puberty-typical behaviour, such as expressing feelings of anger (ibid). Moreover, Prevent duty has been criticised by the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the University and College Union (UCU) who affirmed their opposition of Prevent and voted that the Government should withdraw it (Khan and Cohen, 2016). It is obvious that the Government through Prevent, is contradicting the 'British Values', is denying basic human rights, and is alienating the very people it wants to engage with and integrate (Cohen and Waqas, 2017). Nevertheless, the British government responded earlier this year to calls for an independent review of its 'controversial' and 'discriminatory' Prevent strategy, which is due to be conducted this year, 2019 (Warell, 2019). However, due to the current context and restrictions of COVID-19 pandemic, the deadline of the Review result, which was initially on August 2020 was removed, and a new date for the Review was set to be on August 2021 (Home Office, 2020).

2.7 Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter highlighted the challenges related to social inclusion that refugee Arab Muslim women face in British society. Whilst the UK is a multicultural and multilingual society, yet there are several factors that negatively affect intercultural communication between Britons and people from different cultural backgrounds such as Arab Muslims. These factors are related to old colonial ideologies which persist in our modern time, such as, 'Orientalism' (Said, 1978, 2003), the classification of societies into Western and non-Western, chauvinism, and essentialist understandings of the ‘Other’. Considering Arab Muslim communities, such essentialist understandings promoted divisions (us and them) and reinforced assumptions that Arab Muslims are inferior, backward, and uncivilised. Muslim women in particular are perceived as oppressed and in need of a ‘Subalternist’ (Spivak, 1992) to speak for them.

Other factors are related to power relations between Western and non-Western societies. Power relations result in reinforcing inequalities in the society and the marginalisation of some communities. Some of the manifestations of such inequalities and marginalisation is by not legitimising the cultural and linguistic capitals of refugees/migrants, which result in the exclusion and alienation of people from minority ethnic and cultural background. Muslim communities in the UK face serious challenges that affect their inclusion in British society. These include the past and present marginalisation of their communities through the government policies, terrorist attacks by radical groups which harm both Muslims and non-Muslims, but which doubly harm Muslims because these attacks justify reactions taken against them by the people and the government. On the other hand, mainstream media, radical writers, and far-right political parties play a significant role in shaping the perception of British people about Muslim communities. They fuel the widespread ‘bigoted’ and false perceptions about Islam, justifying this way, Islamophobia (Elahi and Khan, 2017). However, to challenge or criticise the hegemonic voices is to risk being charged of complacency with terrorism (Butler, 2006). Moreover, Islamophobia has become a phenomenon in the West which is exploited to feed constant resentment and justify hatred of Muslims. Muslim women, especially who wear the hijab, face additional challenges of being stereotyped and rejected. All of these factors hinder the inclusion of refugee Arab Muslim women in British society and result in alienating them.

Nevertheless, there are ways to alter negative perceptions and stereotypes of Arab

Muslims and Muslim women, and to challenge racism and Islamophobia. Some of which include promoting intercultural communication skills such as, putting aside chauvinism, and promoting multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue. In educational contexts, teachers can challenge racism and stereotyping by developing ethnocultural empathy (Rasaol et al., 2011), and understanding learners' cultures and histories to avoid the 'stereotype threat' (Steel and Aronson, 1995), which negatively affects learners and their entire communities. I argue that research about the lives of people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the UK is much needed, as it contributes to understanding different people and their histories, rather than making assumptions and judgements. There is little research that discusses the lives of Arabs in the UK, in particular Arab women. My study about Arab Muslim women, will contribute to this field of study, and reduce some of the predominant perceptions about Arab Muslim women in the UK.

To conclude, this chapter presented a discussion of the three theoretical frameworks that underpin this study. These are postcolonialism, concepts of capital, and intercultural communication. Postcolonialism throws light on the cultural products of colonialism, the background of ‘Othering’, Western assumptions and ways of knowing that form the basis of essentialist perceptions of non-Western cultures, whilst concepts of capital explain power relations and inequalities in societies that give power to some communities and marginalise others. Both concepts explain the reasons for difficulties encountered in intercultural communication and interactions between different social groups and cultures, whereby these difficulties are not mainly because of cultural differences, but because of stereotyping, chauvinism, and unequal power relations.

Chapter 3 ESOL in the UK: Debates about provision

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the context of ESOL in the UK. I start with a brief recount of the history of ESOL in the UK, and highlight major milestones that influenced the provision. Then I move on to discuss the relationship of ESOL provision with political debates on national unity, integration, security, and citizenship in relation to migrants/refugees, which have sparked a lot of debate at the public and national policy level.

In the final sections of the chapter, I will discuss translanguaging, a new pedagogical approach that has been advocated for in education and in the field of ESOL, and which came to challenge monolingual beliefs and practices in teaching. Relevant to translanguaging is the discussion of the employment of bi/multilingual teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds in England, the effect of the demographic match between teachers and learners, and the challenges minority ethnic teachers face in the workplace. An important part in the debates about ESOL is its relationship to discussions of identity reconstruction, and to relations of power. I end the chapter with a discussion of social justice approach within ESOL, which has been advocated for by educators, practitioners, and activists and which has significant implications for pedagogy.

3.2 ESOL provision in the UK – A brief history

ESOL provision in the UK has experienced many changes since the early twentieth century. The demand for ESOL classes increased due to factors such as successive groups of refugees and migrants arriving in the UK during World War I and in the early 1930s, migrants coming from Europe and former colonies after World War II to provide labour, and immigration acts that made English language competence a requirement for settlement or naturalisation (discussed in Chapter 4). During the years between 1870 – 1930, ESOL classes were developed, provided and funded by local volunteer practitioners and voluntary organisations such as Local Education Authorities (LEA) (Rosenberg, 2007; Hamilton and Hillier, 2009). In London where the majority of refugees were concentrated, ESOL was provided by the Inner London Education Authority, School Board for London (SBL) and London County Council schools (LCC) (Rosenberg, 2007; Hamilton and Hillier, 2009). The creation of the British Council in

1934 was a major development in the provision of ESOL, as it took the role in organising ESOL learning, besides promoting a positive image of Britain overseas (Rosenberg, 2007).

Funding for ESOL was provided for the first time by the government in the year 1966 under what was known as Section 11 of the Local Government Act (Paget and Stevenson, 2014). However, funding was restricted to accommodate the English learning needs of immigrants from the Commonwealth countries (Hamilton and Hillier, 2009), whose numbers had increased substantially and “whose language or customs differ from those of the community” (Local Government Act 1966, C. 42). Funding under section 11 continued through voluntary organisations and local providers until the year 1993, when it ended and was replaced by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, which included non-Commonwealth immigrants as a result of the increased diversity of immigrants arriving in the UK (Rosenberg, 2007; Hamilton and Hillier, 2007; Simpson, 2016).

During the 1970s and 1980s, the absence of an effective government policy and attention resulted in extensive activism among ESOL practitioners and researchers (Hamilton and Hillier, 2009). Activism and campaigns led to the foundation of organisations such as NATESLA (National Association for Teaching English as a Second Language to Adults), the London Literacy Unit (LLU), and ALBSU (Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit) which were established in 1977, 1980, and 1984 respectively, and which worked within limited funding from the government to develop the provision of ESOL (Rosenberg, 2007; Hamilton and Hillier, 2009). NATESLA, which was later called NATECLA (National Association for Teachers of English and Community Languages to Adults) worked with other national organisations such as the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the National Organisation for Adult Learning (NIACE), and the Further Education and Development Agency (FEDA) to support ESOL provision (DfEE, 2000). This was done through researching and identifying the particular needs of ESOL learners, providing training programmes for ESOL teachers, lobbying for a separate curriculum, and advocating for an adequate and coherent funding for the provision (DfEE, 2000).

3.3 Emergence of Skills for Life for ESOL

In 2001, the New Labour government of the time published its White Paper Skills for Life in which national standards and a national core curriculum for adult literacy and numeracy was introduced (DfEE, 2001). The Skills for Life initiative came in response to the Moser report of the year 1999 *A Fresh Start*, which estimated that seven million adults in England were in need of Adult Literacy, Language, and Numeracy (ALLN) education (Appleby and Bathmaker, 2006; Roberts and Baynham, 2006; Hamilton and Hillier, 2009). A new Adult Basic Skills Strategy emerged from the Skills for Life initiative to reduce the number of adults with basic literacy and numeracy skills (Simpson, 2015). ESOL was included under the Skills for Life umbrella after active lobbying from ESOL teachers and researchers, who viewed its inclusion as an opportunity for funding (ibid).

Although initially ESOL was closely linked with literacy and numeracy under the basic skills umbrella, it later became managed through the ESOL core curriculum (Hamilton and Hillier, 2009; Paget and Stevenson, 2014). Despite the argued benefits of the inclusion of ESOL within the Skills for Life policy, the positioning of ESOL as a ‘skill’ - rather than a discipline – which is managed by a narrow skills-based agenda that would eventually produce a ‘docile low paid workforce’ (Roberts and Baynham, 2006) resulted later in the sidelining of ESOL (Cooke and Simpson, 2009; Simpson and Whiteside, 2015). Nevertheless, funding under the New Labour Government was expanded and was accompanied by a ‘relaxed eligibility criteria’ (Paget and Stevenson, 2014).

3.4 Cuts in funding to ESOL provision

Skills for Life was funded until 2009, by which year the New Labour government of the time signalled that ESOL was no longer a component of Skills for Life and would be coordinated by local authorities and councils (Paget and Stevenson, 2014; Simpson, 2015). Starting 2010, the Coalition government’s attention was focused on ‘austerity measures’, which resulted in cuts in funding for ESOL and affected local authorities’ abilities to coordinate their responsibility of the provision (Simpson, 2015). Reduction in funding came after the tightening of public spending and living standards, which raised scepticism about state support to groups perceived as not ‘paying in’, such as immigrants (Paget and Stevenson, 2014, p. 23). Therefore, the Coalition government announced reforms to the funding of ESOL in its document published in 2010, *Further Education – New Horizons: Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth* in which it was stated that ESOL funding would be ‘refocused’ (BIS, 2010; Foster and Bolton, 2017).

Later, in 2011, the government restricted fully funded ESOL courses to learners on active benefits, who were mainly seeking jobs (Paget and Stevenson, 2014; Foster and Bolton, 2017). Later funding for providers was based on learners progressing to employability after ESOL courses, and thus, making ESOL courses ‘employability-focused courses’ (Simpson and Whiteside, 2012). ESOL provision continued to witness a reduction of funding. In 2008/09, the amount of budget spent on ESOL was £212.3 million, but was dropped to £99 million in 2017/18, which represents a reduction of 57% between these years (Refugee Action, 2019). The cuts in funding policy which started in 2010 has directly affected ESOL learners who are already experiencing isolation, a sense of disadvantage and inferiority, and an inability to find jobs (Simpson, 2016; Refugee Action, 2019). Learners who are not employed or in low-paid work would no longer be able to access fully funded courses because they would not be able to afford course fees (NIACE, 2012). It has also affected ESOL providers who have become concerned because of their inability to provide enough classes to meet learners’ needs (Marsden, 2018). Ironically, cuts in funding come at times when national governments continue to expect new arrivals to use the dominant language of their new country (Simpson, 2016).

In response to calls for adequate ESOL funding from local organisations, the UK government published its *Integrated Communities Strategy* Green Paper in 2018, and its White Paper future skills-based immigration system in December of the same year, where it pledged to provide funding for ESOL learning. As it is stated in the White Paper, “we plan to secure an ambitious and well-funded English language strategy” (HM Government, 2018, p.77). Yet, it has been noted that there has been no commitment from the government to ensure that adequate funding was provided for ESOL provision (Marsden, 2018; Refugee Action, 2019). As the shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden (2018) has argued that the government “talked the talk on language learning … But it did not walk the walk on the additional funding that’s so desperately needed”. The Conservative government announced again in its 2019 manifesto that it will “boost English language teaching to empower existing migrants” (The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto, 2019, p. 23), though no details on how this will happen were explained. It is noteworthy that the reduction in funding coincides with the rhetoric of some politicians and media sectors that migrants are obliged to learn English, and sometimes imply that migrants are reluctant to learn the language (Simpson, 2016).

ESOL provision and funding are often a reflection of the public and the state’s attitudes towards immigration and towards issues of ethnicity, religion, and social class (Cooke and Simpson, 2009; Simpson, 2016). For example, Hamilton and Hillier (2009) discuss that funding for ESOL came from the Home Office rather than the Department for Education, and thus ESOL has been framed as a social ‘problem’ that resulted from immigration, rather than treating it as an educational issue. Linking ESOL with the low-skilled and low-paid migrants who are accused of being a drain on the national economy (Appleby and Bathmaker, 2006), resulted in the marginalisation of ESOL as a subject and in terms of funding and policy (Simpson, 2015). Though migrant workers who work in menial jobs, as Cooke and Simpson (2009, p.7) argue, are ‘contributing to the economy and the functioning of towns and cities’.

3.5 Shifting to an employment led ESOL provision

Moreover, the provision of ESOL has been subject to social, political and economic pressures and has been managed in a reductive way (Robert and Beynham, 2006). For example, the Skills for Life strategy was reviewed in the years 2007, 2008, and 2009 by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and the National Audit Office (NAO), which recommended that emphasis should be given to “functional skills at a time of economic challenge, with particular focus on employability” (Mallows et al., 2016, p. 10). Moreover, in 2010, Coalition government published its document Skills for Sustainable Growth in which the government stated that its focus will be shifted to employability and skills learners need to get a job (Mallows et al., 2016). Emphasis on the employability aspect in adult courses came from other bodies. For example, the London Strategic Migration Partnership which leads the Mayor of London’s refugee and migrant integration work recommended that there is a need to “develop employability elements at each ESOL level and assess the potential for local market trends” (2013, p. 9). Linking ESOL with employability means that ESOL learners would be viewed in terms of their economic productivity (Simpson, 2015). However, adult ESOL learners, as Norton (2006, p.96) has argued earlier, may look forward to making productive contributions to their new communities, yet, “unless the host community is receptive to their arrival, they will struggle to fulfil their potential”. In this regard, the UK has been a ‘reluctant host state’, with a perception that ‘immigrants are needed but not welcomed’, and a view of any fall in the numbers of migrants being related to successful ‘tough’ policies (Simpson, 2015, p.8).

As a result, ESOL has become an employment-led provision rather than a language education discipline. As Cooke and Simpson (2009) discuss, bringing ESOL under the Skills for Life umbrella enabled the government to control ESOL and dictate the nature of English language education through the restriction of the curriculum to certain syllabus. This created pressure on ESOL departments which provided decontextualized, work-related courses whose contents are stipulated by the government (ibid). This is not to argue that an employment-led course of ESOL would not be useful to learners who are most likely either employed or would seek employment after completion of ESOL courses. However, there are issues in these types of 'ESOL' courses. Some of which are related to ESOL teachers not being business-focused people and therefore they struggle to teach 'ESOL for work' courses with their narrow pedagogic focus (Cooke and Simpson, 2009). Through this type of orientation, the teacher is positioned as a 'technician' who gets prepared through short, prescriptive training rather than as a 'professional' or a 'powerful actor' who participates in the shaping of the adult literacy provision (Hamilton and Tett, 2012, p. 46, 47).

Moreover, the emphasis on employability in ESOL can lead to the exclusion of learners whose needs and aims are not related to employability, as Kliffen (2012) has noted. For example, there are ESOL learners, particularly women, who learn English mainly to be able to support their children with their schoolwork, to communicate with their children's teachers and with general practitioners confidently, and to read bills and letters, and thus, an employability focused course is unlikely to meet their needs (Kliffen, 2012; Court, 2014). Other factors are related to learners who need differentiated occupational competencies for their jobs, and factors related to material which is usually generic and decontextualized with a focus on writing letters of application and CVs and preparing for interviews (Cooke and Simpson, 2009). This type of material often lacks examples of real-life interactions that develop learners' competencies to help them form relationships with colleagues and to negotiate their rights (ibid). Apart from issues related to teachers' ability/inability to teach for employment, limited course contents, and learners' different needs and aspirations, there are other implications on learners' lives. Learners are more likely to be employed in 'any work', since the intent of the focus on employability in ESOL courses is to move learners into work, which is usually 'low paid and low status' regardless of their previous level of education or experience (Court, 2014). This will result in learners becoming ineligible for free ESOL classes, and will also result in them being unable to pay for course fees because of their low income, and will eventually be prohibited from being able to improve their language skills any further, progress in the job market, or 'participate in the world of work in a way meaningful to them' (Court, 2014, p. 19).

3.6 An increased emphasis on ESOL for integration

Furthermore, ESOL has also been linked to debates about integration and social cohesion. There are many substantial benefits of learning English as an international language and as the dominant language in the UK, some of which is social mobility, participation in the British society and economic benefits (Khan, 2014). However, the discussion in this section presents the different stances and beliefs regarding linking English language learning with social cohesion and national unity. As mentioned in an earlier part, section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966, stated that funding for learning would be provided for immigrants “whose language or customs differ from those of the community”, thus, ESOL was tied to integration since that time (Paget and Stevenson, 2014). The implication was also that despite their contributions to the UK; if they wanted to stay, they must assimilate (Donoghue and Bourke, 2019). Similarly, Hamilton and Hillier (2009, p.4) discuss that ESOL is seen as a programme to help with the assimilation of immigrants into what is perceived as “a traditionally monocultural, monolinguistic heritage”. Public and political rhetoric support the idea that migrants are obliged to ‘speak our language’ for the purpose of national unity and social cohesion (Simpson, 2016). For example, former Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills has stated that “learning and using English demonstrates to the wider community an individual’s commitment to adapting to life in the UK” (Denham, 2009, p.2). A national survey revealed that 95% of Britons think that one must be able to speak English to be considered ‘truly British’ (NatCen, 2014). This is problematic, as Simpson (2019) notes, because it conveys integration as being primarily the responsibility of migrants ‘they must integrate with us’, without considering the role of the existing population in the process of integration. It also fails to recognize migrants’ multilingual repertoire as a resource and assumes that migrants would be developing competence in English aside from that repertoire (ibid). It also disregards the fact that migrants would be integrating into a multilingual society regardless of how it is represented in policy (ibid).

Integration, which replaced the term ‘social cohesion’ in recent literature but is still sometimes used interchangeably with ‘community cohesion’, lacks a clear definition, as Donoghue and Bourke (2019) discuss. Similarly, Cooke and Simpson (2009, p.7) have pointed out earlier that the concept of cohesion is ‘ill-defined’ and seems to be synonymous with ‘good behaviour’. Moreover, the implication in many government documents is that people from minority ethnic groups should integrate with existing British values and society (Donoghue and Bourke, 2019).

Integration of immigrant communities was tackled in some government and parliamentary reports that highlighted the need to learn English to facilitate the integration of refugees and migrants. In 2016 a review on integration by Dame Casey stated that despite the growing diversity of the nation, community cohesion was not strong across the country. The reason for that, as mentioned in Casey’s review, was that there were growing concerns about race relations and extremism which is often conflated with terrorism. However, the review stated other factors that could affect integration, such as attitudes towards immigration, socio-economic exclusion, inequality, racial and religious tensions, and negative news in the media. (Casey, 2016). The All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees published a report in 2017 *Refugees Welcome?* where it was pointed out that refugees “wanted to learn English as it is key to integration”, but that there was shortage in classes, and despite the funding the government had allocated for resettled Syrian refugees, the ‘drastic’ reduction in ESOL funding in England resulted in “longer waiting lists, a decline in teaching hours and a lack of classes that meet the needs of refugees” (APPG on Refugees, 2017, p. 6,7). However, the government published its *Integrated Communities Strategy* Green Paper in response to the Casey review and the APPG report, in which it was stated that migrants “should learn to speak and understand *our* language and values” [my emphasis] (HM Government, 2018, p.10). With regards to funding, it was stated that the government would provide full funding of ESOL course costs for people looking for work, and half of the course costs for other eligible learners, such as people in low-skilled employment (HM Government, 2018).

Considering refugees, the Government’s scheme to support Syrian refugees states that all costs are fully funded in the first 12 months, and additional £10 million were provided for ESOL funding to enhance English skills of Syrian refugees and “to improve their resettlement and integration experience and employability” (Home Office, 2017). Moreover, there is £5,000 funding per person in the second year in the UK under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) (Home Office, 2017). There are also exceptional cases of funding for vulnerable refugees to enable local authorities to support them in rebuilding their lives in the UK (Home Office, 2017). Also, the Government's funding instruction for the years 2019-2020 with regards to English language provision for adult refugees entails that adult refugees can access a minimum of eight hours per week, that formal language training should be provided to adult refugees until they have reached Entry level 3, that adult refugees should be offered the opportunity for conversational practice outside formal language training, and that funding should be used to overcome barriers that prevent refugees from accessing the provision, where possible (Home Office, 2019). However, surveys have found that supply of ESOL provision continues to fall significantly, with 63% of ESOL providers feel that the quantity of ESOL provision is insufficient for people's needs, and that learners receive an average of 5 hours of ESOL classes per week, which is half of minimum weekly provision a refugee should receive under the Government's resettlement scheme for vulnerable persons (Refugee Action, 2017).

3.7 Securitisation of ESOL

There is also a link between English proficiency, integration and national security in debates and government policies. Creating integrated communities was positioned in a security context with the goal to prevent extremism and terrorism (Khan, 2014; APPG, 2017; Donoghue and Bourke, 2019). Yet, it is argued that conflating integration with counterterrorism matters has been counter-productive; 'irresponsible and dangerous', as it reinforces social division and 'baseless suspicion of an entire faith group' (APPG on social integration, 2017, p. 57). However, within the educational context, it is argued that ESOL classes can be considered as the 'front line of government security policy' (Han et al., 2010, p. 64). This is evident in the introduction of the 'Prevent duty' in educational institutions together with the requirement that all teachers should emphasise British values in classrooms (discussed in Chapter 2), a combination that is seen fundamental to integration and "integral to a successful and cohesive nation" (Casey, 2016, p.66). However, using ESOL and educational contexts to identify potential links with terrorism has been criticised by teachers and unions and researchers who saw this as a further continuity of the cycle of disengagement, while casting teachers the role of a 'watchdog' (Lander, 2016).

However, the beginning of the link between English and community cohesion started in 2001, when riots in the north of England which involved conflicts between Asian and White youth led to questions about integration and race relations (Khan, 2014). Although the cause of the riots was the rising levels of poverty and unemployment in Asian communities, a debate in the House of Commons related the lack of a good level of English to the lack of community cohesion, peace and understanding (ibid). Moreover, a report by Ted Cantle on community cohesion following the disturbances has pointed out that communities were living ‘parallel lives’, and highlighted the importance to agree on common elements of ‘nationhood’, one of which is language (Home Office, 2001, p.9,19). However, the Cantle report did highlight other factors that hinder community cohesion such as poverty and unemployment. As Cook and Simpson (2009) contend that the reason for any breakdown in cohesion is not caused by a lack of English or knowledge of life in the UK, but rather it is the economic downturn and social inequality, though for some individuals poor English could exacerbate them. Similarly, it has been argued that other factors such as injustices and unfairness besides unemployment and poverty are more substantial factors that separate communities and hinder integration (Richards and Heath, 2018). Interestingly, critics to the Cantle report have pointed out that the youths who were involved in the riots spoke English as their first language. Therefore, the recommendation to agree on English as a common language was ‘hard to understand … and perhaps more political considerations were in play’ (Han et al., 2010, p.3). However, whether there is an evidence, or a lack of evidence, that associates the lack of English competence to social unrest and a threat of extremism, political rhetoric and media discourses that position migrants in negative terms contributed to the creation of a ‘perception of danger that migrants, and indeed the children of migrants, pose’ (Simpson, 2019, p.32). Nevertheless, political and security concerns have their effects on the provision of ESOL for both learners and teachers who have had to merge their teaching role with policing (Khan, 2014). As Khan has discussed, ESOL for adults has come to be viewed more as a process of integration than education, and the suspicion of ESOL courses and colleges creates a sense of ‘unease’ not only about the students who attend them but also those who provide and teach them (ibid, p. 9).

3.8 Adult ESOL and Citizenship

Discussions in the House of Commons after the disturbances of 2001 proposed that the government should consider a reasonable level of English as a requirement for immigrants seeking permanent settlement (Khan, 2014). Government reports and political discourse in the aftermath of the disturbances presented a lack of English competence as a cause for community tensions (Blackledge, 2006). Although this argument was contested by sociolinguists, poor English became the theme in political speeches about integration, cohesion, terrorism, and citizenship (Cooke and Peutrell, 2019). New measures to reform the system of immigration, asylum and citizenship came in the Home Office's White Paper *Safe Border, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain* (Home Office, 2002). The White Paper referred to the disturbances in the north of England as an incident that revealed the divided communities in Britain, and which reflected the need to introduce language teaching and an examination for citizenship for permanent settlers, to ensure integration and cohesion in the UK (ibid). The Cantle report proposed that the use of English language "will become more rigorously pursued" (Cantle, 2002, p.19). Cantle's conclusions were 'embraced' by members of the government at the time, and their pronouncements made a direct link between social cohesion -and later terrorism- and migrants' language use, side-stepping the greater effect of 'economic precarity' on social cohesion (Simpson, 2019).

Soon afterwards, the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 introduced a new naturalisation system under which it became a requirement that residents applying for British citizenship had to take a test to show sufficient knowledge of English and of life in the UK (Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, C. 41). The requirement was extended to spouses of citizens, and applicants for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ibid). According to the new legislation, migrants seeking citizenship have to pass a test called the Life in the UK test, known popularly as the 'citizenship test' or the 'Britishness test' (Cooke and Peutrell, 2019, p. 2). The test consists of 24 questions which tests the applicant's knowledge of information provided in the official handbook for the Life in UK Test (www.gov.uk/life-in-the-uk-test).

For residents whose level of English was lower than Entry level 3, they had the option of taking an ESOL course with elements of citizenship built into it (Cooke and Peutrell, 2019). Many of the citizenship elements were covered in ESOL courses, but the difference was that citizenship was the lens through which the elements were viewed (Han et al., 2010). Citizenship elements involved adapting to life in the UK and becoming a citizen in the UK, being able to access health services, education, welfare, besides learning vocabulary for citizenship such as community, respect, freedom, diversity, etc. (ibid). However, in 2013, applicants for citizenship and settlement with low level of English proficiency were no longer allowed to take an ESOL with citizenship elements course instead of the Life in the UK test (Peutrell, 2019). A new legislation was introduced, making it a requirement for people applying for settlement and/or citizenship to pass an English language test at level B1 on the CEFR, in addition to the Life in the UK test (Simpson, 2019).

However, the top-down insertion of citizenship into ESOL -besides the cuts in funding- received criticism and resistance from teachers, researchers, and activists. This resulted in the campaign Action for ESOL in 2011, and led to the writing of the ESOL Manifesto which provided a critical argument to the insertion of prescribed ideas of citizenship in ESOL (Cooke and Peutrell, 2019). The manifesto warned against 'being co-opted into a simplistic rhetoric of citizenship or community cohesion' which makes speaking the dominant language a precondition for the right of citizenship or social acceptance, while detracting from factors that cause community division such as discrimination, inequality, and poverty (Action for ESOL, 2012, p.5). In addition, teachers, researchers, and activists saw the top-down insertion and later the requirement to promote 'British values' and the anti-extremism statutory Prevent 'not a fruitful way to foster genuine participation and a sense of belonging amongst migrant students', and saw that a way of asking ESOL teachers to do the Home Office's 'dirty work' (Cooke and Peutrell, 2019, p. 2, 8). Instead of the top-down prescribed approaches to citizenship through ESOL courses, there are suggestions that ESOL should be viewed as a site for an active interpretation and formation of citizenship, rather than being a site for reproducing mandated ideas (Peutrell, 2019). This could include promoting an active, participatory form of citizenship which recognizes migrants' knowledge and experiences as residents in the UK and as 'transnational citizens who operated in global, as well as local, diasporic communities' (Cooke, 2019, p.76). This could also include supporting ESOL learners to articulate and defend their rights, challenge stereotypes, and transform themselves and the communities they live in (Hepworth, 2019).

The Life in the UK test has received criticism for functioning as a 'gate-keeping mechanism' to citizenship for some ethnic groups, particularly with the cuts in funding and the shortage in ESOL provision which has made some immigrant groups more adversely affected than others (Han et al., 2010). The language test and the Life in the UK test have also been viewed as 'tools of exclusion' as it is argued that they reflect discrimination against people on the basis of their language proficiency, literacy, schooling, and economic situation (Simpson, 2019). McNamara and Shohamy (2008, p.91) have discussed that the changes in policy to citizenship tests are

> *A reaction to the growth of ethnic diversity, internal ethnic tensions, and the emergence of the discourses of homeland and border security and national identity as a protection against external terrorist threat.*

On the other hand, counter perspectives argue that it is not unreasonable for a state to impose some conditions on immigrants applying for settlement or citizenship, as there is evidence that learning the language and acquiring information about life in the UK would facilitate social and economic integration (Han et al., 2010). However, contents of the Life in the UK test have received criticism, and there are recommendations to amend them. The All Party Parliamentary Group on social integration recommended in 2017 that contents of the latest edition of the handbook should not include long lists of historical dates and ‘trivia’ that immigrants are required to memorise. Moreover, recommendations for amended contents included that the test should not include questions that are not relevant to ‘life in the UK’ which ‘ordinary Britons’ cannot answer. The redesigned test would focus on “British customs ... guidance on accessing public services and navigating everyday situations, as well as region-specific questions” (APPG on social integration, 2017, p.61). Moreover, while the earlier editions of handbook which the Life in the UK test was based on covered content related to rights and civic responsibilities, the latest (third edition) of the handbook contains ‘esoteric’ topics with a strong emphasis on British history (Simpson, 2019). As Brooks (2013) has concluded earlier after reviewing the third edition that the handbook and the test are impractical as the handbook does not provide knowledge about the NHS, educational qualifications, how to report a crime, etc. - knowledge that would facilitate integration; it instead requires applicants to know the age of Big Ben and the height of the London Eye in feet and meters. Other notes about the handbook and the test mentioned in Brooks’s review included being inconsistent, outdated, ineffective, trivial, with clear gender imbalance. Brooks (2013, p. 4) has contended that the handbook and the test are ‘unfit for purpose at present until several serious concerns are addressed’.

3.9 Monolingualism, multilingualism, translanguaging

One of the key issues involved with the teaching of English is related to attitudes to and beliefs about multilingualism. Though linguistic diversity in the UK is a fact of life, the UK is often represented as a monolingual state (Simpson, 2020). As mentioned in a previous section, there is an association of English with British national identity. As

Simpson (2016, p.5) puts it

> *This 'one nation, one language' ideology is interlaced with other beliefs about national identity, for example the ideal that the nation state should be as homogeneous – and as monolingual – as possible.*

This ideology- which increased after the outcome of Brexit referendum- resulted in linguistic xenophobia and symbolic linguistic violence, and was reflected in the form of abuse directed at people speaking other languages or speaking with a 'foreign accent' (Simpson, 2019). However, before the referendum, speaking languages other than English has been seen as causing communities- as politicians see it- to live 'parallel lives', the country 'sleepwalking into segregation', a feeling of 'discomfort and disjointedness' in local communities and has also been linked to a "breakdown of social cohesion and a threat of extremism" (Simpson, 2015, p.2; Cooke and Peutrell, 2019). To avoid being connected with extreme far-right ideology, politicians who make a link between multilingualism and social disorder 'couch their talk in liberal terms' (Simpson, 2015, p.2). For example, they stress that English is necessary for migrants to be able to access their rights and to avoid being socially and economically marginalised (ibid, p.3). As Blackledge (2009) has pointed out,

> *The UK is a multilingual society … while these arguments seem to be about learning English, they are in fact about migration … and the kind of society Britain wishes to become.*

This had an impact on ESOL policy and practice which rarely embraces bilingualism or multilingualism, and thus do not reflect the realities of the learners' lives or the complexities of their communicative experiences (Simpson, 2020). Moreover, Simpson and Cooke (2017) have discussed that while ESOL learners are multilingual, yet ESOL practices are typically monolingual, and ESOL classes are not providing spaces where learners' multilingualism is valued. They advocate for a translingual pedagogy for ESOL, one which acknowledges the role of learners' languages in the learning of English and brings them into ESOL. Translanguaging, as they explain, allows speakers to deploy their multilingual resources such as languages, registers and styles which constitute their communicative (linguistic and non-linguistic) repertoire in interactions in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts. The 'trans' in translanguaging refers to the perspective that learners can fluidly draw on 'all of the linguistic resources at their command in situated communicative acts' (Hawkins, 2020, p.33). Similarly, Canagarajah (2011) has discussed earlier that translanguaging stands for the assumption that for multilinguals, languages comprise a repertoire that could be accessed for communicative purposes. According to this concept, "languages are not discrete and separated, but form an integrated system for them" (ibid, p. 1). In the same sense, Garcia and Wei (2014, p.21) have explained that translanguaging does not refer to two separate languages, or to a hybrid mixture, but rather to language practices "that make visible the complexity of language exchanges among people with different histories".

Simpson and Cooke (2017) point out that there are interactional challenges that ESOL learners face in many everyday encounters whether in shops, businesses, consultations, etc., that could be made easier when they draw on their communicative resources and move across languages. They contend that ESOL pedagogy and materials are monolingual in orientation and practice, in particular materials, which contents fail to represent the complexity of interactions, and thus fail to support students' translingual experiences. In addition, ESOL teachers rarely make systematic use of learners' linguistic repertoire and follow an 'English only' teaching practice in ESOL classrooms which prohibits multilingual language practices and considers them unconstructive to learning (Simpson, 2020).

Yet, translanguaging is more than a pedagogical approach for language learning. Fundamental to the concept of translanguaging is the transgression of boundaries (Harvey, 2020), and the advocation for inclusive and socially just educational approaches for all learners (Robinstein, 2020). It can be considered a 'hopeful practice' (Bradley et al., 2020) as it contains within it, 'the seeds of transformation' that can transform the habits of language education which has long supported 'processes of minoritisation, racialisation and the perdurance of coloniality' (Garcia, 2020, p.13). It instead, enables learners from minoritized communities to use their bilingual resources to expand understanding, to see and hear themselves as they are, and to have the right to their own language practices without fear of judgement 'from the white monolingual listening subject'. In this respect, translanguaging is considered 'multilingualism from below' (Pennycook and Ostuji, 2015) which has connotations of Spivak's subaltern concept in that it is a 'creative/political project vis a vis the normativities of monolingualism and separate bilingualism' (Beynham, 2020, p.25). In other words, it transgresses boundaries and long-established prejudices set by monolingual ideologies, and helps to repair existing inequalities by allowing for the ability and freedom to activate the repertoire of resources (capitals) that are not privileged in our globalised world (Beynham, 2020; Ballena et al., 2020). It also brings the voices of the Others to the forefront as it transforms subjectivities, discourses and social systems and releases old understandings and structures (Hua and Wei, 2020). This way, learners will be able to negotiate and extend their social identities, as they are given the opportunity to use their full repertoire of communicative resources and are encouraged to value those resources, rather than being restricted to communicate in a language they are less proficient in (Simpson, 2020).

Translanguaging points to the ways that multilingual pedagogy can enhance learning and engagement in classrooms (King and Bigelow, 2020) by acknowledging that when learners move between different languages, language and content learning can be improved (Garcia et al., 2017). An example could be reading a text in one language and discussing it in another, or systematically alternating the languages used for input and output (King and Biglow, 2020; Robinstein, 2020). This creates an opportunity for learners to be seen competent, drawing on different resources and multimodalities that complement and reinforce each other to achieve effective communication, instead of being signalled as ‘deficit’ (Robinstein, 2020). Moreover, there are many benefits of translanguaging as a learning approach, one of which is promoting learning spaces that are inclusive of leaners’ everyday communicative practices (Robinstein, 2020). King and Biglow (2020) point out that translanguaging provides the opportunity to foreground learners’ linguistic and cultural assets, and the positive emotional and social development of migrants/refugees.

However, there are occurrences where translanguaging is not enabled, or is not stable or consistent (Bradley and Simpson, 2019). That is, in some contexts, certain languages, varieties and registers are not allowed while others are legitimised, resulting in what Bradley and Simpson call a ‘negative translanguaging space’, (ibid, p.152). In addition, there are other challenges that constrain the implementation of a translanguaging approach in ESOL contexts such as, the hegemony of monolingualism (Simpson and Whiteside, 2015), linguistic xenophobia, notions of social cohesion, and language requirement for citizenship. As Hamilton and Hillier (2009, p. 5) have discussed,

> *ESOL teachers have to work within a cultural and political climate that is marked by racism and xenophobic attitudes towards newcomers, a poorly*

> *informed public and the symbolic value of Standard English within debates about national identity.*

Other challenges are related to funding and scepticism, as King and Biglow (2020, p.206) discuss that using immigrants' native language and translanguaging approaches has been viewed by state and local organisations as 'novel, experimental, or logistically impossible'. As Garcia and Li (2014, p. 125) has discussed that the acceptance of translanguaging as a valuable and legitimate resource by educators has been one of the biggest challenges. In addition, systematic support and funding was never provided (Hamilton and Hillier, 2009; King and Biglow, 2020).

However, these challenges could be overcome by providing after-school programmes that are equipped with resources, bridging between formal and non-formal education through collaborative networks, preparing future teachers for our cosmopolitan societies by including a translanguaging approach in their training which could eventually transform the educational experiences in mainstream education(Robinstein, 2020).

3.9.1 Bilingual/multilingual ESOL teachers in the UK

ESOL classes are provided for migrants and refugees who come from different parts of the world and who are diverse in their linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and faith backgrounds. However, I would argue that such diversity is missing among ESOL teachers. In educational contexts in general, there is a growing body of literature which suggests that positive learning outcomes such as learners' attendance, test scores, and learners' aspirations are affected by a demographic match between teachers and learners (Figlio, 2017). Moreover, teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds could act as an effective role model and could boost students' confidence (Dee, 2004). They are also more likely able to present material in a culturally relevant way (Egalite and Kisida, 2017), and are more empathetic and less likely to subject students to negative stereotypes (Gershenson and Dee, 2017).

However, research also reveal that minority ethnic teachers face multiple challenges. A report published by the Runnymede Trust and The Teachers' Union NASUWT (2017) discussed concerns pertinent to the teaching profession that were described as 'deep-rooted, endemic and institutionalised' (p. 6). For example, the majority of black and minority ethnic (BME) teachers reported facing problems in their workplace such as discrimination and both overt and covert racism because of their race or ethnicity. They also had to deal with stereotypical attitudes and felt their opinions were not valued by school management. The negative treatment had a significant impact on the BME teachers' health and well-being. The report revealed that 75% if BME teachers have considered leaving the teaching profession. Moreover, there is a 'chronic' shortage of BME teachers in relation to the BME pupil population. This coincides with the Swann Report published in 1985 which noted,

> *We regard the under-representation of ethnic minorities in the teaching profession as a matter of great concern, which calls for urgent attention. We believe that ethnic minority teachers (and would-be teachers) have been and are still subject to racial prejudice and discrimination, both in gaining employment and in advancing their careers.* (p. 775)

This is evident in facts and figures provided by Home Office, whereby it is stated that in 2018, 85.9% of all teachers in England were White British and 92.9% of headteachers were White British (Home Office, 2020). It is noteworthy that there are no figures provided by the Home Office that shows the ratios of White and BME teachers in the field of ESOL. However, I argue that the figures of the teacher workforce could provide an indication for ESOL teacher workforce.

Research also reveals that BME teachers are on average paid less than their white counterparts and are less likely to hold senior positions (Basit et al., 2006). They often face what is known as 'invisible glass ceiling' which means that there is a certain level that they do not go beyond it (Pells, 2017). Muslim teachers, in particular, face misconceptions about them, and the government's Prevent duty made them feel undermined and suspected if they do not agree with it (Pells, 2017). This is despite the implementation of policies that aim to reduce the negative consequences of race discrimination and racial inequality (Miller and Callender, 2019). However, 'their permanence in the educational landscape of England is long-standing' (ibid, p.1).

3.10 ESOL and the reconstruction of learners' identities

Sociolinguistic research on second language acquisition and multilingualism has linked language learning by linguistic minority learners to the construction of social identities, and provided insights into the way language intersects with issues of symbolic power and identity (Kramsch, 2006). The social turn in second language acquisition has emphasised the importance of non-cognitive processes in language learning such as, the negotiation of identity and issues of power relations (Kramsch, 2006; De Costa and Norton, 2016). In this sense, language learning is not simply the knowledge of the linguistic system of words and sentences that are cognitively internalised and then applied to social situations; rather it entails understanding the complex social practice that is related to the language and in which identities can be negotiated (Kramsch, 2006; Norton, 2016).

It would be useful to iterate that identity has been viewed in the fields of applied linguistics and sociology as fluid, multidimensional, and socially constructed (Block, 2007), as a result of globalisation, mobility, and diversity in our modern societies (Preece, 2016). Identity is also a site of struggle and is continually changing over time and across space (Darvin and Norton, 2015). Hall (1996, p. 4) has explained that identity is '…not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become'. This is relevant to refugees/immigrants as they are likely to experience identity transformation and reconstruction. This is because undergoing the migration process results in losing familiar social, cultural and linguistic resources, and having to use new linguistic and other resources in the new environments in order to make sense of self, and to adapt to the new environment (Simpson and Gresswell, 2012). Sites where migrants would most likely experience identity reconstruction, redefinition, and negotiation are language learning contexts.

Some theories in the field of sociolinguistics have highlighted the role of constructs such as, motivation, and investment in the construction of learners' social and linguistic identities when learning a language. Motivation is a construct that can influence learners' negotiation of identities in second language learning contexts. Motivation, as Ortega (2009) defines it, is the desire to learn a second language and the effort exerted to maintain that desire. It is "the impetus to create and sustain intentions and goal-seeking acts" (Cook and Singleton, 2014, p. 90). According to Ellis (2014) motivation is considered the main factor that affects the amount of learning and achievement in second language acquisition. Motivation, according to Ellis (2014), consists of three components, 'behavioural motivation' which is the effort a learner puts to learn a language, 'attributional motivation' which is the learner's self-evaluation of her/his progress and how it affects her/his learning. The third component that Ellis (2014) suggested is 'motivational orientation' which is the reasons that motivate the learner to want to learn a language, or how learners evaluate the usefulness of the language to them (Ortega, 2009). These reasons could be additional qualifications, employment prospects, promotion or a higher salary, all of which are external rewards that can affect selfidentity positively (Weyreter and Viebrock, 2014).

Dornyei (2009) introduced the 'L2 motivational self-system' which consists of the 'ideal L2 self' and the 'ought-to L2 self'. The former means that a learner's image of the future self that speaks a second language fluently (ideal L2 self) can work as a powerful motivator to minimise the disagreement between the present self and the ideal, desired, future self (Dornyei, 2009). The latter refers to the traits that one 'ought to' have in order to reach goals and fulfil expectations, and to prevent negative results. Both 'ideal self' and 'ought-to self' are fuelled by personal hopes and aspirations and can result in the reconstruction of a second language learner's self-identity (Weyreter and Viebrock, 2014). However, attitudes towards the second language and its speakers play a major role in increasing or diminishing the motivation to learn a second language (Ortega, 2009). Some of the learners' attitudes are influenced by what learners experience in class, as will be discussed later.

The sociological construct of investment and imagined communities provided a complement to the psychological construct of motivation, and provided further insight into the negotiation of identity and imagined futures (De Costa and Norton, 2016). While the construct of motivation views the learner as having 'a unitary and coherent identity with specific character traits', investment considers the learner's identity as complex and changes across time and space (Darvin and Norton, 2015, p. 37). Investment in second language learning as Kramsch (2013) describes it, is synonymous with learners' commitment to learning a language. Influenced by the theories of Bourdieu on capital, field, and habitus (discussed in Chapter 2), this construct suggests that learners invest in learning a language hoping and expecting that learning the language will grant them a wider range of symbolic and material resources that will increase their cultural capital and social power, which will in turn, provide 'for a wider range of identity positions from which the learner can speak or listen, read or write' (Darvin and Norton, 2015; Norton, 2016, p. 476). As Norton (2013, p.45) has put it,

> *it is through language that a person negotiates a sense of self within and across different sites at different points in time, and it is through language that a person gains access to – or is denied access to – powerful social networks that give learners the opportunity to speak. Thus, language is not conceived of as a neutral medium of communication, but is understood with reference to its social meaning.*

Moreover, a learner's imagined identity and hopes for the future, and the process of imagining one's membership to a desired community will impact on the learner in many ways. It will influence her/his current identities, motivation to create new identities, and investment in learning the language, the literacy practices of the classroom, and the progress they make in learning (Pavlenko and Norton, 2007; Norton, 2016). This is similar to what Kramsch (2006, p.101) refers to as ‘desire’ in language learning, which is defined as 'the basic drive toward self-fulfilment'. It is as Kramsch (2006) discusses, the need to identify with another reality than the one that surrounds us and the desire to explore a variety of real or imagined possibilities of the self. However, desire can also result in the clinging to the familiar to survive, as in the case of some second language learners who do not wish to identify with a new society and language, and despite learning the forms of the language, maintain a desire to preserve their own identities (Kramsch, 2006). The idea of investment can have implications for second language teaching and learning; instead of labelling a silent learner as 'unmotivated', teachers can ask, 'to what extent is the learner invested in the language and literacy practices of my classroom?' [emphasis in original] (Norton, 2016, p.476). In other words, the construct of investment seeks to collapse the traditional dichotomies associated with learner identity such as, 'good/bad, anxious/confident' etc. and replaces them instead with an invitation to reflect on the relations of power that position learners in often unequal ways, resulting in varying learning outcomes (Darvin and Norton, 2015).

Relations of power could be reflected through dominant ideologies which value specific ethnolinguistic and cultural capitals, and which position learners in multiple ways by virtue of their race, ethnicity, social class, etc. and as such, either grant them or refuse them the right to speak and the right of entry (Darvin and Norton, 2015). As Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004, p.3) discuss, language and literacy are used sometimes to 'marginalize and disempower particular individuals or minority groups'. Classrooms, as Bernstein (2000) argues, have become spaces that legitimise some identities and delegitimise others. Disempowerment results in resistance to that domination to protect identity (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004).

When learners’ languages, cultures, and experiences are devalued or excluded in classroom interactions, learners start to feel disconnected because all their life and world experiences become dismissed or irrelevant (Cummins, 1996). In this case many refugees/immigrants consider learning a second language a challenge to their own identities (Byram, 2008). They resort to silence and non-participation in classroom interactions, which is often interpreted by teachers as a lack of academic ability and effort (ibid). Therefore, what happens in the classroom is more important than the beliefs and attitudes the learners might have (Ellis, 2014).

In the same manner, Norton (2016) contends that a learner might be highly motivated to learn a language, but if the classroom practices are racist, this will result in the learner having little investment in classroom practices and will demonstrate little progress. This is what Dornyei (2009, p.29) calls the 'L2 learning experience', which refers to the 'learning environment and experience (e.g. the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, the experience of success)', which have an impact on the learner's motivation. Therefore, teachers play an important role in maintaining high levels of motivation by helping their learners determine their goals, reflect on their progress, take responsibility of their own learning, and by encouraging autonomy (Cooke and Singleton, 2014). Moreover, Norton (2000) emphasises the need for language teachers to understand the life histories of their immigrant students, their motives, and their needs. She has also stressed the need to reconsider ideas about immigrant students by abandoning the essentialist conceptions of language learners, as it proved to be unfruitful, and to acknowledge the complex identities of the learners in order to be able to understand the challenges and possibilities of language learning and teaching. This entails treating the linguistic and cultural capital (discussed in chapter 2) of learners as 'affordances rather than constraints and to question and re-evaluate the taken-for-granted value system they use to assess this capital' (Darvin and Norton, 2015, p. 45).

In the same manner, Amanti (2005) stresses the importance of building constructive social relationships in the educational setting, because positive, affirming, and mutually respectful relationships between teachers and learners should be the norm before any learning can take place, even if the teacher knows the academic standards and can write the most creative lesson plans. Moreover, constructive interactions between learners and teachers that allow learners to affirm and extend their identities can help learners improve academically and be more active participants in classrooms (Cummins, 1996). It is important to note that the affirmation of identity is not an uncritical or non-evaluative process; it is equally important to encourage learners to reflect critically on both their cultures, beliefs and experiences and the culture of the host society in order to resolve contradictions (ibid). Reflecting critically will create spaces for the exchange of a variety of perspectives in the discussion, it will help learners negotiate their identities, and will foster constructive relationships between teachers and learners, as teachers will listen to their learners’ perspectives and learn from them (ibid).

3.11 Social justice in ESOL

Within ESOL, social justice movements led by researchers, practitioners, and activists have advocated for an ESOL provision that would be more inclusive, diverse, and empowering in the way English is conceptualised and is taught to its diverse community of learners (Chang, 2018). Though there is no single definition for social justice as it can be interpreted, determined and addressed in various ways in different individual culture and context (Hall, 2016), it could be defined as 'the drive to combat social exclusion' (Ward, 2007, p.12). Social justice movements in ESOL have been concerned with issues related to inequalities and oppression such as, racism, ethnicity, imperialism, and white supremacy (Chang, 2018). One of the prominent figures who believed in the role of education as an agent of social change and justice was Freire. He criticised traditional education systems that view students as,

> *marginal persons who deviate from the general configuration of a "good, organized, and just" society. The oppressed are regarded as the pathology of the healthy society, which must therefore adjust these "incompetent and lazy" folk to its own patterns by changing their mentality. These marginals need to be "integrated," "incorporated" into the healthy society that they have "forsaken." (Freire, 1970, p. 74)*

Freire suggested an alternative to integration which is engaging students in critical thinking and transforming the relationship between students and teachers to make it a relationship based on partnership, 'both are simultaneously teachers and students' (ibid, p. 72, emphasis in original). I argue that there are education systems that continue to view migrant/refugee learners the way Freire described, albeit the teaching methods seemingly look more modernised. As Blackledge and Pavlenko (2004) discussed that social injustice continues to occur through symbolic domination in hyper-modern, neo-liberal democratic states and their institutions. Much of Freire's work resonates with the change that researchers and educators call for in literacy and in ESOL. For example, Cummins (1996, p.4) has encouraged constructing the relationship between teachers and learners in a way similar to the one suggested by Freire. He has contended that “if teachers are not learning much from their students, it is probable that their students are not learning much from them”. Cummins (1996) has also challenged a historical pattern of subordination by calling for an education that builds on the languages, cultures, and prior experiences learners bring with them. Building on learners’ knowledge and what they bring to school has proven to be an effective teaching strategy. It involves contextualisation and drawing on and building on the knowledge that is familiar to the learners, all of which leads to a meaningful learning experience (Gonzalez, 2005).

Advocation for social justice within ESOL has also called for the recognition of ESOL learners' rights. Rights include, as Court (2014) explains, the right to learn English and to be economically mobile, that is, not just to work in low -skilled jobs, the right to maintain cultural identity and language, and the right to have racist and xenophobic attitudes towards migrants and ESOL learners challenged. In addition, Cooke and Simpson (2009) discussed the right for ESOL learners to be 'audible', who because they lack the right social and cultural capital that is valued by the hegemonic group, find that they do not have a voice in their new society. As Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) point out that when the majority language has a symbolic status that asserts it superiority over minority languages, linguistic minority speakers may be excluded from membership in powerful groups, which will result in issues related to social justice. On the other hand, recognising and understanding the different types of learners' linguistic and cultural practices, as well as histories and epistemologies is effective in promoting social justice in ESOL (Chang, 2018). However, in most cases, learners are evaluated according to pre-determined standards of ability and achievement (Chang, 2018).

There are also calls to reconstruct adult literacy in a way that makes it empowering for migrant learners. For example, Simpson and Gresswell (2012, p. 193) explain that the field of ESOL has offered learners 'limited and deficit subject positions (identities)' as primarily immigrants, learners of 'skills', and a prospective employee in menial employment. This is because of the tight connection of ESOL with government policies on employment, citizenship and social cohesion (discussed earlier) (ibid). However, it is this positioning of learners as 'skills training' students that usually limits the learners' choices and excludes them from other areas of adult education, that could allow them to challenge the deficit and limited identities imposed upon them (ibid). The positioning of ESOL learners within a deficit framework imposes other identities upon language learners such as, 'non-native speakers, limited English proficiency students, interlanguage speakers', all are limiting identities that equate 'second class' and 'disadvantaged', and exacerbate the challenges ESOL learners face (Pavlenko and Norton, 2007, p. 596). This can be challenged, as Pavlenko and Norton discuss, through appropriation. For example, giving voice to multilingual voices by incorporating the literary work of bilingual/multilingual authors in ESL (English as a second language) classrooms, as this serves to resist dominant notions of 'native speakerness' and monolingualism (ibid). The concept of appropriation is discussed by Sandhu and Higgins (2016, p. 183) who define appropriation as 'the act of taking a cultural or linguistic legacy, such as English, and making it ones' own'. This concept as Kirkpatrick (2007) explains, pluralises English by acknowledging the presence of several varieties of English without giving superiority to any specific type. As Sandhu and Higgins (2016, p.183) put it,

> *(it) seeks to describe variation in English as an international language. Rather than viewing World Englishes, such as Kenyan or Indian English, as deficient versions of standard British English, unique features of these varieties are identified and the analysis is located within cultural and multilingual contexts.*

In addition, Hamilton et al. (2012) discuss the need to move away from a discourse of deficit that perceives learners as one undifferentiated mass of people lacking literacy skills. This can be done in many ways, one of which is acknowledging that learning is a transformative experience, 'a process of becoming, or avoiding becoming a certain person, rather than a simple accumulation of skills' (Pavlenko and Norton, 2007, p. 590). Other ways this could be achieved is through the development of a leaning and teaching process that positions migrant learners in a more equal position, socially and politically, allowing learners to take control over their learning and to decide what is 'really useful literacy' to them, and to recognise the resources learners have rather than focusing on what they lack (Hamilton, et al., 2012). This also involves building curricula that are based on learners’ knowledge. As Amanti (2005, p.132) contended, curricula that builds on learners' knowledge would be,

> *the reverse of the typical Anglocentric curriculum developed by education specialists usually located at a great distance, spatially and conceptually, from the classroom.*

This process involves working with learners and teachers to develop an inclusive curriculum for minority students, but it would not be achieved easily as it challenges the official curriculum (Chang, 2018). Moreover, it is usually people in more powerful positions within the educational hierarchy who control whose knowledge should be used in the construction of curricula (Amanti, 2005). Additionally, even if teachers try to tap into their learners’ knowledge and try to use emancipatory and empowering approaches, they struggle with a system that ‘mutes autonomy and pushes for standardisation and homogenisation' (Gonzales et al., 2005, p. 2). This is because practices in educational contexts are usually related to issues of power and ideology (Moll, 2005). It is noteworthy that there are many, at a state level, who disagree with social justice in education as some consider it 'nebulous'; others believe that social justice in education amounts to 'partisan indoctrination' (Hall, 2016). As Antonsich (2015) argued, there is an insistence on a system that is based on exclusivity and identity classification, which is why there is a failure to provide an education that reflects a multicultural changing world.

3.11.1 ESOL and dyslexic learners

It is important to consider students with special learning needs such as dyslexic learners when discussing social justice and empowering learners in ESOL courses. Dyslexia which is defined as a "learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling" (Rose, 2009), is not linked to intelligence, as many people with dyslexia have "strong visual, creative and problem-solving skills" (The Dyslexia Association, 2019). Though it can make learning difficult, but with careful and systematic teaching, dyslexic learners can overcome their learning difficulties (The Dyslexia Association, 2019).

It is noteworthy that the first sign of dyslexia is a literacy difficulty (British Dyslexia, 2019). Thus, literate adults with dyslexia could have acquired it as a result of hard experiences such as a traumatic event, which can cause a damage in a specific area in the brain (Bishop and Snowling, 2004). Adults and young people with dyslexia reported that a lack of understanding from their teachers led to "unhelpful and damaging comments from some teachers" (Dyslexia Action, 2012).

It is also noteworthy that dyslexia is considered a disability under the Equality Act (2010). Therefore, people with dyslexia have 'protected characteristics' and therefore, are protected against discrimination at work and in educational places (HM Government, 2010). Some forms of discrimination include treating someone with 'protected characteristics' less favourably than others, putting arrangement that apply to everyone, but puts someone with 'protected characteristics' at an unfair disadvantage, and harassment that violates their dignity or creates an offensive environment for them

(Legislation, 2010). People with ‘protected characteristics’ are advised that it is legal to take ‘positive action’ if they are at a disadvantage or have particular needs (Legislation, 2010).

3.12 Conclusion

To conclude, the discussion in this chapter throws light on the different issues surrounding ESOL provision and contributes to my research study which seeks to explore how refugee Arab Muslim women negotiate learning English. The discussion shows that ESOL provision has been subject to social, economic, and political pressures which culminated in cuts in funding for ESOL. Funding cuts are a reflection of public and state’s attitudes towards migration and issues of ethnicity, religion, and class, and resulted in further marginalisation of the provision which has been framed as a ‘social problem’, and led to serious implications for ESOL learners. Some of these are limited opportunities to access the provision, or to progress into higher level courses, or even a complete denial of access to the provision.

While the government is making it difficult to learn English through restrictions on funding and limiting access to ESOL courses, the rhetoric that immigrants are ‘reluctant’ to learn and speak English, and the pressure to integrate and ‘contribute to the economy’ continues. Additionally, ESOL has been viewed as a tool to integrate learners into a ‘monolingual’ society, and has been linked with citizenship, whereby immigrants who are seeking British citizenship must acquire at least an intermediate level of English. ESOL has also been associated with issues of social cohesion and national security, whereby not speaking English is considered the cause for social unrest, extremism, and even terrorism. Immigrants are constantly under the pressure to ‘speak our language’, and to prove their ‘integrability’ by showing competence in English.

Moreover, ESOL provision does not reflect the reality of the learners who are multilingual and multicultural. That is, ESOL practices are typically monolingual where the notion ‘English only’ is implemented in classrooms for reasons related to teachers’ instructional ideologies and pressure to have learners integrate. This creates classrooms that rarely provide spaces where learners can use their bi/multilingual repertoires to communicate and make meaning of their learning. Even if translanguaging is allowed, in some circumstances, classrooms become ‘negative translanguaging spaces’ (Bradley and Simpson, 2019) where certain languages and registers are not valued equally. In addition, the majority of ESOL teachers are not bi/multicultural and/or bi/multilingual. There is little literature that discuss the advantages of having a demographic match between learners and teachers in the UK, in particular for ESOL, or tackle the underrepresentation of ESOL teachers from minority and ethnic groups. I would argue that this would reflect the multicultural and multilingual society in the UK. However, monolingualism and monoculturalism in schools could result in making classrooms 'sites of unbelonging' (Muller et al., 2019, p. 177) with all its negative implications for social justice, and on learners' motivation for and investment in learning English.

I reiterate that the discussion in this chapter does not intend to suggest that learning English is not necessary for migrants/refugees in the UK. However, based on the current context of ESOL, I would argue that it would be realistic to suggest that ESOL provision needs transformation in terms of policy and practice. Current and future immigrants/refugees need to learn English, but they also need to be 'audible' and empowered. ESOL learners have been viewed in policy as 'one undifferentiated mass of people lacking literacy skills', although they are diverse in their backgrounds, learning needs, goals, aspirations, and qualifications. They need to have their linguistic resources legitimised, drawn and built upon rather than being seen as deficiencies. However, until this could be achieved, there will an ongoing concern on whether current and future refugees/migrants would be able to access ESOL provision, learn English, and integrate into British society without being discriminated against, or whether they would be blamed and essentialised according to stereotypical ideas, if they could not. I am hoping that the discussion of ESOL provision in the UK will contribute to a better understanding of the challenges that some ESOL learners face to learn English, which as a result, affect their overall experience of living in the UK.

Chapter 4

Migration to the UK

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review the history of migration into the UK and trace the acts and policies that were issued in response to migration since 1900. The chapter shows the historical development of acts and policies and offers an insight into how policies on migration have changed and have been shaped by the political discourse on refugees and migrants, and therefore, serves as a context for my study. In the last section, I look at Arab refugees from Iraq and Syria, and discuss the circumstances that forced their flight from their countries, as well as their presence in the UK. It is important to bear in mind that the change in policies is as a reflection of sentiments towards migrants in Briain, as it is a reflection of Britain's changing economic and global role (Walvin, 1984).

4.2 Legislation and policies since 1900

The following sections traces the development of acts and policies issued to deal with immigration and provides a chronological review of them. It starts with the 1905 Aliens Act, which marked the beginning of restrictions on entry into Britain (Girvan, 2018).

4.2.1 Migrants become 'Aliens' - Immigration policies 1900 – 1947

In the late nineteenth century, there was a significant increase in the number of Jewish immigrants coming from Eastern Europe into Britain (Saggar, 1992; Rosenberg, 2007). However, there were already Indian immigrants, Irish immigrants who fled famine in Ireland and settled in England in the mid nineteenth century, a community of black Africans who were brought to England during the British slave trade, immigrants from the ex-British colonies such as the West Indies, as well as Italian, Chinese, and Asian communities (Walvin 1984; Ramdin, 1999; Haddad, 2002). Migrants were beginning to make their presence in some unlikely fields; there were Jews in Parliament, Chinese seamen, Indian doctors, lawyers, and bus drivers, African missionaries and footballers, and a Sikh composer (Winder, 2014). There were xenophobic reflexes and a British sense of racial superiority at the time, anti-immigration sentiments directed towards 'aliens' who never showed an inclination to assimilate, such as the Chinese and the Jews, and pressure from the street to limit entry into Britain (ibid). The Conservative government passed the first immigration control act, the Aliens Act in 1905, in response to an expanding 'anti-aliens campaign' and hostility towards newcomers, and to restrict immigration that was viewed as a "drain on public resources" (Saggar, 1992, p. 27; Rosenberg, 2007, Girvan, 2018). It is noteworthy that immigrants were referred to as 'aliens' in the legal terminology of the time (The National Archives, 1905). The Act limited entry to the United Kingdom from named ports where there were immigration officers and medical inspectors, and it also granted the immigration officer the power to prevent the landing of undesirable immigrants (The National Archives, 1905 Aliens Act, C.13). According to the act, an immigrant was considered undesirable if he could not provide proof that he was able to support himself and his dependants, if he was a "lunatic" or an "idiot", if he had a disease, or a convicted criminal (ibid).

Although debates and objections to non-white settlers were centred on colour, settlers who were racially indistinguishable from the English experienced hostility from the hosts who complained about foreign settlers' family habits, their alleged lack of hygiene, disruptive children, inclination to crime, their poverty and the cheapness of their labour (Walvin, 1984). There were also concerns at the time that immigration limited the availability of housing and work, and threatened to undermine the British culture (Girvan, 2018). There were even concerns that foreign settlers would cause the English to be displaced from their homes (Walvin, 1984). Nevertheless, the Act was followed by other Acts in the following years to further restrict immigration, but it also gave the right of asylum for people fleeing political and religious persecution (Saggar, 1992; Rosenberg, 2007).

Later, Britain witnessed the largest refugee movement at the outbreak of World War I in 1914, when a quarter of a million Belgian refugees fled to Britain as a result of the German invasion (Rosenberg, 2007). A general feeling of xenophobia (Rosenberg, 2007, p.24), and 'Germanophobia' (Girvan, 2018) at the time led to the quick formation of the Aliens Restriction Act and Aliens Registration Order on the Eve of the First World War in 1914 (Saggar, 1992). The Act enabled the monarch to impose restrictions on aliens in ‘an occasion of imminent national danger or great emergency’ (The National Archives, Aliens Restriction Act, C.12). After the Act was enacted, aliens were prohibited from landing in the United Kingdom and restrictions and conditions were imposed on aliens’ entry into the UK. Moreover, aliens were required to reside in certain places in the UK and were prohibited from residing in specific areas, they had to register with the police, and officers were given the power to deport aliens from the UK (The National Archives, C.12).

The formation of the 1905 and the 1914 Aliens Acts was to prevent undesirable aliens from entering the UK and to prohibit aliens from landing in the UK especially in wartime. While the 1905 Act stated clearly that refugees seeking asylum would not be refused entry into the UK (the National Archives, C. 13), the same provision for refugees was not provided in the 1914 Act. However, Belgian refugees who fled Belgium after the German invasion in 1914 were given protection in the UK (Girvan, 2018).

After the end of World War I, tensions arose between black sailors who came from West India and Africa to fight with the British army, and who later established their black communities in the UK, and returning British sailors and soldiers. As Jenkinson (2009) has pointed out, local blacks became the subject of resentment of the local whites who accused them of taking their work, despite the obvious level of black unemployment. Black communities became the subject of racial abuse as well, and mobs of whites began attacking blacks’ lodging houses, leading to the 1919 riots between the blacks and the whites (Walvin, 1984). Those events, as Walvin (1984) has discussed, helped confirm an idea that the blacks were a 'problem', therefore the British authorities suggested repatriation as a solution.

Later in the year 1919, the British government extended further immigration restrictions and issued the 1919 Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act, which restricted the employment of aliens in British merchant ships and banned aliens from being employed in the civil service. The Act also prohibited the employment of aliens at a rate of pay less than the standard rate of pay. In addition, the Home Secretary was granted the power to deport aliens who were already in the United Kingdom and whose continued residence was "undesirable in the public interest" (The National Archives, C.92). It was noticed that the 1919 Act built on the widespread anti-alien sentiments at the time was passed to stress the fact that a country has the right to exclude certain people and has the means for doing that (Taylor, 2016). However, people seeking asylum were not exempted from immigration restrictions imposed by the 1919 Act (The National Archives, C. 92), as was the case with the 1905 Act.

During the 1930s, Jews fled Nazism and fascism in Europe (Rosenberg, 2007). However, the British government did not allow for a large influx of refugees and tried to avoid repeating what happened in 1915, when quarter of a million Belgian refugees arrived in the UK (Saggar, 1992; Ramdin, 1999, Goodhart, 2013). Therefore, there was resistance within the British government to allow more Jewish refugees into Britain, and many were discouraged from fleeing to Britain or refused admission (Walvin, 1984). The common sentiment among the British at the time was 'a pronounced and undeniable' antisemitism, especially among middle and upper classes who sympathised with Mosley's British Union of Fascists, and trade unions who feared that Jewish immigrants would 'threaten the livelihood of their members' (Walvin, 1984, p. 85, 87).

At the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, tens of thousands of foreign troops, soldiers, and labourers arrived in the UK to fight with the Allies (Ramdin, 1999; Rosenberg, 2007). There was also the flight of surviving Jews from Europe before the outbreak of the war (Walvin, 1984). The UK government considered those refugees temporary residents and provided considerable support for them, hoping that they would return home after the war (Rosenberg, 2007). However, the support that the British government provided to refugees was an indirect financial support mainly due to the allegations that the British government was “supporting aliens more than its own citizens", and because of the hostility against newcomers who were thought to be given special treatment, though they were living in miserable conditions (Cahalan, 1982, p. 25). Nevertheless, there were millions of uprooted and stateless European refugees after the war, many of whom sought long-term settlement in Britain, such as Jewish and Polish refugees (Walvin, 1984). In addition, there were Eastern European workers, Irish, and West Indian immigrants who were already in Britain and who served in the army during the First or Second World Wars, and who wanted to stay in Britain (Goodhart, 2013).

4.2.2 From citizenship to deportation - Post-war immigration policies

The aforementioned events preceded issuing the Polish Resettlement Act in 1947, which because of an economic need of the British, allowed the Poles to settle and work in Britain (Walvin, 1984, Goodhart, 2013). Soon afterwards, the UK issued the 1948 British Nationality Act, which introduced the new category of 'Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies', and which allowed citizens from the Commonwealth to move freely between Britain and the different parts of the Commonwealth, and later granted them citizenship (Goodhart, 2013; Girvan, 2016). By provisions of the Act, individuals could acquire British citizenship by birth, by descent, and through marriage (The National Archives, C.56). Individuals could also become British citizens if they were born in

British colonies or in territories annexed to the United Kingdom (ibid). The Act allowed aliens to become citizens of the United Kingdom by naturalisation if they resided in the UK or any colony, mandated territory, protectorate, and trust territory for seven years, if they were of good character, and if they had sufficient knowledge of English (The National Archives, C. 56, sec. 10).

Unlike the 1914 Act which was issued to prohibit aliens from landing in the UK during wars, the British government lifted immigration restrictions during World War II, and immigrants and refugees were allowed to land and stay in the UK. Moreover, under order of 1919 Act, immigrants were banned from being employed in different sectors, however, under provisions of the 1948 Act, immigrants were actively recruited in several industries, as the British government was undergoing a severe shortage of labour (Walvin, 1984). It was one of the consequences of the Second World War that Britain began to receive aliens and colonial citizens "on a scale and at a pace which had never been previously experienced" (Walvin, 1984, p. 101). As Marr (2008) has pointed out, the 1948 British Nationality Act changed Britain dramatically; it declared that all subjects of the King had British citizenship, and therefore it allowed around 800 million from the around the world the right to enter Britain. Though nowadays this seems extraordinary, it was uncontroversial at the time as it was assumed that black and Asian subjects of the King would have no desire to pay for expensive journeys to come and settle in ‘uncomfortable and crowded Britain’ (Marr, 2008, p.41).

However, after passing the 1948 Act, the numbers of immigrants who came from the New Commonwealth, often referred to as the 'Windrush', grew rapidly as Britain was facing a labour crisis (Ramdin, 1999; Rosenberg, 2007). On the other hand, many Indians and Pakistanis were displaced and took flight to Britain in the early 1950s because of the clash over Kashmir, the partition of India and the independence of Muslim Indians (Ramdin, 1999; Marr, 2008). Indo-Pakistani immigration started to make an impact on British cities, therefore the British government began to urge the Indian and Pakistani governments to apply more control on issuing passports, and to ensure that the uneducated and unskilled were not allowed to travel to Britain (Walvin, 1984).

Nevertheless, immigrants from the Commonwealth countries continued to migrate to Britain, and by 1962, the number of those immigrants was 500,000 (Goodhart, 2013). But according to the 1948 Act, immigrants who travelled from the Commonwealth countries in the 1950s, did so as citizens of the United Kingdom and colonies -as mentioned earlier- with full rights of entry and settlement (Walvin, 1984). These immigrants had different reasons for coming to the UK. For example, West Indian and Asian immigrants came to the UK "for a better life" for themselves and their children, whereas African Caribbeans and Somalis, "to escape wars and destitution" (Goodhart, 2013, p.116). They worked in the private sector, London Transport, British Rail, foundries in the West Midlands, hotels, restaurants, hospitals, and mills in Yorkshire, and were providing the labour needed to rebuild Britain after the war (Walvin, 1984; Rosenberg, 2007). However, they suffered from discrimination, as "discrimination and prejudice on the grounds of race and colour in employment were entrenched", and white Britons often described them as "shiftless and lazy, living off national assistance" (Ramdin, 1999, p.173). Moreover, popular papers were reporting worries about the cleanliness and criminality of immigrants from the West Indies, and the sign ‘No dogs, No blacks, No Irish’ was common on boarding houses (Marr, 2008). Nevertheless, migrants from the Commonwealth held the belief that "we are here because you were there" (Goodhart, 2013, 118).

Debates over immigration started to intensify and there were arguments that were in favour of control or repatriation of immigrants, as many Commonwealth immigrants migrated to the UK in the 1950s for work opportunities (Walvin, 1984). British people were increasingly worried about the colour of the immigrants, and the cultural values and beliefs of the aliens being transplanted into British cities (ibid). The Home Secretary at the time declared that it would be a bad thing for the coloured races of the Empire to think they were equals of the people of Britain (Marr, 2008). Later during the 1950s, with the outbreak of race riots in 1958 in Notting Hill (Marr, 2008), the 'Keep Britain White' campaign (Ramdin, 1999; Goodhart, 2013), the h8ened hatred against the "nonwhite minority" (Ramdin, 1999, p.180), and the decreased need for immigrant labour (Girvan, 2018), some conservative MPs considered the deportation of immigrants, especially from the West Indies, a necessary measure (Rex and Tomlinson, 1979; Ramdin, 1999). However, the Labour party resisted the idea of expelling people from Britain because of race (Goodhart, 2013). Soon afterwards, rumours spread about the intention to issue a legislation to restrict immigration to Britain, which resulted in a dramatic increase in the influx of West Indian and Asian migrants in 1961 (Walvin, 1984; Ramdin, 1999).

In 1961 immigration into Britain reached its peak, resulting in debates in the British government in favour of new stringent regulations to control the number of Commonwealth immigrants entering the UK (Walvin, 1984). However, immigration into Britain was never 'uniquely coloured' (Walvin, 1984, p.112), as many European refugees entered the UK during the 1950s, such as Hungarians who fled the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 (Rosenberg, 2007), the Greek and Turkish Cypriots after the divided island became politically violent, Czechs who fled the Soviet invasion of their country, and the Maltese immigrants (Marr, 2008).

Nevertheless, the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act (1), which is considered a milestone in the history of immigration into Britain, was a political and legal reinterpretation and redefinition of British citizenship (Walvin, 1984, p.113). The Act as Girvan (2018, p.4) points out, "stands as the first in a series of restrictions to free movement of Commonwealth citizens to the UK". It controlled immigration of Commonwealth citizens into the United Kingdom by authorising deportation, and by granting the immigration officer the power to refuse admission of any Commonwealth citizen into the UK, or to admit them under conditions that restrict their period of remain and employment in the UK (The National Archives, Commonwealth Immigrants Act, 1962, C. 21). The UK government also adopted a system of vouchers, whereby immigrants could enter the UK under either category A, which was issued to employers in the UK to bring in workers, or category B, which was issued to skilled workers (Rosenberg, 2007, Girvan , 2018).

However, despite such measurements, the number of immigrants from the Commonwealth grew rapidly as families joined the men later, and new children were born to them in the UK (Ramdin, 1999; Rosenberg, 2007). There were also the Greek Cypriots who made the fourth largest group of immigrants (Ramdin, 1999). Immigrants were perceived to pose challenges to the governments at the time, as a report by the Institute of Race Relations in 1966 identified the challenges to education, housing, statutory services, and market employment new communities of immigrants presented (Rosenberg, 2007). On the other hand, immigrants suffered from prejudice and discrimination in employment, housing, and education. For example, they worked in the lowest grades and took socially undesirable jobs (Rex and Tomlinson, 1979; Ramdin, 1999). They also suffered from discrimination from landlords which resulted in forcing them to live in decayed, slum and overcrowded areas (Modood, 1997; Ramdin, 1999;

Goodhart, 2013). In addition, they suffered from the teaching of imperial history that represented them as inferiors, and they suffered from the absence of a multi-cultural educational system that respects their culture (ibid). There was also an assumption that despite having a common citizenship, "immigrants would not be felt to have a claim to equal treatment", because colour means foreignness and the coloured immigrant would inevitably find barriers standing against him; such barriers spring from "class-consciousness or from xenophobia" (Rose and associates, 1969, p. 5).

According to Goodhart (2013, p. 134), prejudice on grounds of race was common in Britain after the Second World War, and "British people had markedly chauvinistic views about the superiority of themselves and their empire over all others". Moreover, a widely held belief states that "Britishness and Whiteness go together, like roast beef and Yorkshire pudding" (Parekh, 2000, p.25). As a result, hostility to immigrants grew in the 1960s and was fuelled by Enoch Powell’s speech “Rivers of Blood” in 1968 (Rose and associates, 1969; Rex and Tomlinson, 1979; Berthoud, 1997; Ramdin, 1999; Rosenberg, 2007). Although he was later dismissed from the Conservative Shadow Cabinet because of his speech (Rosenberg, 2007), there were rallies and demonstrations supporting what he said (Ramdin, 1999, Rosenberg, 2007). Powell emphasized Englishness and called for the sending back of the Black and Asian immigrants in England to where they came from (Ramdin, 1999).

The British government issued the Race Relations Act in 1965 to combat racism (Rose and associates, 1969; Rex and Tomlinson, 1979; Ramdin, 1999; Rosenberg,1997, Goodhart, 2013). The Act ‘banned racial discrimination in public places and made the promotion of hatred on the grounds of ‘colour, race, or ethnic or national origins’ an offence’ (The National Archives, C.73). However, the 1965 Act was criticised for ‘failing to address vital areas where discrimination was most prevalent, namely employment and wider aspects of acquiring accommodation’ (The National Archives, C.73). The Act was amended, and another Race Relations Act was passed in 1968 which focused on ‘eradicating discrimination in housing and employment’ (The National Archives, C.71). After the Act was introduced, it was considered illegal to refuse to provide housing, employment, and public services to people because of their ethnic backgrounds (Berthoud et al., 1997; Rosenberg, 2007). Nevertheless, despite passing the two Race Relations Acts in 1965 and 1968, several surveys revealed that discrimination persisted in fields like employment and housing, and was still practised and apparent

(Berthoud et al., 1997). However, the Act gave power to the Race Relations Board to deal with complaints of discrimination (Rosenberg, 2017). Later, a Community Relations Commission (CRC) was set up after the 1968 Act to foster harmony in relations between communities (Rosenberg, 2007; Goodhart, 2013).

In 1968, the Labour government responded to media and public pressure by placing more restrictions on entry to the UK through the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act (2). The 1968 Act introduced amendments to the 1962 Act, that is, while the 1962 Act refused and restricted entry of Commonwealth citizens, the 1968 Act applied the same type of restrictions to holders of British passports who were not born in the UK, or who were not naturalised in the UK, or did not become citizens by being registered in countries stated in the 1948 Act, namely Canada, Australia, New Zealand, The Union of South Africa, Newfoundland, India, Pakistan, and Ceylon (The National Archives, C.9, C.56). Both Acts authorised immigration officers to refuse or restrict the admission of Commonwealth citizens into the UK (ibid).

4.2.3 Tightening restrictions - Acts and policies in the 1970s and 1980s

Another Immigration Act was issued in 1971, after the Tory party won the elections in 1970, and ended remaining privileges given for Citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies (CUKC), which operated between 1948 until 1971 (Goodhart, 2013). The 1971 Immigration Act was introduced because restrictions imposed by the Commonwealth Immigrants Acts were considered insufficient by the Conservative government to restrict immigration from the Commonwealth (Girvan, 2018). Under this Act, the word ‘patrial’ was used to refer to a person who had the right of abode in the United Kingdom if he was a citizen of the UK by birth, adoption, naturalisation, or registration in the United Kingdom, or if he had been settled in the United Kingdom for more than five years (The National Archives, C.77). On the other hand, a person who was ‘not patrial’ was not allowed to enter the UK except if he was given limited or indefinite leave to enter or remain, subject to conditions attached to it, such restrictions in employment and registration with the police (ibid).

At the same time, there were efforts to promote equality and tolerance. A few years from passing the 1971 Act, the 1965 Race Relations Act was repealed by the 1976 Race Relations Act (Rex and Tomlinson, 1979; Berthoud et al., 1997; Rosenberg, 2007) which was passed as a result of the findings of the Racial Disadvantage in Britain survey in

1974 (Berthoud et al., 1997). The Act made discrimination and segregation based on colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins of the person unlawful, in relation to employment, education, and in the provision of goods, facilities and services, charities, in trade unions, and advertisements (The National Archives, C. 74). The Act also replaced the Community Relations Commission (CRC) and set up the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) which was run by commissioners appointed by the Home Secretary to deal with issues of discrimination and to promote equality (Rosenberg, 2007). However, the majority of ethnic minorities continued to live in serious poverty, and experienced disadvantage in employment (Modood, 1997). Though some minority groups were able to be presented in professional occupations, still, there was a "glass ceiling effect, holding back all groups that are not white" (ibid, p.346).

More refugees and economic migrants entered the UK in the 1980s, this time they fled conflicts or persecution in Hong Kong, Malta, Ghana, Sri Lanka, Iran, Pakistan, Somalia, Turkey, Congo, and Sudan (Rosenberg, 2007; Goodhart, 2013). In 1981, the total number of ethnic minority population was 1.5 million (Goodhart, 2013). The 1980s also witnessed an increase of the number of Vietnamese refugees who arrived in the late 1970s as Mrs Thatcher agreed to take 10,000 refugees with their dependents at an international meeting in Geneva in July 1979 (Rosenberg, 2007). However, Thatcher who agreed that immigration rate was very high made an election pledge to further restrict immigration to Britain (Girvan, 2016) and later imposed further cuts on work permits (Goodhart, 2013). Consequently, the 1981 British Nationality Act was passed to make ‘fresh provision about citizenship and nationality, and to amend the Immigration Act 1971 as regards the right to abode in the United Kingdom’ (The National Archives, C. 61).

The 1981 Act put an end to the category Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies and replaced it with other categories so that not all citizens of the UK and Colonies had the right to abode in the UK (Girvan, 2016). Unlike the 1971 Act which conditioned the acquisition of citizenship mainly by birth or descent, under conditions of the 1981 Act, acquisition was mainly by descent. That is, a person born in the UK could become a British citizen if his father or mother were a British citizen, or if they were settled in the UK before the commencement of the Act (ibid). However, there were exceptions subject to specific conditions being fulfilled, such as acquisition of citizenship by registration of minors, registration of citizens of Colonies before commencement of the Act if they had connection with the UK, by virtue of marriage, and by naturalisation (The National Archives, C. 61).

4.2.4 Tougher laws - Immigration policies in the 1990s

Tragic events such as the breakup of former Yugoslavia followed by Serbian assault on Bosnia, the Balkans war as a result of the fall of communism, Operation Desert Fox in Iraq, crisis in other countries such as Somalia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone have forced hundreds of thousands to flee their countries (Marr, 2008; Winder, 2014). However, the 1991 census revealed that there were already three million people in Britain who belonged to ethnic minorities and who made 5.5 percent of Britain's population (Winder, 2014). However, there were calls for tougher and even 'implacable' laws from the public and from the British National Party whose members complained that, "foreign spongers were given favourable treatment and precedence over honest Brits ...They were stealing our houses, our birthright and our jobs" (Winder, 2014, p.420)

The British government passed several asylum and immigration acts, the first was the 1993 Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act. The Act was established to tackle the growing number of asylum applications, and to make a better system for asylum decisions (Girvan, 2018). The Act mainly introduced fingerprinting for asylum applicants and temporary accommodation was provided for them. The Act also allowed for rights of appeal if applications were refused (The National Archives, C.23).

The 1993 Act was amended by the 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act (1). Under provision of the Act, the Secretary of State could decide and refuse a claim if the applicant came from a country where it was believed there was no serious risk of persecution, there was no fear of persecution based on the applicant's race, religion, political opinion, and membership of a particular group, and if the circumstances that gave rise to the fear no longer exist (The National Archives. C.49). The Act also introduced the removal of applicants to a third country where their lives and liberties would not be threatened. Moreover, the Act made it unlawful to employ persons who fail to apply for asylum on entry, or those whose asylum claims were rejected and were waiting for an appeal (ibid). Moreover, they were not entitled to housing accommodation, assistance, income support or child benefits. Penalties were also introduced on anyone helping asylum seekers make an illegal entry to the UK, or travellers who tried to obtain leave to enter by deception or anyone assisting them in that (ibid).

The government passed the 1996 Act to discourage asylum seekers from coming to the UK. As Winder (2004, p. 421) has discussed,

> *The idea was to deter asylum seekers partly by making their lives even more miserable, and partly by punishing anyone who helped them, even if they did so unwittingly*.

However, it was decided that the asylum process was still slow and opportunities for appeal allowed asylum applicants to stay in the UK for years while their cases were heard (Girvan, 2018). There were long chaotic queues of asylum seekers at immigration centres, lost files, piles of shelved applications that needed processing (Winder, 2014). These concerns were addressed in the Labour government's 1998 White Paper *Fairer, Faster and Firmer* which set out a faster approach to immigration control and proposed delivering faster decisions through making a one single appeal for each case (Home Office, 1998). To put that in effect, the government passed the 1999 Asylum and Immigration Act (2) through which a new procedure, the 'one-stop' appeals, was introduced whereby an applicant whose application was refused, was entitled to an appeal, but must "state any additional grounds which he has or may have for wishing to enter or remain in the United Kingdom" (The National Archives, C.33, p.51). Other amendment to the 1996 Act were the dispersal of asylum seekers, and the introduction of a voucher scheme for asylum seekers to replace the standard welfare benefits (Winder, 2014; Girvan, 2018). The National Asylum Support Service (NASS) was created in 2000 under the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act to provide welfare support to asylum seekers (Home Office, 2006).

A review of the adequacy of support provided by NASS to asylum seekers in the House of Commons (2004) found out that "the voucher scheme was greeted with much hostility" as it required them to travel to designated shops, and there was resentment that there was no cash change that could be provided for an unused portion of the voucher. The vouchers scheme as the refugee council (2001) has described it, "blatantly discriminates against some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in our society", it was "a humiliating procedure which more or less branded the recipients as imposters" (Winder, 2014, p.431). Moreover, local authorities were criticised by the audit commission for their lack of preparation to deal with dispersed asylum seekers, and for providing them with inadequate accommodation, in areas that experienced tensions (Home Office, 2006). Asylum seekers were housed in rotten rooms where there were hostile and antagonistic neighbours (Winder, 2014). Nevertheless, the full summary of the review findings was not published on the grounds that it contained confidential advice to Ministers, but the House of Commons urged the Home Secretary to regard an improvement in the performance of NASS and the asylum system (Home Office, 2006).

4.2.5 From 'Secure borders, Safe Haven' to Brexit - Immigration policies 2000 – present

The number of asylum application in the UK continued to rise and peaked in 2002, while at the same time, refusals to asylum applications reached the highest record compared to previous years, in the same year (Home Office, 2011). Asylum seekers were mainly from Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo, who fled their countries after Operation Desert Fox in Iraq, and the NATO bombing of Kosovo and Afghanistan (Marr, 2008; Winder, 2014). Meanwhile there was criticism that the asylum system was becoming 'too punitive' (Girvan, 2018). However, the public opinion towards asylum seekers was 'clear': asylum seekers and immigrants would encourage crimes, spread drugs and knock property prices (Winder, 2014).

On the other hand, churches, charities, refugee support groups, and columnists tried to broadcast stories of asylum seekers to counter public sentiments, which resembled anti-Semitic feelings before the Second World War (ibid). The government also published the White Paper Secure Borders, Safe Haven in 2002, in which former MP Blunkett urged Britons to be secure within their sense of belonging and identity and to offer a safe haven for people coming to the UK. He asked them to dismiss the idea that asylum seekers and migrants who come to Britain in container lorries or through Channel Tunnel were invaders, as in fact, these immigrants were disparate to enter Britain despite the immense difficulties they face to do so. He advocated the concept of a balanced Britain, one which is 'neither open to abuse nor a Fortress Britain'. Moreover, the White Paper promoted the idea of a well-managed migration system; one that brings skills, enhance the economy, cultural diversity and global links, and it advocated a shared civic identity and common values (Home Office, 2002).

The government introduced the 2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act, whereby the voucher system was cancelled and replaced with cash support. A quick comparison shows that unlike the 1999 Act, support and accommodation was provided for failed asylum seekers whose claims were rejected and for destitute asylum seekers. Moreover, applicants for British nationality were required to have sufficient knowledge of English and of British society. Another amendment to the 1999 Act is the appeal system which was expanded to address various cases and was no longer based on a ‘one-step appeal’ system (The National Archives, C. 41).

More asylum and immigration acts were passed in the next years with minor additions such as, introducing penalties for assisting unlawful immigration and employment of people under immigration control, electronic monitoring (Asylum and Immigration Act, 2004, C.19) , ‘a good character requirement’ for the registration of British citizenship (Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009, C. 11), and a requirement for a person who works for the public authority to speak fluent English (Immigration Act, 2016, c.19)

The Labour government announced a new immigration system in 2005. Its five-year strategy for asylum and immigration document, Controlling our borders: Making migration work for Britain, introduced a scheme to ‘enforce strict controls to root out abuse’, while at the same time allowing into Britain skills that benefit the economy and the country (Home Office, 2005). The new scheme would be based on a points-based system that ensures only skilled workers whose jobs cannot be filled from local workforce would be taken. The scheme introduced four tiers, and obligations such as having sponsors who would ensure migrants comply with the requirements attached to their leave (ibid).

However, the Conservative government that came into power in 2010 promised in its manifesto to reduce migration to tens of thousands (Gentleman, 2019). Two years later, the government introduced the Hostile Environment Policy in 2012 which ‘aimed at identifying and reducing the number of immigrants in the UK with no right to remain’ (Lords library briefings, 2018, p.1). The Opposition has debated the policy, believing it had negatively impacted the lives of Commonwealth immigrants who have lived in the UK since the 1950s, and who have legal rights to remain in the UK. Those immigrants – also referred to as the Windrush generation – were being denied access to services and were threatened with deportation due to their inability to provide documentation that proves their right to reside in the UK (ibid). Vans were driving around London’s six boroughs decorated with billboards that had pictures of handcuffs, a recent number of arrests, and a line that warned, “In the UK illegally? Go home or face arrest.” (Gentleman, 2019). This was in addition to alarming text messages that urged immigrants to leave the UK as they no longer had the right to remain (ibid). As a result of the policy, thousands of immigrants who had been living legally in Britain for decades were considered illegal immigrants, and became homeless, denied healthcare, lost their jobs, and were detained or deported (Rawlinson and Gentleman, 2019). Interestingly, a YouGov poll at the time revealed that 71% of the public supported the government's 'hostile environment' policy (Wells, 2018).

The Immigration Act 2014 contained more measures to reduce the number of illegal immigrants in the UK, such as granting authorities the power to search premises, simplifying the removal process and limiting rights of appeal, the prohibition of providing services such as residential tenancies, NHS, bank accounts to persons disqualified by immigration status, and ensuring courts give weight to the 'public interest' regarding immigration (The National Archives, Immigration Act 2014, C.22; Lords library briefings, 2018). Two years later, Immigration Act 2016 reinforced measures related to illegal immigrants and included the right for landlords to obtain possession of their property when a tenant no longer has the right to rent, and granted new powers for police to search individuals and premises (the National Archives, Immigration Act 2016, c.19, Lords library briefings, 2018).

On 23 June 2016 the government held a nationwide referendum on whether the UK should keep its membership with the European Union. Results of the referendum revealed that 51.9% of British people voted to leave the European Union (BBC, 2018). Former Prime Minister Theresa May said that one of the main messages she got from the outcome of the referendum is that the British people wanted to see a decrease in immigration to the UK, and that she will work on getting the migration level down to a "sustainable" level, which is 100,000 a year (BBC, 2018). This target was previously set by former PM David Cameron in 2010. However, latest figures of immigration show it was at 270,000, and that brought criticism on May's plan to reduce immigration and dubbed it "economically illiterate" (Grice, 2017). Bulman (2017) has pointed out that the referendum outcome is a reflection of "a widespread anti-immigration sentiment" rather than a "dissatisfaction with politics". According to the findings of the British Social Attitudes survey, Brexit is the result of a growing concern among Conservative voter in Britain over the consequence of membership with EU, specifically immigration and freedom of movement between Britain and EU countries (ibid).

Similarly, Clarke et al. (2016) have discussed that there was a sharp change of attitude towards membership with the EU after the Eurozone crisis in 2010, and after the influx of refugees arriving in Europe from the Middle East and Africa. The British community also have concerns over economic sovereignty and national identity being deteriorated if

UK remains in the EU. Another concern was that Britons find themselves in competition with labour from the EU countries, which resulted in lowering wages of skilled workers, as PM May had stated (Grice, 2017). However, the major factor for Brexit remains to be ‘prejudice against immigrants’ (Johnston, 2017, n.p.). It is noteworthy that after the referendum, the police reported a tripling of hate crimes in the areas inhabited by immigrants from European countries (ibid). On 31 January 2020 the UK left the European Union after 47 years of membership with the union. While leaving the EU marked an end to the free movement of half a billion Europeans who used to study, work, and live in the UK, for Brexit supporters, leaving the EU brought sentiments of patriotism and pride, and a sense that the UK has become a sovereign nation (Lawless, 2020).

After the UK exited the European Union a new Immigration Bill was based on a points based system was introduced. It is stated that the previous immigration system was ‘distorted by European free movement rights, … has been failing to meet the needs of the British people’ (Home Office, 2020, n.p.). As of 1 January 2021, the government would reduce levels of immigration by treating EU and non-EU citizens equally and by giving priority to those with the ‘highest skills and the greatest of talents’ to come to the UK to work (ibid). However, this new policy raises an interesting question on whether immigrants/refugees who are highly skilled could have an opportunity in the UK given the perception that they limit employment opportunities for the British, and other factors such as racism, discrimination, and the ‘glass ceiling effect’ discussed earlier in this chapter.

4.2.6 Reflections

This section provided a discussion on the changing policies in relation to migrants and refugees, as well as the racialised attitudes of the British people towards them. Discriminatory legislation, xenophobic and discriminatory attitudes, prejudice and a sense of superiority have shaped Britain’s relationship with migrants and refugees. This throws light on the context in which refugees such as Arab Muslim women live and the challenges they face which hinder their social inclusion.

4.3 Iraqi and Syrian Arab refugees in the UK

This section will provide a discussion on the conflicts in Iraq and Syria and the subsequent displacement of millions of Iraqis and Syrians from their countries. It will provide a review of the reasons of their displacement, the arrival of some of them in the

UK, and the UK government's policy to receive them and address their needs. The focus is on these two countries because the participants in the research arrived in the UK as refugees from Iraq and Syria.

4.3.1 Refugees from Iraq

The arrival of Iraqi refugees in Britain is not a new phenomenon; it started mainly in the 1950s after the collapse of the monarchy in Iraq and the subsequent flight of some upper-class families who had connections with the overthrown king (Al-Rasheed, 1994). Later in the 1960s, several republican governments were formed, and the country witnessed social, economic, and political developments that laid the ground for the rise of Saddam Hussein and his Baathist Party to power (Fattah and Caso, 2009). Following the Baathist takeover, members of the Iraqi Communist Party, The Arab Nationalist Party, and the Islamic Movement, as well as ordinary individuals who had no political ideology, but whose views were not tolerated in Iraq fled to London, which became the centre for gathering and organising Iraqi opposition and political parties (Al-Rasheed, 1994). This led to the emergence of an Iraqi refugee community of exiles who opposed the political system and who fled the country to protect their personal security and to continue their political activities in a more liberal environment (Al-Rasheed, 1992; Chatelard, 2009). Their choice of settlement was because of the good connections they had established during business and study visits (Al-Ali and Pratt, 2006). Those early refugees did not see their flight as an action to escape violence or persecution inflicted on them, but as a strategy to save political and practical programs (Al-Rasheed, 1992). Furthermore, some Iraqi Arabs who came to London were voluntary migrants, who until the gulf war in 1991 were successful businessmen, merchants, and professionals who searched for new economic opportunities and utilized their knowledge of both their country’s economy and the British society and its language (Al-Rasheed, 1994). The majority of Iraqi migrants settled in West London in areas like Kensington, Westminster, and Hammersmith (Al-Rasheed, 1994).

After the breakout of the Iraqi-Iranian war in 1980, a community of Iraqi refugees consisting of political exiles from all sectarian groups was formed in London in the late 1980s (Rahe, 2002, Chatelard, 2009). However, the Shia families represented the majority of refugees because of pressures put on them which stemmed from their presumed loyalty to Iran and connections with Iranians who are viewed as their ‘coreligionists' (Al-Rasheed, 1994).

In 1991, the United States-led coalition began its massive bombing of Iraq which with the comprehensive embargo that was imposed on Iraq in 1990, forced many Iraqis from almost all sections of society to leave the country (Al-Rasheed, 1994; Fattah and Caso, 2009). Intermittent air strikes that continued during the 1990s hit water treatment plants which denied 22 million people in Iraq clean water, sewage treatment plants, irrigation plants, archaeological sites that date back to 6 B.C.E., electrical generating plants which made refrigerating food and medicine impossible and denied hospitals electricity, as well as communication centres (Bennis in Arnove, 2000). Those were the result of the 130,000 tons of bombs dropped on Iraq in 1991, which damaged the infrastructure of the country (Zainy, 2003). Moreover, the sanctions that remained in effect for 13 years created a humanitarian crisis. As Peter Pellet, who served on United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation Missions to Iraq observed,

> *… the sanctions led to a steep increase in hunger, disease and death throughout Iraqi society, especially among women, children, and the elderly. The population of Iraq, which formerly enjoyed some services comparable to those in the West, has suffered terrible hardship because of the sanctions. In effect, the population moved from the edge of first-world status to poor, third-world status with staggering speed.* (Pellett, 2000, p. 151-152)

It is estimated that 4.5 million Iraqis fled their country to neighbouring countries in the Middle East and to other countries in Europe during the 1990s (UNHCR, 2020). It is noteworthy that there is no accurate estimation of the number of Iraqis who left the country as many of them did not register with the UNHCR (UNHCR, 2020). This is because the majority of them come from an affluent Iraqi middle class that used to benefit from the revenues of oil exports (Fattah and Caso, 2009). After the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq and the fall of the former Ba'athi regime in 2003 insurgency sprang up against the occupation forces (Chatelard, 2009; Ali, 2013; Jenkins, 2016). However, Iraq soon sank into chaos because of the breakdown of order and security, the scarcity of food and goods and clean water, the broken health care system, the destruction of infrastructure and of public facilities, looting and arson, terror attacks, and sectarian violence (Fattah and Caso, 2009; Mustafa, 2018). Sir John Chilcot, who chaired an independent inquiry committee established by former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, stated in his public statement in 2016 that the consequences of the invasion were underestimated as the situation in Iraq deteriorated after the invasion and the subsequent instability that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands and the displacement of millions of Iraqis (The National Archives, The Iraq Inquiry, 2017). Nevertheless, a new

Iraqi state that was formed after the Western invasion which was considered a fragile and a failed new Iraqi state that contributed to the worsening of the situation in Iraq (Ali, 2013, Jenkins, 2016). As Ali (2013, p.58) has pointed out,

> *It was no surprise that the 'new' Iraqi state that emerged from the wreckage after the invasion of 2003 was fragile, with serious implications for human security and displacement which are still felt today by Iraqi society.*

As a result, the number of Iraqis who fled the country continued to rise in the following years. Generally accepted figures estimate that five years after the invasion, the number of Iraqis who left the country has risen to 4.2 million (Fattah and Caso, 2009). Most of them sought refuge in neighbouring countries such as Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and Iran (UNHCR, 2009) Moreover, the chaos that followed the invasion and the dissolving of Iraqi Army provided an ideal breeding ground for the terrorist organisation ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) to gain power in Iraq and to establish its state in Iraq and Syria in 2014 (Oosterveld and Bloem, 2017). More Iraqis fled the country and an estimate of near 3.4 million Iraqis were forced to leave after the establishment of ISIS (IOM, 2018). Some Iraqis tried to seek asylum in countries in Europe given the political and economic situation in the Middle East. However, many Iraqis who sought asylum in the UK were rejected. Government figures show that cases from Iraq that were granted asylum were only 12% in 2016, 20% in 2017, and 28% in 2019 and 2020 (Home Office, 2020). It is argued that the UK government has never had a programme for the resettlement of Iraqis although the UK along with the US invaded Iraq in 2003, despite warnings about the likely destabilisation of the country and the mass displacement that would take place as a result of the invasion (Hart, 2018).

4.3.2 Syrian refugees

Unlike the long and complex history of Iraqi exiles in Britain, Syrian refugees started to seek refuge in Britain after the civil war that tore apart Syria. The Syrian civil war started in 2011 after successful uprisings in other Arab countries such as Tunisia and Egypt – known as the Arab Spring – toppled long-ruling Tunisian and Egyptian presidents. The spirit of the uprising transferred to Syria and gave hope to Syrian activists who wanted to see freedom and economic growth in Syria (Aljazeera, 2011; BBC, 2018). Protests erupted in Syria in 2011 after fifteen Syrian boys were detained and brutally tortured before being killed for writing graffiti in support of the Arab Spring, to which the Syrian government responded by killing protesters and arresting others (Aljazeera, 2011; CNN, 2018; UNHCR, 2020).

Peaceful protests that were met with violent crackdowns by the government dashed hopes of regime change and reforms, and eventually developed into a civil war that has been heavily influenced by international interventions (Reid, 2020). For example, the Syrian regime is supported by Iran, Russia, and Hezbollah in Lebanon, while the United States, Turkey, and some Arab Gulf States are supporting different opposition and anti-Assad groups (Karlin, 2018). The conflicts provided an opportunity for the terrorist organisation ISIS to take control of parts of Syria in 2014 and to announce its state in Syria and Iraq (Oosterveld and Bloem, 2017). The UK became involved in the wars in Syria in 2015 when former Prime Minister David Cameron's cabinet approved British airstrikes against SIS sites in Syria, and in April 2018, the U.S., France, and the UK launched airstrikes after Assad attacked areas of opposition army with chemical weapons (CNN, 2018).

Thus, Syria which was considered a modern country built on ‘the cradle of civilisation’ and which had a ‘rich cultural history’ that dates back more than 8,000 years was torn apart and destroyed (Reid, 2020, n.p.). The war in Syria has resulted in the destruction of half of all medical facilities, as well as the destruction of housing units, schools, public facilities, water and sanitisation infrastructure, historic landmarks, entire cities and towns which have been reduced to rubbles, and the death of hundreds of thousands of civilians (The World Bank, 2017).

4.3.2.1 UK response to Syrian refugee crisis

By the end of the year 2019, Syrians continued to be the largest forcibly displaced population with 6.7 million refugees and more than 6 million internally displaced (UNHCR, 2020). Syrian refugees are scattered in different countries in the world. The majority of them resettled in countries in the Middle East such as Turkey which has taken 3.6 million refugees, Lebanon where 911,000 Syrians sought refuge, Jordan that took 656,000 refugees, Kurdish Iraq which hosted 250,000, and Egypt that has 130,000 (UNHCR, 2020). Some Syrian refugees tried to make their way to European countries particularly Germany, which is hosting 614,000, and other countries in Scandinavia where they could have better opportunities, but their way to their intended destination countries had to go through Greece, Denmark, and Hungary where their journeys would often be blocked (Hartocollis, 2015).

In the UK, former Minister of Immigration, Mark Harper stated in 2014 that the Government believed that the best way to address the suffering of the Syrian people is to provide humanitarian assistance to displaced Syrians in neighbouring countries but not to provide resettlement. (UK Parliament, 2014). However, later that year the Government accepted to relocate some of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees through a resettlement programme called the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme (VPRS) (Home Office, 2014). The programme gave priority to survivors of torture and violence, as well as women and children at risk or in need of medical care. There are also other resettlement schemes; the Gateway Programme which settles 750 refugees every year, and the Mandate Resettlement Scheme which accepts to resettle refugees who have a close family member in the UK willing to accommodate them (Home Office, 2014). The UK government also has a resettlement scheme for 3,000 at-risk children and their families from the Middle East and North Africa (Home Office, 2017).

In 2015, it is estimated that more than 1 million refugees arrived in Europe by sea and land, but were unable to continue their journeys to their destinations due to closed borders between European countries to limit the influx of refugees (Spindler, 2015). However, that same year, the image of the drowned Syrian toddler Aylan Kurdi sparked a wave of outrage across Europe and raised calls for Europe to do more for refugees (Kingsley, 2016; Edwards, 2016). The toddler's family who fled their city in Northern Syria because of the devastating battles between Kurdish fighters and ISIS groups, was trying to reach Europe, but their ultimate destination was Canada where they hoped to join their extended family (Osmandzikovic, 2020). The toddler along with his mother and older brother drowned after the inflatable boat they boarded capsized, but his image lying face down on a beach raised awareness of the refugee crisis that some countries in Europe decided to take Syrian refugees (Osmandzikovic, 2020). After this incident and because of criticism of the limited number of refugees the UK was offering settlement for, former Prime Minister David Cameron agreed to expand the scheme and resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees (Home Office, 2015). By the end of March 2020, the total Syrian refugees who were settled in the UK under the (VPRS) were 19,768 refugees. Additional 239 refugees were previously resettled but were not counted towards the 20,000 target (Home Office, 2020).

4.4 Reflections

Both Iraq and Syria which used to be well-established states have been torn apart by years of wars and political conflicts, and by the intervention of external powers. Hundreds of thousands have been killed and millions have been internally and externally displaced. The British government has never announced a programme to resettle Iraqi refugees, which is striking given that the UK participated in the invasion of Iraq (Hart, 2018); however, it did provide a resettlement scheme for Syrian refugees, through the numbers that were taken are relatively very small.

4.5 Conclusion

A review of the history of policies issued to control immigration reveals the old and perpetuating anti-immigrant sentiments in Britain. These sentiments have stemmed from various fears and concerns such as fears of draining public resources, limiting the availability of employability and housing, and concerns about the colour, race, and cultures of immigrants who are not willing to assimilate, which could affect or undermine British culture. However, anti-immigrant sentiments spring also from feelings of xenophobia, superiority, and prejudice. Refugees who fled wars and violence as well as immigrants were homogenised and ‘Othered’ and were described as ‘aliens’, a ‘problem’, and their presence was considered ‘undesirable’. While post World War II immigrants contributed to rebuilding Britain and worked in several industries such as the British Rail, London Transport, mills in Yorkshire, hotels, restaurants, and hospital, they were accused of being ‘lazy’ (Ramdin, 1999). Later, as the need for immigrant labour decreased, they either experienced disadvantage and discrimination in employment, or the ‘glass ceiling effect’. These old sentiments persisted and were reflected in Brexit referendum outcome. The UK exited the EU to fulfil the wishes of the British public, to end European free movement (Home Office, 2020) and what is perceived as competition in employment. The discussion in this chapter compels us to consider the context in which refugees live that affect their intercultural encounters and the chances they have to progress in exile.

Chapter 5

Two Qualitative Methodologies

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological approach of this research and the research methods I used to address my overarching research question:

> **How do the experiences of refugee Arab Muslim women living in London affect their capacity to learn English and their social inclusion?**

This chapter begins with a review of qualitative methodology, its characteristics, philosophical underpinnings, and a discussion of its appropriateness for my research objective, type of questions, and theoretical frameworks. Two research methodologies are used for this study; these are narrative inquiry and ethnography. Methods used for these two research methodologies provided a rich source of multi-perspectival data for this research. The sections that follow discuss common challenges faced when conducting research, particularly with vulnerable groups. These include approaching gatekeepers, sampling strategies, insider/outsider position, ethical considerations, and reflexivity. The final section summarises limitations encountered with initial analysis of data collected in an earlier stage of the research project which inspired a different approach to later data analyses.

5.2 Qualitative research

The aim of the present study entailed using a qualitative methodology to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives. A qualitative research methodology as Leavy (2014) explains, is often used to explore and explain a social phenomenon, to gain a deep understanding of an aspect of social life, to build 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) of people in natural settings, and to explore under researched areas. Qualitative research methodology gained importance in the 1970s with the emergence of postmodernity which acknowledged the dynamic, multiperspectival, and complexity of social phenomena that cannot be captured by quantitative methodology (Brinkman et al., 2014). The postmodern era also witnessed a shift to non-traditional methodologies, a critique of positivism, a search for more authentic forms of representation, an emphasis on the creation rather than the discovery of social realities, and a call to counteract the hegemony implicit in Western-biased and ethnocentric texts (Butler-Kisber, 2010).

Additionally, Leavy (2014) explains that the development of qualitative inquiry came as a result of several movements such as social justice, civil rights, and women's and students' movements in the 1960s and 1970s and the major changes in the social fabric of life, which incited major changes in the academic field. These changes included a call for new ways of asking research questions, a need to develop approaches that could uncover the meaning of complex social phenomena, and a drive to understand the social worlds of the underprivileged groups and marginalised people, such as immigrant communities (Leavy, 2014; Brinkman et al., 2014). It is similarly important as well to realise that because of the sociohistorical conditions in which qualitative research developed, there is 'a social justice undercurrent to qualitative practice, one that may be implicit or explicit' (Leavy, 2014, p. 3). In this sense, the aim of this study is to raise awareness about an underrepresented group who is also often silenced and marginalised in the society. Through this research they were able to speak about their experiences and to tell their stories, which otherwise could remain unknown.

Qualitative researchers assert that human nature is complicated and changeable, and is influenced by various cultures; therefore, it cannot occur in fixed patterns and cannot be limited to 'variables' and the relations between them (Hammersley, 1989). While quantitative research follows deductive, hypothesis-testing methodologies and expresses the social world in figures and statistics, qualitative research adopts a 'holistic' way to study the social phenomena (Flick, 2006; King and Horrocks, 2010). In other words, qualitative researchers "sacrifice scope for detail" (Silverman, 2013), and this unwillingness to give up "depth for generality is a matter of analytic necessity, not technical inadequacies" (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997, p.13).

For this study, quantitative methods based on an objective epistemology (King and Horrocks, 2010, p.12) would not provide a deep insight into the experiences, feelings, and perspectives of the participants. Rather, a qualitative research approach with interpretive and critical views that are characterised by a concern for the individual, and an understanding of the subjective world of human experience, as well as a concern for consciousness-raising was considered 'fit for purpose' (Cohen et al., 2018).

5.3 Two qualitative research methodologies

Qualitative methodology is considered the umbrella term for many types of research practices (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Leavy, 2014). It is distinguished for its philosophical and methodological diversity; it can be based on a single case or a small number of participants, it can also use more than one ontological and epistemological stances (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Butler-Kisber, 2010; Leavy, 2014; Spencer et al., 2014). The first phase of this study involved conducting a pilot study. The aim of the pilot study was to try out data collection procedures and instruments in order to gather preliminary data that could provide an overview of the participants, their experiences, attitudes and beliefs. Doody and Doody (2015) pointed out that a pilot study 'ensures methodological rigor' as it allows for methodology to be tested in advance and enables the researcher to obtain preliminary data before commencing the actual data collection. A pilot study is also an important step in testing the main research questions and sub-questions and sharpening the focus of the research as well as the improving the data analysis methods. Afterwards, I have used two qualitative research methodologies, narrative inquiry and ethnography which are considered research methodologies in the current research literature (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Given, 2008; Clandinin and Caine, 2013). Both methodologies use similar methods of inquiry such as observations, semi-structured interviews, and field texts (Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007). However, in this research, life history interviews were used as a research method of narrative inquiry, while the other research methods including semi-structured interviews, ESOL classroom observations, and field notes were used for my ethnographic work. This allowed for richness in the data sources, and a deeper understanding of the experiences of the refugee Arab Muslim women. As Silverman (2011, 2014) states, the choice of research methods depends on what the researcher is trying to find out; there are no good or bad methods, but more appropriate or less appropriate methods. Discussion of and impetus for using research methodologies and methods of collecting data will each be discussed in the following sections.

5.3.1 The narrative revolution

> *People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful.*
>
> *Connelly & Clandinin (2006, p. 375)*

Narrative inquiry, as Clandinin and Caine (2013) explain, is fundamentally a way of understanding experience. That is, it is the study of stories which are considered central in understanding human experiences (Pinnergar and Daynes, 2007). In other words, it is a research methodology for inquiring into the phenomena of individual's experiences, but which allows for the intimate study of their experiences (Given, 2008; Clandinin and Caine, 2013). Narratives are used in this study to gain a deeper understanding of the women's life experiences and their stories. This is made possible in narrative research through the intimate relationship and the trust that developed between the women and myself, and through the types of questions that focused on the context and meanings of their stories. A narrative in research does not necessarily have a structure, nor does it have a beginning, middle, and an end (Bold, 2012). This is because a narrative could be a short topical story about a particular event or an encounter, an extended story about a significant aspect of one's life, or a narrative of one's entire life (Chase, 2005). In all narrative forms, however, the focus is on the meanings that can be drawn from the narratives and importantly, the context in which the narrative is set in order to make sense of it (Bold, 2012). Narrative research advocates pluralism, relativism, and subjectivity and adopts an underlying assumption that there is neither a single, absolute truth in human reality, nor one correct reading or interpretation of a text (Lieblich et al., 1998).

Having introduced narrative inquiry as a research methodology, I now highlight the circumstances that led to its adoption and development of a critical and advocacy perspective. Narrative research became increasingly visible in social sciences in the 1980s, but has later earned a place in research in various disciplines such as, psychology, psychotherapy, medicine, education, sociology, and history where understanding the lived experiences of people is important (Lieblich et al., 1998; Bold, 2012). The historical evolution of narrative inquiry was termed 'the narrative revolution' (Lieblich et al., 1998) and was made possible with the intellectual, social, and cultural changes that led to its emergence. To start with, the liberation movements and women movements in the 1960s and 1970s reignited interest in personal narratives which were particularly used to bring silenced voices to the centre (Butler-Kisber, 2017). These movements 'highlighted the fact that narrative is a legitimate way of doing and knowing' (ibid p. 4). In addition,

Bochner and Riggs (2014) mention the 'crisis of representation' in the mid-1980s, wherein researchers in social sciences and anthropologists started to doubt the validity and efficacy of the language used in research approaches that were based on traditional, objective, and scientific descriptions of *the* world [italics in original]. The crisis of representation resulted in calls for an emphasises on the researcher's active role in the research, and urged the researcher to situate him/herself in the research reflexively mainly because the research process started to be considered a series of constructions and interpretations made by the researcher (Butler-Kisber, 2010), as I have done in my study.

Other factors are pointed out by Clandinin (2007) and Pinnergar and Daynes (2012) who discuss the four turns (changes) that marked a change in the way of thinking and led to the emergence of narrative inquiry in research. The first turn, as they discuss, signified a change in the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the researched from one that is based on a positivistic stance to one that is more subjective and interactionist. The reason was, as Butler-Kisber (2017) explains, that there was a dissatisfaction among researchers with the type of research that takes place in a controlled, objective and decontextualized space where hypotheses were tested, and theories generated. Therefore, a demand for the acknowledgment of the human element in the study emerged across various disciplines and multiple professional fields (Clandinin and Caine, 2013; Butler-Kisber, 2017). Hence, narrative inquiry has become distinguished by its emphasis on relational engagement between the researcher and research participants (Given, 2008). This is important for my study, as a subjective and interactionist relationship between the participants and myself allowed for a deep exploration of their experiences.

Moreover, the development of narrative inquiry was marked with a turn from the use of numbers to the use of words as data, as narrative inquirers realised that in translating experience into numeric codes, they lost 'the nuances of experience and relationship in a particular setting that are of interest to those examining human experience' (Pinnergar and Daynes, 2007, p. 15). A closer look at how texts are presented in narrative research reveals that narrative inquirers add life into language by presenting texts in a form similar to the one associated with writing stories and novels (Bochner and Riggs, 2014). Thus, narrative inquirers have 'fractured the boundaries that traditionally separate social science from literature' (ibid, p. 15). The third turn was a focus from the general to the particular, as there was an understanding that exploring in details the complexities and nuances of a phenomenon 'has as much or even greater value for understanding and contributing to change than generalising' Butler-Kisber, 2017, p. 4).

The fourth turn was marked by the decline of an exclusively positivist paradigm for social science research (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007), and an acceptance of multiple ways of knowing the world, instead of a reliance on positivistic assumptions (Pinnergar and

Daynes, 2007). Additionally, in the 1990s researchers particularly from marginalised minority populations advocated the need to ‘give voice to silenced narratives and marginalised groups and communities’ as they realised that ‘vocabulary of neutrality, objectivity, and scientific detachment could easily function as a tool of oppression and domination’ (Bochner and Riggs, 2014, p. 200). Thus, they advocated for research methodology that ‘resonated with their lives and lived experiences’, and one that would make a difference personally, emotionally, politically, and culturally (ibid). As mentioned earlier, for this study, an objective and detached type of relationship with the participants would have not only been counterproductive, but would have further oppressed and marginalised them. Moreover, being a member of the marginalised and oppressed group who is researching women of her group, allowed for deeper insights and interpretations of the stories that raised awareness of the circumstances that forced the women to leave their home countries and of their lives in exile.

However, narrative inquiry was not immune from criticism. For example, it has been criticized for being ‘more art than research: it seems based predominantly on talent, intuition, or clinical experience; defies clear order and systema-tization' (Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 1). However, using narratives in research can be viewed as an addition to the existing research methods such as, the survey, observation, and other traditional methods, or as an alternative to ‘sterile’ research tools (ibid).

5.3.2.1 The life history interviews

Life history interviewing is one form of narrative inquiry research that can be used to document an individual's account of his or her life experiences in their own words (Jessee, 2019). A life history interview is a narrative that can be about specific significant aspects of a person’s life, or it might revolve around a turning point in an individual’s life (Chase, 2005).

One of the values of life history interviews is in its ability to enhance understanding of the life experiences of individuals in marginalised communities (Kerr, 2016). This is because life history as a research approach is distinguished by its choice of subjects, that is, it tends to focus on underrepresented individuals who might be left 'voiceless, overlooked, and/or marginalised by other forms of research', and because it provides 'much-needed context' about the ways individuals make sense of their lives (Lanford and Tierney, 2019, p. 6). Life history as a research method was conceptualised as a 'powerful means of challenging the elite power structures' that controlled the production of history, and to promote a better understanding of 'structural oppression and discrimination that has undermined the social vitality of marginalised communities' (Jessee, 2019, p. 428). It enables people whose voices and experiences are not included in the public record to share their experiences and to take part in the reconstruction of knowledge (Mohaqqeq, 2012). This is because the quality of relationship between the interviewer and the participants that builds over a period of time, and the trust that develops between them reduces the chances of giving a ‘purely sanitised version of events that rarely goes beyond what is already on the public record’ (Jakson and Russell, 2010, p. 23). Moreover, this type of relationship between the researcher and participants provides better opportunities for ‘naturally occurring conversations’ (Riessman, 2001), which is the type of relationship I had with the participants in this study. In fact, the women who participated in this research contributed through their stories, to the reconstruction of knowledge about Arab Muslim refugees from Iraq and Syria. This is particularly important as public knowledge is often constructed through the media and the politicians' rhetoric and is often distorted or one-sided. Therefore, the women provided a different version and another side of the story, a side that is often silenced.

Life history interviews can be used in conjunction with other methods wherein they can provide more details and support findings from other forms of research (Ojermark, 2007), as I have done in this study. On the other hand, life history interviews can be criticised for their non-generalisability due to the small sample size. However, it is distinguished for offering a comprehensive understanding of a multifaceted topic, and for being nonreductive, as it gives voice to the marginalised and the neglected, in particular, those whose lives are often affected by policy and public discourse, such as immigrants/refugees (Lanford and Tierney, 2019). This is particularly relevant to the participants in my research, namely refugee Arab Muslim women, who are under researched, underrepresented in the British society, and are subject to common public discourse and stereotypes. As Lanford et al. (2019, p.1) put it, 'life history can serve as a platform for individuals who would be otherwise marginalised by expansive generalisations and exclusionary protocols'.

5.3.2.2 Structure of life history interviews

Life histories may be centred on specific moments or particular periods in a person's life that are of particular interest for a research project or are important for the contextualisation of an issue (Chaitin, 2008; Lanford et al., 2019). This is similar to a technique that Wolcott

(1994) suggested earlier, which is 'focusing on some key events' in the lives of the participants, so that the essence of their stories can be revealed. In this respect, life history interviews with refugee Arab Muslim women were centred around three stages in their lives, these are, pre-migration life experiences, transmigration life experiences, and post-migration life experiences. The reason for focusing on these three stages is because they have been identified in previous literature on forced migration and considered fundamental stages in refugees' lives (Fazel and Stein, 2002; Anderson et al., 2004; Khawaja et al., 2008; Bhugra and Gupta, 2011; Wessels, 2014; Meda, 2017). The pre-migration stage includes the stressors that refugees experience before leaving their home country which force them to leave, such as wars, violence, torture, losses of close family, denial of basic necessities, and a general sense of insecurity (Fazel and Stein, 2002). The trans-migration stage describes the journey to another country to seek refuge, and/or staying in refugee camps and all the stresses and life-threatening dangers that occur in both settings. The post-migration stage starts when refugees settle in another country and face additional stresses such as social isolation, poverty, unemployment, difficulties in accessing education and health services, xenophobia, etc. This final stage has been referred to as ‘a period of secondary trauma’ to highlight the difficulties refugees encounter (Fazel and Stein, 2002, p.366). The three stages are useful to describe change over time, and to consider the individual and environmental factors that facilitate or hinder the adaptation of refugees (Anderson et al., 2004).

Interviews lasted between an hour and a half and three hours and allowed me to gain an in-depth knowledge of their stories of displacement, and their experiences of social inclusion in the UK. I explained to the participants that interviews will focus on the three stages of their life experiences. However, I did not follow a strict order for the narration of the stories, and rather left the choice to the participants to decide where they would start from, and what events they wanted to talk about in details. This is because life history interviews are different from other types of interviews in that they are directed by the participant, who speaks in as little or as much detail they feel necessary to narrate events and experiences they feel are important (Jessee, 2019).

Interviews were carried out in different places. This allowed the participants to feel comfortable and allowed for natural conversations to be carried out. Bochner and Riggs (2014, p. 50) state that the conversational partners and surrounding environment ‘can influence what gets told or doesn‘t, and how’, and these factors should be considered when contextualising and framing the stories. Interviews were conducted in Arabic, which allowed for rich experiences to be expressed fully by the participants. Translating interviews from Arabic to English was a complex process due to the differences between the two languages, for example sentences in Arabic always start with a verb followed by the subject, also some tenses in English such as the present perfect, do not exist in Arabic and are inferred from the context (Al-Amer et al., 2016). However, being a bilingual, and a person who knows almost all of the Arabic colloquial dialects, including those of the participants, and working as a translator for some time facilitated the process. Notes were taken during the course of the interviews as none of the women felt comfortable to have their voices audio-recorded, and after assured them that their identities would remain anonymous.

Hakim (2000), Wolcott (2005), King and Horrocks (2010), Edwards and Holland (2013), and Hammersley (2013) point out that when conducting interviews with a marginalized or vulnerable group, such as women with a refugee background, audio recording tools might not be welcomed or allowed by the participants, despite assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. They note that it is not unusual that vulnerable participants do not feel safe and secure to have their voices audio recorded as they fear the ramifications of stating their viewpoints on political topics. Other participants disclose sensitive information during the interview and need to remain anonymous, and in other cases, wish to keep such revelations off the record. Other concerns are related to cultural norms, as in some societies women's voices are not normally audio recorded. Some participants might feel self-conscious or uncomfortable if their voices are recorded. In this case, taking notes can replace audio recorders and interviews can be conducted after explaining to the participants the reasons for taking notes (ibid), and this is what I have done in this study.

5.3.2 Ethnography

Ethnography is considered a style of research that aims to understand the meanings of social experiences and activities of individuals in a given setting, but which involves close association with, or participation in the setting itself (Brewer, 2005). Whilst there are numerous discussions of ethnography in literature, I think it would be useful to summarise a number of characteristics that authors consider key elements of an ethnographic research. These include that, an ethnography involves the immersion of a researcher in the (natural) field or the society for a considerable amount of time; it also involves collecting rich and diverse data through the use of multiple methods; it provides ‘thick descriptions’; the researcher can be engaged in the field of study; and is interested in the mundane, the taken for granted, and the unusual (Troman et al., 2006; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Walford, 2009; Denscombe, 2014). There are two distinct activities which represent the core of ethnographic research, these are participation in the field and observing what is going on, and writing down in regular and systematic way records of observations (Emerson et al., 1995). Moreover, other authors sought to broaden the term 'ethnography' and make connections between it and narratives so that 'the essence of ethnography is seen as story-telling' (Walford, 2009, p. 275). This research involved close attention to these elements so that rich data and a comprehensive understanding of the field was allowed, as well as a coherent, narrative way of presenting the data.

I engaged in an ethnographic research study during the year I worked as an ESOL and functional skills teacher in a women's learning centre. During the year I spent there, I collected data from multiple sources such as semi-structured interviews with the teachers and the centre manager, observation of ESOL classes, and my records of other observations in the field. Working in the centre allowed me to engage with the teachers and with other people involved in ESOL provision and enabled having the dual role of the observer and the participant. It also allowed for a deeper immersion in field of ESOL and to gain deeper and more comprehensive insights and understandings of the events, activities, and experiences of teachers and learners (Emerson et al., 1995).

5.3.2.1 Interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews with four ESOL teachers, and with the manager of the women's centre. As I mentioned earlier, I wanted to see things from a different angle and therefore, having 'different perspectives from others who know and/or understand the context' by virtue of their work was very useful in helping me gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences in learning English and would also enhance the 'trustworthiness' of the findings of the study (Butler-Kisber, 2017, p. 3).

I prepared ten questions for the teachers and five for the manager of the centre, but more unplanned questions were asked during the interviews, as it is very typical in this type of qualitative interview (Wengraf, 2006). The teachers preferred not to read the questions ahead of the interviews, although they were asked if they wanted to read them. Moreover, the type of the interview I had with them was far from being formal and 'contrived' (Silverman, 2013), as working with the teachers and the manager for a full academic year (2017-2018) made my relationship with them a relaxed one and allowed for an interactional, conversational type of interview. Interestingly, the teachers told me that they experienced a kind of relief right at the end of the interviews and before I could ask them what they thought about the interview process. They told me the questions were very interesting, thought-provoking, and at times challenged some of the assumptions they had, and it was an opportunity for them to think deeper about such assumptions. I would suggest that these were the type of interviews that Edwards and Holland (2013) described as ‘empowering’ for both the interviewer and the interviewee.

5.3.2.2 Observations

Another research method that I used in this study was observations and taking field notes. This research method offers researchers the opportunity to gather first-hand, ‘live’ data in naturally occurring social situations (Wellington, 2000). Cohen et al. (2018) point out that there are three types of observations that can be undertaken which are highly structured observation, semi-structured observation, and unstructured observation. In the first type, the researcher will know in advance what s/he is looking for and will have predetermined observation categories (ibid). A semi-structured type of observation is less pre-determined and allows for wider, holistic observations (McKechnie, 2008). In an unstructured observation, the researcher will go into the context, observe what is happening, and decide later on its significance for the research (Cohen et al., 2018). In other words, a structured observation has its hypotheses beforehand and observation is carried out to confirm or refute the hypotheses; however, semi-structured and unstructured observations are ‘hypothesis-generating’ and data from observations will be analysed to suggest an explanation for the phenomena observed (Cohen et al., 2018).

I carried out an unstructured type of observation for this study with the intention to observe everything that was happening in the field. Through this type of observation, I was able to notice all aspects of the setting and as a result was able to provide 'thick descriptions' for my observations, which helped in the analysis and interpretation of the field texts. Yet, an observer, as Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013) suggest, needs to consider important factors during observations such as, the questions of the study, what role the observer will take, and how to record the observations. I kept a journal with me during the period of my fieldwork to record vignettes based on field observations of participants, interviews, meetings, and incidents, with descriptions of the settings. In recording observations, I followed suggestions such as using key words that would later trigger recollection of conversations and contexts, replaying scenes mentally during breaks (Merriam, 1998), making note taking a daily routine, drafting expanded pieces using ‘thick description’, including reflections on random thoughts and personal reactions (Wolcott, 2005), listening and looking carefully to be able later to turn jottings into detailed field notes (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2002). It is important to note that it is not possible to include all phenomena observed, or to capture all events and that is why it is important for researchers to be conscious of their decisions on what data to include, and to be reflexive about those decisions (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011). In my journal, I recorded my perspectives and thoughts about the different field notes I had, and eventually made decisions to include observations that threw light on how refugee Arab Muslim women negotiated learning English and their experiences of intercultural communication. However, unstructured observations broadened my understanding of the context of ESOL teaching and learning.

The researcher can adopt different roles in observations, and they are all based on the degree the researcher participates in the setting (McKechnie, 2008). Having had the role of and ESOL and functional skills teacher in the women’s program, my role was a ‘participant-as-observer' (McKechnie, 2008). This role allowed me to be a member of the group, who was also known to be an observer, and who was able to gain an ‘insider’s knowledge’ (Cohen et al., 2018). Importantly, this position –a teacher and a participant as observer- allowed me to reduce the ‘reactivity effect’, known to be the effect of the observer on the observed (Watts, 2011). For example, there was a strong sense of familiarity, informality, and friendliness between me and both the teachers and the learners. even after I left the centre and came back a few months later for more observations, these feelings did not change.

With regards to observations within a life history method, this entails meetings with the participants in multiple settings, as settings may provide additional data to the statements made by the participants during the interview (Lanford and Tierney, 2019). Moreover, the participant has the agency to suggest locations for meetings and invite the researcher to places of their own choice (Lanford and Tierney, 2019). Interviews with my participants and observations were made in different settings such as their homes, place of work, ESOL classrooms, coffeeshops, and parks, which allowed for ‘thick descriptions’ and enriched the construction of the life history narrative and the analysis of the data.

5.4 Gatekeepers

Gatekeepers, as Andoh-Arthur (2020, p.1) describes them, are ‘essential mediators for accessing study settings and participants within social research’. Gatekeepers are not ‘censors’ in the literal sense, but are people who control research access, and who are involved in negotiations that revolve around giving permission to access the filed or people, and the concerns of those whom the gatekeepers represent (Harvey, 2012). Gatekeepers may be persons within institutions or those in charge of formal institutions such as heads of institutions, or may also be a person who represent a group of individuals who may be invaluable for gaining access due to his/her knowledge, connections with the target population (Andoh-Arthur, 2020). My experience with gatekeepers is discussed in the following two sections.

5.4.1 Refugee Arab Muslim women

I conducted life history interviews with three Arab Muslim women who came to the UK as refugees. The process of finding women who would agree to participate in my research was a complex one due to the sensitivity of the circumstances that brought them to the UK, and because of issues related to gaining access to them. Finding gatekeepers who would facilitate gaining access to potential participants was of crucial importance, not only for issues of gaining access, but because gatekeepers may stand as a 'point of reference' and their support can add 'credibility to the value of the project and to the status of the author' (Okumus et al., 2006, p. 13), particularly when discussions of topics are often 'highly politicised' (Jessee, 2019, p. 425). I was also able to get in contact with one of the participants through professional connections of my supervisor in the field of ESOL. Other gatekeepers who facilitated meeting with participants were three British-Jordanian women whom I met through Palestinian and Jordanian communities in the UK. They have been living in the UK for over three decades and have different backgrounds; two of them are Muslim and of Palestinian origin and one of them is Christian and of Jordanian origin. However, the three of them have been working with Arab communities and charities in the UK and thus, have wide connections with Arabs in the UK.

Yet, Cohen et al. (2017, p. 134) discuss, researchers 'cannot expect access as a matter of right … hosts will have perceptions of researchers and their intentions'. I briefly explained to the British-Jordanian women the objective of my research, and the nature and methods to be used. There were concerns about maintaining anonymity of participants, and whether interviews with participants would be published outside of academia, such as local newspapers. I explained that the data would be used for academic research only and briefed them on the ethical principles of anonymity and confidentiality in research. However, gaining access is not only a tactical process (Gummesson, 2000). Factors related to the gatekeepers' perspectives and feelings such as acceptance of the research objective, trust and confidence in the intentions of the researcher, are all important factors (Cohen et al., 2017). I would also suggest that rapport between the gatekeepers and the researcher is of similar importance in helping the researcher gain access to the target group.

5.4.2 ESOL teachers and Centre manager

Before I worked in an adult learning centre in London, I had difficulty accessing ESOL teachers, and observing ESOL classes was nearly impossible. However, after applying for several ESOL teaching positions, I was offered a position to teach ESOL and functional skills for a women's project in an adult learning centre. The women's project offered a variety of accredited, non-accredited courses and drop-in sessions for women from different cultural, ethnic, and faith backgrounds, in women-only classrooms. I taught there for a full academic year, which is the period required for fieldworkers to get an in-depth understanding of the environment and the experiences of the people there (Wolcott, 2005). The two women who interviewed me (Operations Manager and Centre Manager) were not gatekeepers in the literal sense, but working in the centre was like a gate opener for me, as I was able to get immersed in the field and meet several ESOL teachers, people who are involved with ESOL provision, and a diverse community of learners.

5.5 Sampling strategy

Sampling is defined as a process wherein 'researchers examine a portion or sample of a larger group of potential participants and use the results to make statements that apply to this broader group or population' (Salkind, 2010, p. 1302). However, the idea of making statements (generalisations) that may apply to the larger population is fundamentally contested and challenged in qualitative research. For example, in qualitative research, the emphasis is placed on the 'uniqueness, the idiographic and exclusive distinctiveness of the phenomenon, group or individuals in question', and therefore, qualitative research seeks to explore the particular group under study, not to generalize (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 223). In other words, qualitative researchers should not choose their cases only for the purpose of comparison, but should rather, choose each case because of their ‘intrinsic and unique value’ (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007, p. 249).

It is argued then, that it is more fitting to talk about a group, or individuals -not sample- whose representativeness of a wider population or group depends on other groups finding that the issues raised are relevant to them (Cohen et al., 2018). The sampling methods used for selecting the participants are discussed in the following two sections.

5.5.1 Refugee Arab Muslim women

The sampling method that I used to select refugee Arab Muslim women is known as 'nonprobability' or 'purposive' sampling, wherein a researcher purposely 'handpicks cases on the basis of their judgement of their typicality' (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 214). In this study, I conducted life history interviews with three Arab Muslim women who came to the UK as refugees, as mentioned earlier. They came from Iraq and Syria, the two war-torn Arab countries that have produced the greatest numbers of Arab refugees in the past two decades (discussed in Chapter 3). Therefore, they had first-hand experience of being a refugee and an in-depth knowledge about post-migration challenges and issues, which my research sought to explore. It is noteworthy that the participants came from an urban middle-class background; however, this was not a matter of choice as much as of ‘typicality’ as mentioned above. While the stereotypical view of refugees is of rural and poor backgrounds, the reality is often the opposite. Refugees may have come from urban areas and may have been well-educated and wealthy before flight, particularly refugees arriving in the UK as it requires resources and considerable amounts of money paid to smugglers to make the long journey to the UK (Hope, 2015).

Purposive sampling has been criticised for being non-generalisable and nonrepresentative. However, in purposive sampling, the concern is not to generalise so much as to get rich and in-depth knowledge about particular issues from individuals who have it by virtue of experience (Flick, 2009). Moreover, in qualitative research, the emphasis is placed on the individuals and their exclusive characteristics, and the sample/group seeks to represent only 'key features of a wider population' (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 224). While I initially intended to include more refugee Arab Muslim women from other war-torn Arab countries in my research, yet there were several factors that may have limited the sample size. Gaining access to potential participants from gatekeepers does not ensure that participants will accept to take part in the research, particularly in sensitive research. Some potential participants might reject participating for different reasons, but mainly for fear of being known. I experienced such incidents while trying to find participants from other war-torn Arab countries. I had potential participants who called me back and said, 'I discussed what you said about your research with my husband, but he still thinks that I shouldn't talk', and others who told me, 'I don't want trouble, I just want to live in peace'. While the former excuse made the reasons for not wanting to participate seemingly a cultural reservation in some more conservative Arab communities, the latter was more about a fear of unsettling things. However, both types of excuses made me more aware of the vulnerability of Arab Muslim women living in the UK.

5.3.2 ESOL Teachers and centre manager

As mentioned earlier, ethnography involves collecting data from different sources such as interviews. Interviews sample consisted of four ESOL teachers who were teaching in the women's learning centre, and who expressed interest in my research and agreed to be interviewed. This is a process called 'convenience sampling' which involves choosing the nearest individuals or individuals from those who happen to be available and accessible, such as students, co-workers, etc. to serve as participants (Cohen et al., 2018).

The teachers were diverse in their cultural backgrounds; those were English, Australian, Italian-Brazilian, and Caribbean. Interestingly, they all had experience in teaching in multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-ethnic contexts. I also interviewed the centre manager whose parental country of origin was Iran, and who was also interested in my research and agreed to sit for an interview.

5.6 Insider/Outsider Position

Cohen et al. (2018) discuss that the researcher is often seen to be in an asymmetric position of power to the participants by virtue of his/her status, knowledge, role, etc. They suggest that establishing rapport and trust, and ensuring a match between the characteristics (age, language, background, etc.) of the researcher and the participants will help reduce power differentials between them (Cohen et al., 2018). Power relations can also be reduced by sharing personal narratives which help establish a 'non-hierarchical' relationship between the researcher and the participants and reveal the human side of the researcher (Dickson-Swift et al., 2008; King and Horrocks, 2010; 2008; Edwards and Holland, 2013). Cultivating interpersonal qualities such as rapport, trust, commitment, and warmth between the researcher and the participants encourage participants to talk freely and openly, and as a result brings more genuine and authentic data to the interview (Alvesson and Ashcraft, 2012). The following section will discuss my own insider/outsider position as a researcher.

5.6.1 Life histories

As an Arab who came from the politically charged Arab region, and a Muslim woman in a Western society, and a daughter and granddaughter of refugees, I had much to share with the participants. However, entering the lives of the women in my study was not as simple as it might seem. Although the participants – and potential participants- expressed interest in my research, they were sceptical at the beginning, I had to answer questions with hidden doubts such as ‘so why do you care?’. However, having real interest in their stories, besides being humble and honest with them, and aware of their sensitivities and wounds, helped in establishing trust and rapport between us. Moreover, it is argued that unlike many other methodological approaches, life history ‘blurs the spectral divide between the researcher and the participant’ (Lanford et al., 2019, p. 1). As Atkinson (2012) argues, the relationship between the participants and the researcher which is shaped by a life history project should be ‘equitable’. For example, - as discussed earlier - the researcher explains the parameters of the project to the participants, enables the participants to take part in the decision making in the research, prioritizes their welfare, protects their identities, and presents data faithfully (Atkinson, 2012). My experience with the participants challenges the ‘simplistic assumption’ that the researcher/interviewer is always in a more powerful position than the interviewed (Jackson and Russell, 2010).

5.6.2 Ethnography

Another discussion about insider-outsider positions is related to the re-envisioning of the way in which being an insider or outsider is conceptualised (McNess, Arthur, and Crossley, 2013). For example, Milligan (2016, p.240) suggests that ‘a reconsideration of what is meant by the separate notions of insider and outsider’ entails that in research, a researcher may neither be one identity, fully inside or fully outside, but rather taking different positionings depending on the situation, the people the researcher is interacting with, and the familiarity of the socio-cultural norms.

As I carried out my ethnographic fieldwork at the women’s learning centre, I had the dual positionality of being ‘partly insider, partly outsider’ (Katyal and King, 2011). I was an insider on a professional level and was a colleague and a member of the women’s centre team. This enabled me to have an insider’s knowledge of the context, and to collect data from external and informal sources for additional perspectives, and enabled me to provide ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) of the incidents and experiences. However, I was also an outsider by way of cultural and racial differences as I was the only Muslim teacher and the only Arab among a community of White, Christian, British and European community of teachers. This position was also due to being a non-native speaker of English teacher, and because I was unfamiliar with ESOL provision and courses and knew little about life in the UK, particularly at the beginning of my work. I realised early when I entered the field that I had less linguistic, cultural, and social capital and consequently less power to incite changes in that place and resulted in experiencing several instances of racism and discrimination. These relations of power provided an opportunity for reflective thinking that allowed for a deeper understanding of how Arab Muslim women experience learning English, interculturality, and exclusion.

5.7 Ethical considerations

Discussions in research have tackled numerous ethical issues but have mainly agreed on general key considerations/principles concerned with informed consent and autonomy, confidentiality, anonymity, non-maleficence and beneficence (Clandinin and Caine, 2013; Cohen et al., 2018). However, it is argued that addressing ethical issues is not a simple straightforward and rule-following matter (Brooks et al., 2014). That is, ethical decisions are contextually situated (Cohen et al., 2018). Hammersley and Traianou (2012, p. 34) explain this by pointing out that,

> *any principle has to be interpreted in the light of particular situations – it is rarely if ever a matter of simply* applying *a rule, calculating what is best, or knowing directly what a situation requires.*

5.7.1 Life histories - ethical considerations

The three Arab Muslim women accepted voluntarily to participate in this research. I explained the reason and objective of my research and answered the questions they had, and I also made them aware that they could withdraw at any time if they wanted. However, applying the ethical principle of having a formal consent in a written form was impossible due to cultural reservations. As Cohen et al. (2018) discuss, ethical norms vary in different cultures, and what could be acceptable in a Western culture may not be in another culture. In this case, consent is 'situational' (Hammersley, 2015), and a verbal consent is enough, as a formal written consent may be considered ' insulting or threatening by some people, and can have undesirable effects on the research relationship' (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012, p. 89). In the case of the three participants, seeking a written consent would have been regarded suspicious and intimidating, and could have resulted in not agreeing to participate.

Another ethical principle necessitates protecting the participants particularly if they are marginalised or vulnerable and ensuring that participants are impossible to identify in a research (Flick, 2006; Vanclay et al., 2013). The participants wanted their stories to be heard through academic research, but they were concerned about having their identities revealed particularly by publishing parts or all of the interviews in local newspapers or in social media in the future. I assured them that their stories would never be published in any newspaper or on social media. I also explained to them the ethical principles of confidentiality and anonymity, which oblige researchers to ensure anonymity of participants. It is noteworthy that debates about confidentiality in literature argue that confidentiality in research should address anonymity and non-traceability, rather than confidentiality itself, as there would be no point in collecting data if it cannot be used or passed on (Cohen et al., 2018). When their stories were complete, I reviewed with them the parts of the stories they felt comfortable sharing and checked again if they wanted any parts to be removed or any details to be added. Providing two of the participants with drafts of the written stories to read and check was not a useful idea as they were written in English, and therefore reviews were done verbally in Arabic.

Moreover, participants remembered distressing events and experiences that occurred in pre-migration and trans-migration periods during interviews, such as the torture of a family member, experiences of fear, violence, war, and memories of the home country that has been destroyed, and family members who were deceased or are left behind. Though considerations of non-maleficence necessitate avoiding any kind of harm caused by the research, these events were part of the participants' lives and stories and were remembered in almost every interview. As Jackson and Russell (2010) discuss, life history interviews can elicit strong emotions and whether or when this might happen cannot be predicted. In the same manner, Hammersley and Traianou (2012, p. 57) note that the risk of harm is unavoidable in nearly every activity, furthermore, 'what counts as a significant risk of significant harm is a matter of judgement'. In other words, remembering and talking about sad or traumatic experiences might not always be harmful for the participants, rather it may be beneficial or therapeutic (Cohen et al., 2018). The characteristics of life history interviews that enriches the quality of the relationship between the researcher and participants, such as openness, rapport, and trust that build up over time, and the common interest in the stories (Clark, 2012) affect the participants' experiences of the interviews. In the case of this research, the participants expressed feeling better after the conversations particularly because I could identify with their pain and stories.

5.7.2 Ethnography – ethical considerations

Ethical considerations related to ethnographic research which have been discussed in literature tackled issues of hiding one's identity as a researcher in the field (Reed-Danahay, 2009), and obtaining consent to be included in the research (Méndez, 2013). Sikes (2015) offers guidelines as prompts when considering ethical implications of ethnographic research and writing such as, depicting people respectfully, respecting participants' autonomy, being aware of internal confidentiality.

Before I was formally offered a teaching position in the women's learning centre, I was asked in the interview 'Why do you want to teach in the women's program?', to which I provided an honest and comprehensive answer about my research project, the objective and the learners experiences whom I referred to as 'marginalised', ESOL teachers' perspectives, and the ESOL field that I wanted to explore. The teachers and centre manager agreed to be interviewed, interviews were audio recorded, and informed consent was also recorded; however, teachers were given pseudonyms. I was also mindful not to interpret practices of the participants in my analysis even though in some instances that stood as a limitation to the analysis. However, situating the data within the literature was necessary to explain, justify, or refute a point.

5.8 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an important concept in qualitative research and refers to the researchers' acknowledgement of their subjectivity, bias, and position throughout the research process (Leavy, 2014). It is argued that researchers bring values, beliefs and assumptions, often unarticulated ones, into their work, which need to be made explicit (Leavy, 2014; Butler-Kisber, 2017). It is also suggested that researchers are not considered neutral and objective in the traditional sense, but rather, need to acknowledge that their personal, professional, political stances may influence all aspects of their research (Bradburry-Jones, 2007;

Leavy, 2014). In other words, in qualitative research, ‘no apologies are needed for identity, assumptions, and biases, just a rigorous accounting of them’ (Butler-Kisber, 2017, p. 7).

Hence, comes the role of reflexivity, which functions as a tool that helps researchers to carefully monitor the impact of their backgrounds, personal histories and experiences on their research (Berger, 2013). It is important to realise that this is not being self-indulgent as it might be understood, but rather practicing self-examination and awareness on oneself as a researcher (Koch and Harrington, 1998; Bradburry-Jones, 2007). This can be attained by an ongoing ‘self-critique’ and ‘self-appraisal’ wherein a critical gaze is turned towards the self to monitor the way it deals with the research (Koch and Harrington, 1998). This is a process that Brinkman et al. (2014, p. 22) refer to as 'making one’s pre-understandings or pre-judices explicit’.

Reflexivity had an important role in my research. As I studied the experiences of refugee Arab Muslim women in London, I was compelled to examine and critique my position within the research. A researcher’s position may include personal experiences, beliefs, affiliation, preferences, and political and ideological stances (Berger, 2013). It is noteworthy here to state that before coming the UK, I did not have any experience in living in the West, nor had I experienced the pain of forced migration, though I come from a family who has. I was affected by the declining political, economic, and social situation in the Arab region. Most importantly, I was also influenced by the dichotomy ‘Western/non-Western’, developed/underdeveloped classification of the world(s), and was bombarded with depictions of the developed world through films, art, and media (cf. Said, 1993; Hall, 1997; Sharp, 2009). Having considered myself to have lived in the non-Western and therefore, the underdeveloped part of the world, I started my research project, ironically, with assumptions that stemmed from public assumptions and stereotypes. Initially, I had two major questions that I wanted answers for, ‘why *don’t they* want to learn English?’, ‘why *can’t they* integrate into the developed world?’. However, I realised at an early stage during data collection that the problem was much more complex and deeper than what I initially assumed.

It is also noteworthy that reflexivity was paramount while I conducted my ethnographic field work, as I became more aware of my professional background, past experiences, and prior assumptions, and became compelled to monitor and question them. In this sense, reflexivity is crucial as it allows researchers to be attuned to their reactions to respondents, maintain awareness of themselves as part of the world they study, and it frees them to handle and present the data better and consider its complex meanings and contributions to the understanding of the social phenomenon (Berger, 2013).

5.9 Initial analysis of data

Cohen et al. (2018, p. 643) contend that there is no one single correct way to analyse qualitative data, however, the abiding principle should be ‘fitness for purpose’. Abiding by this principle means that the researcher must determine what he/she wants the data analysis to do (describe, interpret, generate themes, discover patterns, raise issues, etc.) as this will determine the kind of analysis which will fit that purpose (ibid). From the outset, my intention was to focus on the participants and to provide an in-depth, detailed, and rich interpretation of their life experiences.

Qualitative data can be analysed through coding or ‘data reduction’ (Wolcott, 1994). My initial method of collecting data was through semi-structured interviews which I tried to analyse through coding, categorizing and defining themes. As mentioned earlier, there is no approach to analysing data that is always better than another approach; data analysis and presentation depend on the research aims. That is why using coding to analyse data did not produce analyses that could highlight the depth of the respondents' accounts and the complexities of their experiences. Moreover, I felt that I was losing the respondents' voices, and their stories were becoming fragmented, as Charmaz (1995, 2000) notes, coding and categorizing allow researchers to tell only parts of their respondents' stories instead of presenting them in their 'wholeness'. In addition, data coding is useful in identifying recurring patterns for several respondents, and then categorizing these similar patterns to identify main themes. In other words, it is what Wolcott (1994, p. 26) calls 'the quantitative side of the qualitative research ... a way of imposing order on data no matter how unruly it is’. I became aware that this method was not helpful in highlighting the perspectives and experiences of my participants, or the complexities of their stories. In other words, it was not ‘fit for purpose’. However, initial data analysis provided insight into how a different data collection method (for example, life history interviews) and analysis were needed to explore the experiences of the participants in more depth.

5.9.1 Analysis of life history interviews

As mentioned earlier, the ‘narrative turn’ in the human sciences marked a turn away from positivist modes of inquiry and analysis. Therefore, analysis of life history interviews and data from ethnography followed approaches to data presentation and analysis that led to a more narrative style of reporting. Wolcott (1994) suggests three ways to analyse and present data: description, analysis, interpretation. He notes there is no consistent way to employ the three ways, nor is there a clear signal on where description ends, and analysis starts or whether analysis should follow description for example. In presenting my data, the three ways are interwoven in the presentation and situated within the literature. As Chang (2016) contends, data analysis and interpretation are conducted concurrently and are often intertwined.

After I transcribed the life history interview of each participant, I had a complete account of each participant’s life experiences organised under the three migration stages mentioned earlier (Fazel and Stein, 2003). This organisation provided ‘much-needed context’ which helped understand how the participants made sense of their lives (Lanford and Tierney, 2019). However, I needed to focus on all the participants’ experiences that could be derived from each stage to find out commonalities and differences Therefore, I reorganised the participant’s interviews under the three migration stages: pre-migration, transmigration, and post-migration experiences. As it is argued that holistic approaches to data presentation catch the wholeness of the individuals, however, sectionalising the analysis allows for an easier reading (Cohen et al., 2018). As Wolcott (1994) also has maintained, 'focusing on some key events' reveals the essence of the whole story, as no researcher can tell the whole story with every little detail. This is a more common approach particularly when the excerpts still offered ‘thick description’ on the topics being explored with the goal of identifying commonalities and outliers (Jessee, 2019). This technique is also suggested by Chaitin (2008), Lewis-Beck et al. (2004), and Lanford et al. (2019) wherein data are organised and presented according to incidents or events in the lives of the participants where these events could be challenging, significant, or constitute a turning point, etc. However, it is important to know that in reorganising the interviews under the three stages of refugee experiences, I preserved most of the data from transcriptions, and I maintained a representation of the participants’ experiences in a narrative form, as is the case of all narrative-based methods of inquiry (Reid and Gough, 2000). This organisation of the data allowed for a description of the lived experiences of the participants, provided rich details and context about their lives, and situated their experiences within broader social, cultural, political, and economic contexts.

In analysing the data, I worked on identifying key factors and the relationships between them, and positioned the data within the literature, as Wolcott (1994) suggests. On the other hand, there were instances where reflecting on the data to make inferences and provide additional explanations was required for a deeper understanding of the lives of the participants, and that was where I conducted interpretations. Put simply, analysis and interpretation of the data were conducted in a way similar to what Mills (2007, p. 122) describes, ‘analysis involves summarising what’s in the data, whereas interpretation involves making sense of – finding meaning – that data’. It is important to note that interpretation of life histories, as Atkinson (1998, p. 18) notes, ‘is a highly personal matter, even intuitive and empathic at times’. This understanding of interpretation aligns with the view that subjectivity is unavoidable in qualitative research, and that ‘interpretations are often based on a worldview’ (Barrett, 2007, p.116). However, interpretations need to be reasonable and informative (Trent and Cho, 2014), and need to be based on an outside frame of reference, a theory, that, when applied, expands and deepens the understanding of the story (Atkinson, 1998), as I have done in interpreting the data of my study. Interpretations may also provide a preliminary background, important historical, social, cultural contextual information, or insights that are not stated explicitly in the life story, and may identify the meaning that is implied in the story by the teller (Atkinson, 1998), as in my interpretations.

5.9.2 Analysis of ethnographic texts

With regards to data from ethnography, the same approach (description, analysis, interpretation) suggested by Wolcott (1994) was used to analyse the data. However, there were differences in how I organised and presented data from ESOL teachers interviews and fieldwork. I followed a procedure suggested by Cohen et al. (2018) wherein data is organised and presented by data collection instrument. For example, data from interviews with ESOL teachers and centre manager were organised and analysed according to interview questions, so that excerpts from answers to each question were grouped under respective questions. This was because my interest was not in their life histories, therefore my research interest drove the method of analysis. This method of presenting data, summarising and making comparisons allowed for the description and analysis of the data, as argued by Trent and Cho (2014), and for comparisons across answers to be explored, particularly answers from ESOL teachers interviews.

Organising data by data collection instrument (Cohen et al., 2018) method was also used to organise and present ethnographic data from observations and field notes, wherein these data were presented chronologically, and were analysed and interpreted concurrently. Importantly, I maintained a narrative style of presentation and analysis of the data. The reason is because narrative analysis in ethnography is concerned with the context, meaning, significance, and explanations of human experiences, which cannot be achieved when categorizing and classifying the data (Bruner, 1986; Cortazzi, 2011). Another important reason is because narrative analysis in ethnography portrays ‘an insider’s view of what a particular job is really like’ (Cortazzi, 2011, p.6). In this sense, my work as a teacher at the women’s centre provided deeper insights into teaching and learning experiences at the centre, as well as a deeper understanding and evaluation of events, issues, and struggles of both learners and teachers. A significant characteristic in narrative analysis is the contextual element of the stories which enables it to be understood (Cortazzi, 2011; Chang, 2016). As I analysed data from field notes and observations, I gave attention to background information, and framed my analysis within existing theories and literature. It is noteworthy that utilising an existing theory is useful to explain the cases (Chang, 2016). As DeWalt and DeWalt (2011, p.180) put it ‘the goal of the analysis is to develop a well-supported argument that adds to the understanding of a phenomenon’. I also continually reflected on my position, values, history, understandings, professional background while conducting my ethnographic work and the potential influence all these had on my relationship with the participants and the interpretation of the data.

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented a discussion on the two qualitative research methods I used in this study, which are life history interviews and ethnography, as well as the impetus for using these two research methods in my research and their particular usefulness in the context of my study. It highlighted the several important circumstances that led to the development and legitimisation of qualitative research methodology such as, the emergence of postmodernity which marked a decline in the positivistic paradigm, the changes in the social fabric of life, the narrative turn, and the social justice, civil rights, liberation, women’s and students’ movements. Within these movements and advocation the drive to understand and shed light on the lives and experiences of the underprivileged and marginalised individuals and communities emerged. Indeed, understanding and highlighting such experiences would not be possible using reductionist and 'mechanistic' methods that adhere to objectivity and detachment (Hokkanen, 2017). Therefore, non-reductive, and more humanistic methods that validate the voices of marginal and silenced individuals and groups (Bochner and Riggs, 2014) such as life history interviews are considered powerful tools for such purposes (Chang, 2016). Having just argued that, I am now looking back at the overarching question of my study:

How do the experiences of refugee Arab Muslim women living in London affect their social inclusion and capacity to learn English?

and aiming through the next chapters to provide a detailed discussion on the specific experiences of 'refugeeness', as well as experiences of learning English and social inclusion of Arab Muslim women living in London.

Chapter 6 ESOL Teachers: Perceptions and Teaching Approaches

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will be looking at the teachers' perceptions of Muslim cultures, as well as their perception of motivation problems, power relations in the class, bilingualism, migration, and approaches in teaching fundamental British values and Prevent. This chapter attempts to address my second research question:

- **How do refugee Arab Muslim women negotiate the learning of English once in the UK, and what forms of intercultural communication affect their capacity to acquire the language?**

Organisation of the analysis is based on teachers’ responses to interview questions. Analysis of the responses will reveal how teachers’ perceptions and approaches could affect the learning experiences of their learners, some of whom are refugee Arab Muslim women.

6.2 Background of ESOL teachers

During the year I worked as an ESOL and functional skills teacher in a women’s learning centre based in East London, I interviewed four teachers who taught ESOL besides other topics such as functional skills, maths, and ICT (Information and Communication Technology). The four teachers expressed an interest in my research and agreed to be interviewed. The type of interviews I conducted were semi-structured which allowed me to ask follow-up questions (Adams, 2015), and to ask for more explanation of their answers. Interviews differed in length, but they took between approximately an hour and an hour and a half. Background Information of the teachers who are given pseudonyms will be discussed in the following sections.

6.2.1 Tina

I interviewed Tina in the centre where we worked. She spoke first about her background and upbringing and how she became an ESOL teacher. Tina is in late twenties. She was born in a village in South Western England which she reported to be predominantly white, Christian middle-class. As she grew up in the countryside, she did not have contacts with “foreigners” until she finished school. After finishing school, she went to Rwanda where she had her first experience in teaching English as a foreign language.

Tina then studied French and English and went to France as part of her studies where she taught English in colleges and an adult learning centre, besides private tutoring for a year. At that point she still did not know much about ESOL and did not want to become a teacher, but later she was sent by the church to Colombia to stay with a displaced community for three weeks where she also taught English. She applied for short posts in London, and for an internship in the charity organisation where she works, and took the CELTA course during her internship. She was offered a position as an ESOL and maths teacher where she worked for two and a half year before she was promoted to an ESOL Lead.

6.2.2 Tracy

I interviewed Tracy also in the centre where we worked. Tracy was born in London to an Australian father and a Dutch mother. She had a difficult childhood as her parents were very poor and because her father was a very controlling person. She was seven years old when her father decided to move them back to Australia. She was brought up in Australia but came back to London at the age of 17 after her family split up. She was a musician in Australia but wanted to have a new start in London, so she became a maths teacher and then an ICT teacher, and then a senior leader in a school before she moved into education management where she worked in schools to raise standards. After the government changed in 2010, she and many others “got sacked” as she expressed, so she went back to teaching maths in an adult centre in South London. Her experience in schools and with adults make thirty years of experience. She started teaching the women in the centre in 2014 and has been teaching Math and ICT besides being the Inspection and Quality Lead.

6.2.3 Shayla

I interviewed Shayla in a college in South London where she teaches. She is an agency teacher and I met her in the women’s centre where she was sent to teach temporarily. Shayla was born North of England, but was sent to live with her grandparents and sisters in the West Indies. She came back when she was eleven and had a culture shock because she assumed the school regulations and the principles of schooling that she had received in the West Indies were the same in England. She remembered being shocked as she saw students in the class swearing at teachers and were being disrespectful. As early as that time, she realized she did not want to be a teacher. However, when she applied for work at the Job Centre, she was offered to teach English to Asian and European adults. After finishing university and getting her degree in Psychology in Law, she worked as a school counsellor, and then took her post-graduate diploma to teach further education (FE). She has been teaching ESOL in colleges since 1998.

6.2.4 Cynthia

I interviewed Cynthia in the community area of the building where I lived. She is originally from Brazil, but she also has an Italian nationality as her ancestors were Italians and had migrated from Italy to Brazil after World War II. She started teaching underprivileged communities in a language school when she finished high school in Brazil. She continued to teach in language schools until she got her degree in Portuguese Literature. She then taught Portuguese in schools for seven years, before she came to the UK. She came to the UK in February 2017 as it was an English speaking-country she thought she would live in before the referendum. After coming to the UK, she worked in several jobs, took the CELTA course and started teaching ESOL afterwards. She was an ESOL and ICT teacher in the centre.

6.2.5 ESOL teachers: A closer view

Two of the teachers were young, Tina was in her late twenties and Cynthia was in her early thirties. Both of them had not had previous experience with Arabs or Muslims, but both had experience teaching underprivileged communities. Moreover, they both obtained a CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) before they started teaching ESOL. Tina said she was born and brought up in a predominantly white Christian village in England, whereas Cynthia was born and brought up in Brazil, a country that does not have the characteristics of Western countries, and was colonised by Portugal before gaining its independence (Fonseca, 2006). Both of them had experience living outside their home countries. Tina lived outside the UK for short periods of time where she tried teaching English abroad, but there was not a history of migration in her family. In contrast, Cynthia left Brazil looking for a better life in the UK, and there is a history of migration in her family as her ancestors left Europe after World War II to look for a better life in Brazil. Cynthia has been teaching for almost fourteen years, whereas Tina has only three years of experience.

On the other hand, Tracy and Shayla had more than twenty years of experience in teaching, though Shayla's was specifically with ethnic minorities. They were both migrants themselves, were both born in the UK, and were sent back to live in their home countries when they were children. However, Tracy is White and comes from a Western country, whereas Shayla is of colour and comes from the West Indies, a non-Western country that was a British colony.

6.3 Teachers' perceptions

6.3.1 Perceptions of Muslim cultures

The concept of cultural ideology, as discussed by Hall (1996) and Holliday (2011) (discussed in Chapter 2) has led to an essentialist view of foreign cultures and a perception of non-Western people as conformists, inferior, and in need of help from the modern and sophisticated West (Holliday, 2011).

When I asked Tina about her perception of Muslim women, she talked about issues of inequality, low self-confidence and low self-esteem. Though she had lived with displaced communities in two different countries in the past and taught them English under challenging circumstances, she found teaching women from Muslim cultures dismaying because she believed they have a different lifestyle and perception of their role as women. *She thought* that their perceived role affects their self-image, the quality of their lives, and their personalities. She also believed that it affected their learning experience and the benefits they could get from engaging in different activities in the classroom. She said about her perception of Muslim women generally:

> *I think there's just a big inequality of how they see men and how they see women, and I think that affects the expectations that they have on themselves as well and how they view themselves because they kind of esteem men to be the ones who will aspire to work, and so it's almost like they put that on themselves and therefore, lack confidence because of that. And I think that's quite a challenge in the classroom because they don't have the confidence in themselves to speak out and that can be quite a challenge when speaking, when trying to engage in kind of speaking and listening activities in which they have opinions, and in which I don't necessarily think that they would value their own opinions much, so they are less able to give those opinions.*

When I asked her whether she thought the women were reluctant to give their opinion on different topics in speaking activities because they were brought up in cultures where their opinions are not valued, she said,

> *Exactly, and they haven't had the time to almost form opinions of their own, and so when trying to talk about interesting subjects with certain students it can be*

> *real challenge, ... sometimes it's really challenging to teach them because unless they produce, unless they say things.. it's just showing them that there is value in what they say.. and encouraging that because sometimes they are hesitant to even try because they'd think why? Anything I had to say it doesn't almost have value.*

Though Tina was advocating equality for oppressed women, her opinion was highly judgemental I would argue, based on an essentialist view of Muslim cultures. Regarding the general resistance among ESOL learners to participate in speaking activities, research conducted to probe issues related to this area in language learning (discussed in Chapter 2) has highlighted several reasons for the reluctance to speak among ESOL students, some of which are differences in cultures, values, or learning epistemologies between the learners and the teacher (Diallo, 2014).

On the other hand, Tracy spoke honestly about stereotypical views of Muslims which she held so long, that after teaching Muslim women, she found that she needed to confront and challenge. Tracy spoke reflectively:

> *I always thought I wasn't a racist. I always thought of myself as a liberal, a kind of relativist even, you know, everything is fine, everything is great, tolerance... Yeah man, it's... all is good, but I find now I can't hold those views. [...] I'm immediately talking about the worst aspects of a single culture, so immediately I can see that my own racism is taking me to that rather than the very beautiful things I can see in Islamic culture.*

Tracy spoke about perceptions of Muslims that have been formed unconsciously. These could be a result of negative media reports that represent Muslims as a threat to the British security and values (Poole, 2006), asserting this way Islamophobic stereotypes about Muslims (Allen and Nielson, 2002). However, she found that teaching Muslim women has made her challenge stereotypical views she has held about Muslims. She said,

> *I think it's forced me to confront a range of stereotypes I probably held unconsciously all my life. Um, some quite unpleasant home truths about myself and possibly attitudes that I've been brought up with not even realizing that.*

Moreover, being 'white' herself, she spoke about issues of white supremacy, bias, and racism which she believed are characteristics of white people in Western communities. She contended that these notions must be actively and consciously challenged all the time when dealing with people from 'other' ethnic backgrounds and Muslim cultures, but she regrets that this is not always the case.

> *I think racist thoughts come unbidden into my consciousness and have to be actively challenged, and I think this is true for everyone. Personally, I just don't think that people necessarily see it or think about it because they aren't actively working with people from different cultures. I know it sounds like a depressing conclusion, but we have to actively fight against our naturally white entitled worldview because that's where we are.. I mean I said earlier I was born in poverty, but I was able to get up, to get all these great opportunities through my education that just aren't even available to all cultures, particularly women. So, yeah I do speak from this unconscious bias that is made conscious by working here.*

Cynthia's perception differed as it did not stem from cultural ideology. Perhaps because she lived in a country where there is not a visible population of Muslims, and therefore, was not influenced by Islamophobic stereotypes.

> *Islam is not very common in Brazil; we do not see Muslims in Brazil. Here they seem to be religious, but I don't see that as a barrier. Their lifestyle, it depends on the cultures they come from... I got to know some Muslims in this country, and they are not all the same.*

Shayla, unlike Tina, Tracy, and Cynthia, talked about her long years of experience in teaching learners from diverse ethnic and faith backgrounds in general, though she stated that teaching in a women-only environment was something she was not familiar with. She said:

> *When I first started, it was a bit of a challenge, not because of who they are, but I've never worked in that kind of environment before. So that was really new to me just to have women to teach, but before I met those women, I was teaching students from many different countries and many different religious backgrounds or non-religious, so I've had that grounding.*

She did not seem to hold views based on stereotypes, perhaps because of the many years she spent teaching and interacting with them. It might also be because she comes from a non-Western country and an ethnic group, and therefore, was aware of essentialist views of different cultures. She said,

> *Over the years I've learnt to respect and just to love and accept. I'm a people person anyway, and so when I'm using love I'm just kind of being, you know.. mindful because, like... some people will say you don't really love your students, but I genuinely always love my students. I love people and I think it's great to be able to meet people from so many different countries and listen to their experiences cause I have learned a lot from them.*

Shayla has also preferred to pursue the idea of building positive personal relationships when interacting with her students. As Cummins (1996) and Amanti (2005) (discussed in

Chapter 2) have stressed, building constructive social relationships in the educational setting is important before any learning can take place.

To sum, teaching Muslim and ethnic minority learners could be a challenge for teachers who do not have knowledge of their learners’ communities and backgrounds, and do not have experience in teaching learners from different Muslim and ethnic cultures. This challenge could result in the ‘stereotype threat’, a predicament that causes teachers who lack the necessary knowledge of their learners’ communities to judge and view their students according to negative stereotypes (Steele and Aronson, 1995). On the other hand, teaching and interacting with minority learners could sometimes help teachers make shifts in thinking (Mercado, 2005) and change their attitudes, as they get to learn more about themselves in the process (Moll, 2005).

6.3.2 Perceptions of motivation problems

Gonzalez (2005) states that there is a tendency to view the cultural, social and language practices of poor and minoritized students with a lens of deficiencies (Gonzalez, 2005). Tina believed that the women’s perception of their roles can negatively affect their ability and motivation to learn English and to get involved in employment afterwards.

> *They don't necessarily prioritise their own learning because they don't really see that almost as their right, or something that they can aspire to have that ability, … they didn't necessarily as well want to get into employment, they don’t necessarily have that dream for themselves because it's very much, well, I have a family, I have children..*

Like Tina, Tracy also believes that Muslim women in general are constrained with cultural restrictions and low expectations of them as women. Tracy said critically,

> *For all their lives they’ve had people expecting very little of them. I think for the women I work with they're very bogged down by their circumstances, and to raise them up to think of themselves as independent, strong woman who can make choices, um.. and determine the direction of their lives to any extent... And they will talk the talk but walking the walk is another matter.*

Tracy’s perception may spring from a desire to improve the lives of Muslim women. Yet, it may also come from a colonial perspective of the Orient who needs help from the sophisticated Occident (Said, 2003). Additionally, she thought that Muslim women’s unwillingness to challenge their circumstances or demotivation to change their lives is because of the religious values that they were brought up with and strongly believe in, and which restrict their lives.

> I *think a huge part of the value system is the belief that others come before them, and I do actually think that's.. that's kind of a religious value and possibly a common value across many religions, it certainly is in Christian Church… I do know the religious values of Christian church, and one of those values is to love others before yourself, so very similar, but this kind becomes almost a cult of modesty, um.. that's particularly for women to uphold.. almost a competition, can you be more modest? Can you cover up even more of yourself? Can you be even more self-effacing than the next Muslim? Can you open the door faster than anyone else?*

Cynthia expresses a similar viewpoint to Tina's and Tracy's. She believes that the way her learners perceive their roles as women limits their choices and restricts their motivation.

> *They don't allow themselves to become anything more, like they respect what their husbands say and that's it, if their husbands allow them to study, they can come, otherwise they stay in their places. It is a cultural thing. I don't think it's because of their religion.*

The three teachers, Tina, Tracy, and Cynthia tend to view their Muslim women's cultures and/or religious beliefs from a deficit lens. They think that their culturally perceived role as women is the reason for their lack of motivation. As Soltani (2016) puts it, Muslim women are generally viewed as inferior and oppressed. There is a tendency among teachers to view the 'culture' of their marginalised learners according to stereotypical notions of culture, such as "homogenous and frozen in time" (Amanti, 2005, p. 131), closed and stays the same across generations, but cultures are very much like identities: fluid, dynamic, and are constantly negotiated (Agar, 2006). Therefore, as teachers lack the knowledge of their learners' life histories, motives, and needs (Norton, 2000), they blame the 'culture' of their female Muslim learners for their lack of motivation to progress, not acknowledging at the same time that the field of SLA (Second Language Acquisition) has failed to address issues of power that marginalizes learners (Norton, 2000).

On the other hand, Shayla tackled motivation issues from a different lens. While she acknowledged that there were motivation problems, she addressed them by bonding with her students and trying to give more than what is in the curriculum. She said:

> *There's a bit of a challenge there because of their motivation, I've learned over the years it's what you do with them when they come into the classroom. It's being able to move them from not wanting to be there to want to be there, and it's being able to create that kind.. and I'm not saying it always worked, but again it's the kind of person that you are and what you do with them in that moment, and*

> *they've really soon begun to realize the times that, that your encounter with them is more than just superficial because I think as much as I love to teach ESOL or anything else, I like to leave the students with more than the curriculum if that makes sense, with more than just English, that there's got to be something that when they go away they would always remember you said something, whatever it is that you leave them, but it's something that will impact their lives then, it's like an extra curricula principle, whatever you want to call it, but it will affect their lives forever.*

Unlike the three teachers, Shayla did not resort to assumptions based on stereotypes when she faced issued with motivation. Her strategy to address motivation issues with her learners can be linked to theories on learners' attitudes and motivation (discussed in Chapter 3), wherein it is discussed that learner's attitudes are influenced by what they experience in class, and by relations of power in the classroom, as mentioned earlier (Darvin and Norton, 2015). Shayla's efforts to influence her students' attitudes from '*not wanting to be there to want to be there*' is a working example of Norton's (2016) construct 'investment' (discussed in Chapter 3) according to which, it is recommended to encourage learners' investment in learning practices instead of labelling them as 'unmotivated'.

6.3.3 Perceptions of students' behaviour

Tina spoke about another challenge she faced when teaching women from Muslim minority cultures, which she perceived as the lack of respect among learners towards each other. She gave an example of that in the way learners interacted with each other inside the classroom.

> *The way in which they respect each other slash don't respect each other, kind of their classroom etiquette, in a way like not necessarily having a kind of hands up, there's a lot of shouting out, a lot of speaking over one another. You've got 25 grown adults who don't always have those listening skills and again, it's the valuing, they do not necessarily value someone else's... what someone else has to say, and it's quite hard to get them to respond towards what someone else has to say, often it will be they're just saying their own opinion rather than responding to what someone has inputted.*

I asked her if she thought the way they interacted inside the classroom was because of the cultures they came from "*So you think it's a cultural thing?*", she answered,

> *Yeah, I think, and growing those listening skills.. Yeah.*

Tina spoke also about some of her learners not being punctual and related that to the lack of respect for time in their cultures.

> *They kind of, I think that again it's just that lack of respect and lack of understanding that you know the class starts at this time and I have to arrive at that time. That could be a big challenge because you have students arriving at different times in the classroom and you're only teaching for 2 hours. It's also students leaving halfway through for an appointment.*

She stressed that she dealt strictly with her female learners who were not punctual, she said:

> *So with punctuality I had a strict rule of if you're late you wait outside the classroom […] So when I come to a break in the lesson, I will go out and just say you can now come in.*

Interested in knowing how her learners reacted to that rule, I asked her, *"How do you think they felt about waiting outside?*". She answered,

> *They didn't like it, particularly as that be not rude, but they poke their head through the glass to be like, 'I'm here', and I would just do a hand movement, and just like sit down to show them they're not allowed in the classroom until I'm ready for them to come in. ... it's hard though because you want them to attend, you don't want to be sending sections of the classroom outside..*

Tina acknowledged the sensitivity of the situation as she was dealing with women as well as mothers who could have many responsibilities, but still believed a punitive action was necessary to deal with tardiness. Also, there seemed to be a lack of recognition that they are a minority and a marginalised group in the community, and 'punishing' them could patronise them and intensify their feelings of marginalisation. Tina said defensively,

> *They're also women, they're adults and that's quite a challenge because you want to punish them for being late, but often they have really good reasons and you know something's happened in their family, it is because they've got all that responsibility, so it's a balancing act of being respectful of the fact that yes, they have these things in their lives and they're busy, but reassuring them and reminding them that this is for them and we're doing this for them not because we're just being strict and mean.*

On the other hand, Tracy said that she did not encounter behavioural problems with her Muslim female learners. Moreover, she acknowledged that there is a reluctance to speak among her learners, but she attributes that to the fear of speaking rather than the devaluation of their own opinions.

> *I've never had behaviour problems.. anything like.. Um.. what I've experienced with British teenagers.. there's always.. I mean there's been some reluctance and fear, but never any.. Not a single incident that I could even class with that kind of*

> *stuff I was getting daily in schools, so it's a joy to work with these lovely people who are so appreciative of everything that you do, it’s really lovely.*

Tracy also tried to combat stereotypes and racist ideas by appreciating her learners’ personalities. She continues:

> *When I'm teaching I'm just dealing with individuals.. with all their quirks, laughter, funny remarks, funny things that they do, enthusiasm about their subjects or not, and all that, all the.. the me as a teacher with the high expectation.. just overrides all the nonsense that might be in the background.*

As for Shayla, she came to an understanding that for the women she taught, the classroom environment was an opportunity to socialise and connect with each other.

> *You know women love to talk, and we in that environment as well, I think I felt that a lot of the women or some of the women who are housewives, or mothers, or not, that was a little social moment for them, even though they were respectful enough to do what they were meant to be doing there.*

Like Tracy, Shayla also believed that teaching is more than just a job, it is an opportunity to connect with learners and to understand and relate to their experiences. She explains:

> *People sometimes say to me, like when I say I teach foreign students, they are like, how do you communicate? like I said, I think teaching.. this kind of teaching.. I think it really depends on your personality and the kind of person that you are, and I feel that it's not just about teaching in the classroom if I'm making sense, it's.. there's, there's more to it, so if you're a kind of person who love people, um, and respect people's culture, then you will do well in that environment. I think sometimes people can just do that as a job, they try and do it as a job, the teaching as a job, but there's no connection, if I’m making sense, with the group that you're teaching. I think with me there is a strong connection, there’s always been a connection with my students.*

Teachers responses reveal that the personal characteristics of teachers affect their actions and the way they deal with different situations in the classroom. Research in the field of ESOL teachers’ morality recommends that practitioners need to understand the cultures and histories of their minority learners, and to have ‘cultural competence’ - not just cultural sensitivity or awareness -, to make positive change in teachers’ behaviour (Hanley, 1999). Also, rules and regulations that teachers put to discipline classrooms are not technical matters, they rather reflect power relations in the classroom and ways to constitute judgements on learners (Johnston et al., 1998).

6.3.4 Perceptions of forced/voluntary migration

Immigration to the UK has often been viewed as an issue at the social, economic and political levels which needs to be tackled to promote social cohesion (Bell et al., 2017). Recent polls and surveys conducted in the UK revealed that British views are not favourable towards migration (Blinder and Richards, 2018). Following the EU referendum and terrorist attacks in 2017, hate crimes (based on ethnicity, faith, gender, sexual orientation) have doubled since 2013, making an increase of 123% according to Home Office statistics (2018).

Tina expressed her thoughts on migration by saying:

> *I think it's so important to kind of put yourself in someone else's shoes, like you don't want to leave your country maybe, but you're being forced to, you're not choosing this, it's not your choice, so I would say I'm very much favourable to migration, but ... I know that my grandad's view will be very different just because he comes from a generation where he knew Britain as a place before kind of migration was even possible.. that's changed now. The only issue with that, well, we can't all live on one space.*

Tina expressed a positive attitude towards migration, and sympathy towards forced migration. She made a comparison between her stance and her granddad's stance to show a potential shift in perspectives about migration to the UK among Britons. Her point about the issue of living on one space could be a recommendation for the distribution of refugees/immigrants across various areas in the UK, which could help in reducing the problem of crowded neighbourhoods and closed communities. Although many may agree with this recommendation, still, others might argue that immigrants would rather settle in communities where they can bond and find support from their ethnic communities, particularly where bridging with host communities is complicated because of policies that discriminate and marginalise minority communities (Putnam, 2000 discussed in Chapter 2).

When I asked Tina whether she considered her learners a minority ethnic group or British citizens, she rather considered them an ethnic minority, though after reflection and again, drawing on older generations' potential response to this question, she could not agree with traditional notions of Britishness, which considered Britishness and whiteness went hand in hand (Parekh, 2000 discussed in Chapter 4).

> *Interesting! I would say they're considered an ethnic minority. I would say, yeah just because I think there's that view that if you don't look British, you're not British. I think that still... and what even is British? What is looking British? But I*

> *think it's generational, I think my mom would make the assumption that they're not British citizens, my granddad would 100% made that assumption. I think in London maybe it's slightly different, I think in London people are more aware because they're more exposed to people who come from different places but definitely where I'm from I think there would mostly be the assumption that they're not British citizens.*

When I asked Tracy about her attitude towards migration, she also expressed a favourable attitude towards it, but like Tina, she expressed a concern over the concentration of migrants in particular areas, and migrants bonding with their ethnic communities but not being able to form bridges with the host community (see Putnam, 2000). While immigrants might be accused of forming 'ghettoes', a closer examination of their situation might reveal that they are suffering from social inequality and discrimination (discussed in Chapter 4).

> *You're talking to a first-generation migrant. I certainly don't think 'Oh no these people shouldn't be allowed here', but I think there are small but serious concerns around some areas of UK, places where immigration has had a disproportionate impact on the local community, it hasn't been thought through sufficiently. People have gone in and the local community has felt kind of helpless about what's happening. It hasn't been spread across the community and so the chance for integration, that initial chance for integration was lost when people are, I won't use the word 'ghettoes', but large communities who just communicated with themselves to support each other understandably and weren't supported by the outside community so these things are hugely challenging but on balance I think that immigration is a good thing for the country.*

Like Tina, Tracy considered the women she taught a minority ethnic group, because of either being Muslims, or because of belonging to a different ethnic group. She said:

> *That's interesting! Whether I consider them a minority ethnic group? Well, they're in Tower Hamlets and the Muslim community here is about 30 something percent, so yes, they're a minority group, minority ethnic group. Well I think that's more complex too, I mean you can consider the faith that they share, or you can consider the different ethnicities around, we talked earlier about Arab, Somali, we have eastern Europeans who are also Muslims. So I think I'm aware of the complexities.*

Regarding Shayla, she tried to reflect honestly on her stance before deciding to take a neutral attitude towards migration. However, she noted that she often discussed the topic of migration with her students. She said,

> *I'm not God, I can't dictate.. I can't say they should be here or they shouldn't be here. What I found myself teaching is trying to find out from my students, like if they're unhappy here, I try and find out why they are unhappy and then I'd said,*

> *well would you be better off back in your country? They said no because things have changed, well would you be better off probably in a different part of England? You know, I said everybody always comes to London there are other places.. and I do try and encourage my students not to moan over their past but perhaps to use it and turn it around for good because they've all got some very interesting stories as to how they're here and those stories can actually encourage others.*

Being an immigrant herself, Shayla was aware of the challenges immigrants face in the UK. She was aware of her learners' life histories and did not essentialise them (Norton, 2000). Empathising with her learners (Mercer, 2016) by drawing on her own personal experiences to relate to their experiences was useful in helping them feel better about being in the UK. Like Tina and Tracy, she criticised forming communities of ethnic groups in large concentrations in particular places in the UK.

Interestingly, reflecting on her stance led her to draw on the experiences of her grandparents who came from the West Indies many years ago to criticise the public discourse around immigrants and migration, racism and xenophobia that continues to the present (see discussion in Chapter 4). Shayla said,

> *You'd hear people complaining that these people coming into our country and they are getting all the benefits, and we were here we are not getting anything, or you know they live in really nice houses and we don't, and you'd hear all of the argument and the government's given them that, and you still hear that today. Those are the stories that I heard from my grandparents, you know.. and their friends who came in from the West Indies who were invited, like they're invited and recently a lot of them would be sent back, they were invited to do the jobs the British didn't want to do, and they came in, and they took it when there was 'no blacks no dogs no Irish' on doors..*

She referred to Britain's colonial past and a long-held belief by migrants from the Commonwealth to justify migrating to the UK as '*We are here because you were there*' (see Goodhart, 2013, Chapter 4).

> *And then you get sometimes this confusion where you get the people in this country then, they rise up and they say: 'Oh what a cheat! You have people come in here and taking away our pillars!'. Well this is a bit confusing now because you allowed that! You didn't stipulate that before people came! and well.. Hello! You came into our country many years ago, when you changed a lot of stuff. You can't blame people that are coming here ...*

Unlike Tina and Tracy, Shayla considered the women she taught British citizens. This could imply a rejection of the idea that being British means being white, and an indorsement of the idea that all British citizens should be considered equal.

> *I think if they've got their papers then they're considered to be British citizens. That's a really good question actually.*

Regarding Cynthia, she also drew on the experiences of her grandparents and her personal experience to justify migration. She said:

> *I consider migration a very common thing because for instance, Europe was chaotic in the early past century and a lot of Europeans were welcome in Brazil, and they were allowed to hold both nationalities. Nowadays, Brazilians are not in a very good economic and political situation, so we are going to different countries, the UK for instance. I migrated and came to the UK for a better life, as my great grandfathers did, so I consider migration a normal process, and I think Brexiteers don't see that, they see the UK like an island, they want to close its harbours. They see immigrants as the problem but, they also don't see a British person in a small position, like you don't see a British person being a waiter in London, you only see immigrants, they don't allow themselves to be that low and they think immigrants desire those kinds of jobs.*

Cynthia criticised Brexit outcome and the public discourse around migration, and like Shayla, she referred to the kinds of jobs that immigrants to the UK accept whereas white Britons don't. There was a deep level of emotional pain in her answer which was reflected by using the expressions 'they don't allow themselves', 'they think immigrants desire', 'that low', such emotional depth might not be realised by a proportion of the public who may not understand why people migrate (discussed in Chapter 4).

Like Tina and Tracy, she considered the women she taught a minority ethnic group, though as a non-British, her answer was more a statement on how they are viewed by the Britons.

> *They are a minority group for sure, and they are discriminated against by the society here. You can be a British citizen... you can have the Italian passport, like I have an Italian passport but I don't consider myself Italian, I consider myself a Brazilian, because I don't speak the language. So I understand Italian but I cannot speak a word and I think they are in a similar position, the difference is their colour and religion is showing who they are, so they are definitely not British, they don't have red hair or very fair skin, and their religion is a big problem here, people are really racists and especially against Muslim people and Black people. White Christian people see themselves as superior to those people.*

Cynthia also drew on the widely held belief that "Britishness and whiteness go together" (Parekh, 2000, p.25), and referred to the growing sentiments of Islamophobia (discussed in Chapter 2) and the growing notion of the supremacy of the white. It is interesting that as a non-Muslim and as a white person, she was able observe Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims within the British society.

Teachers’ responses reflect a positive viewpoint toward forced or voluntary migration to the UK. They drew on the histories and views of the older generations in their families to justify migration and to reflect on and contest unfavourable stances towards migration. However, although there are favourable attitudes towards migrants, teachers do not consider learners from minority ethnic backgrounds as British even if they are British citizens. The only exception was Shayla who is from a minority ethnic community. In this regard, it would be useful to consider other ways of being British. For example, Powell (2016) argues that not everybody who is British belongs to the same culture or ethnicity, and what is important is that British citizens feel that they belong to a country that is just and good. Similarly, Modood (2011) believes that the idea of a hyphenatedidentity such as British-Indian, will not result in the erosion of national citizenship, and that minority groups can honour their origins while seeking to belong to Britain at the same time Modood (2011).

6.4 Teachers’ approaches

6.4.1 Ethnocultural empathy

The important role of empathy in language teaching and learning and intercultural communication has been highlighted in research. Ethnocultural empathy as Rasoal et al. (2011) state is empathy for persons from other cultures, the understanding and acceptance of their cultures, and the realization that people in other cultures also have worries and goals. The importance of treating learners with empathy and a nonjudgemental regard have also been discussed by Underhill (2013) who stresses the importance of these qualities for teachers.

Tina believes that the women she teaches lack the power to change their lives. She tries to influence their perspectives on their cultures and their lifestyles. Her beliefs can be linked to Spivak’s (1992) discussion on 'subalternists’ (discussed in Chapter 2).

> *I always want to impose my views on equality on them, but obviously I can't because that's the kind of culture that they belong in and a way of life that they didn't necessarily always like. It.. it's how it is at the moment within their culture.*

She gives an example of how she perceives equality for mothers and how her learners should perceive it as well.

> *I think they need, want a bit more equality in the home, I think just a bit more shared ownership over who does what, who is responsible for what, because I think that's something that can really stop their education, because if their child is ill they’re the ones that has to look after that child..*

However, Tracy followed a different strategy with her female learners where she tried to accept and understand them without imposing her values on them.

> *I think part of it is I've got to accept.. You know, I had to work in a Catholic school and my very dear friend was the head of RE in the school and I remember him saying to me once, "..., you know we work in this school but we have to start from where their learners are", and in the school most of them were Pagan, and we laughed because the brand was Catholic, but actually let's face the reality here: you've got to start from where people are, and I had to start from where my learners are.. not impose my own values on them.*

Shayla had many benefits from her background as an immigrant herself, and her upbringing outside the UK to help her understand and relate to her students.

> *When I look back, I'm grateful to my upbringing, I'm grateful to my background because I think my background, my experience, my being brought up in the West Indies, my coming here, I think that, that's all helped me to be able to relate to others, to all of my students who migrated, left their country for whatever reasons, some of the reasons are totally different to why I'm here, cause I started off here, but I think that has helped me a lot, in being able to respect and to speak to students.*

The way teachers view cultural differences between their cultures and their learners' cultures could significantly affect the way they relate to and interact with their learners. Ethnocultural empathy encourages and helps people (in this regard teachers) control their own prejudices against individuals with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Rasoal et al., 2013). Also, socio-emotional skills for teachers and their sensitivities to relational aspects with their learners are essential (Underhill, 2013), In the context of teaching women/mothers, such skills could nourish an ability to understand and empathise with learners in issues that matter to them, such as an ill child.

6.4.2 Teaching fundamental British values

According to the new Teachers' Standards which was introduced in 2012 by the DfE in England (Lenard, 2016), all teachers were required "not to undermine fundamental British values" (DfE, 2012). However, this requirement suggests that the British government wants to maintain control of minority ethnic communities by ensuring that teachers impose British values on their students through the curriculum and their teaching (Maylor, 2016).

Tina argued that teaching the British values explicitly to her immigrant/refugee female learners was important to eliminate extremism and radicalisation. Her response reflected an understanding that these values are not exclusively British, but could imply an uncertainty whether learners coming from other ethnic, cultural, and faith backgrounds (in this context, Muslims) have a similar value system as the British one. Tina said:

> *The government is very hot on the moment, British values and Prevent in that they believe, I think, that education is a good way to make sure that there aren't any kind of extremists.. like incidents or attacks, so we've been implementing British values in our lessons, those being democracy, and rule of law, tolerance of different cultures and religions, mutual respect, individual liberty. And actually, as hesitant as I was to introduce these, particularly with the term British values, it's actually been quite a positive experience, and it's enabled quite a lot of conversation.*

Further, Tina gave an example on how she used the British values to discipline her class, perhaps not knowing that the way she promoted British values could be patronising to her female Muslim learners, particularly when they are treated as children.

> *It's been quite helpful in the classroom... get them to respect one another. It's been quite good in talking about punctuality and attendance and the rule of law, it really does make sense… listening to one another and respecting one another.. British values have been quite helpful in that, in that we have posters in the classroom that tell us the British values, one of which is mutual respect, and it's just kind of good having that there, so when they are speaking over someone, or they don't listen to someone, I can say 'what are the British values? One of them is respect. How we respect people? We listen to them'. And just being quite strict on that as well.*

On the other hand, Tracy has developed her own personal understanding of the importance of teaching British values to her Muslim female learners. She realized that her learners could be a vulnerable and targeted community of women, and knowing about British values could provide reassurance that they have rights.

> *I think it's appropriate and been helpful for a particular audience and I'm talking about vulnerable and marginalized women who are frightened by what they hear, might feel very frightened and isolated within their communities, about antiMuslim sentiment, about terrorism and then the backlash to any kind of terrorism which will affect them. They're worried about hate crime, they're worried about knife crime, they're worried about the whole panoply of antisocial behaviour ranging from verbal abuse right up to marches in the street, and that attacks them as a culture, so I do think it's really important to be explicit about it all, I mean originally I thought you could just feed these ideas and make it kind of implicit and without actually saying, 'Oh, this is what we're dealing with, we're talking about terrorism, we're talking about radicalization, we're talking about all these big issues that are affecting British culture'.*

Cynthia reflected on her observation on the way British teachers were implementing the

British values in the centre where she taught. She observed a contradiction in what the British values call for on one hand, and the implementation of the values in real-life situations on the other hand.

> *I think they are human values, they are not only British values. They are important values to be aware of.. democracy, rule of law, respect for other people, but how that can be a British value with those people if they cannot be respectful for other cultures? For example, in the centre the students asked for a praying space, and they are not allowed to pray, so how can that be a diverse country, and how can this be a British value if they don't allow them for things like that?*

Teachers' awareness of the sensitivities resulting from teaching and emphasising the Britishness of the British values is required, I would suggest, to avoid patronising and marginalising their diverse ethnic and Muslim learners. The emphasis on British values in classrooms has been a way to reproduce ideology (Blacker, 2007). It could also produce forms of racism, I would argue, such as what MacPherson (1999) refers to 'unwitting racism' when teachers who are not familiar with the traditions, values and cultures of their learners emphasise the British values and deliberately or inadvertently ignore the values of their learners' cultures. Emphasising British values is also a way to assume that only British/white values are acceptable, and minority ethnic communities are required to assimilate (Maylor, 2016). This could be a form of 'symbolic violence' as the government seeks to impose what is legitimate and inculcates 'legitimate identities' (Bourdieu, 1992), and a way to create 'the subaltern internal others' (Taras, 2013), which as a result further alienates Muslims and inadvertently perhaps, perpetuate the cycle of disengagement (Lander, 2016).

6.4.3 Embedding Prevent

Besides fundamental British values, the UK government has also introduced and implemented Prevent, a counter-terrorism strategy, into education which has been criticised for being discriminatory because it targets Muslim students (Cohen and Waqas, 2017). Though Prevent was introduced in the aftermath of geopolitical, national and European incidents related to terrorism, the UK government's response is considered unprecedented when compared to its response to terrorist threat posed by the IRA in the 1960s (Lander, 2016).

Though Tina was a supporter of implementing British values in education, she was hesitant about implementing Prevent. She believed that Prevent came out as a result of the media criminalising the Muslim population, and thought that threat is not only coming from radical Islamist groups, as she pointed out,

> *We are then going to be moving on to embed Prevent into that agenda which I think will be harder because I think a lot of women feel that when we're talking about Prevent or terrorism, like we are targeting a certain group i.e. the Muslim population, because that's a lot of what is in the news, but actually like currently, we are most at risk from like.. the Irish IRA, and so I think it's just taking away that stereotypical kind of view that terrorism equals something specific. It's actually anything that goes against the British values, anything that will endanger or break the law, or won't be tolerant of a different culture or religion.*

Tina also referred to recent terrorist attacks on Muslim communities.

> *I think there's a lot of fear in this community because there have been lately acid attacks which are acts of terrorism in themselves, so I think it will be quite a challenge to have conversations about that in.. in a way that will not get confusing, or not cause kind of misunderstandings, and the government yet really wants this to happen because ultimately this, they believe, is the way of embedding it across the country, and just encouraging integration particularly in big cities.*

Tracy also had her reservations regarding implementing Prevent in education. However, instead of using Prevent to treat her Muslim female learners as potential suspects of terrorism, she was using it to raise their awareness on serious issues such as exploitation and sexual grooming.

> *When I first heard about it as a teacher, I was really worried about the Prevent agenda which was basically telling teachers to report on their students for signs of possible links to terrorist organizations, or the threat that they might become a terrorist, um I don't think I've got any evidence to support that now, that viewpoint. But I can see that the policy is maturing around more of an approach that's akin to safeguarding where we can see these vulnerable young people as people who are being groomed*

She mentioned as an example the story of the schoolgirls in London who fled to Syria in 2014 to join ISIS. She believed that the then teenage girls were victims of manipulation from terrorist groups. Tracy stressed that they were very much like young white boys who gets manipulated and exploited by extremist, far-right groups to participate in Islamophobic marches.

and that was the first thing I said when the young women went from Bethnal Green Academy and went to Syria, people were talking about how appalling it was that these girls went off to Syria, and I said, 'they're being groomed, they're not making a free choice'. It's.. it's like sexual grooming to me, so they are vulnerable.. vulnerable to the kind of manipulation by people who are using them, whether it's Islamic *fundamentalism, or far right extremism, whatever. Exactly the same as young white boys who have nothing to do, have no job prospects, skyhome an EDL March because they'd feel big and important.* Tracy also made a point about the way death is interpreted in the British society, explaining that it is the cause of death that seems to matter for the people, not the number and recurrences of the deaths. She explained:

> *Having said that I'm also an environmental campaigner, and we can talk about deaths as a result of terrorism in this country.. It's being like in a single maybe double figures in last 5 years.. deaths as a result of car, just car pollution, never mind car accidents, car collisions, 9000 this year, we just accept it and we don't accept terrorism, so it's our value system, but it's interesting to see what deaths we tolerate and which ones we don't.*

Similarly, Cynthia spoke about deaths among the young British because of knife crimes, and other issues among British teenagers which are not getting the required attention from the government, but which should be addressed and dealt with the way terrorist attacks are dealt with. She said:

> *With Prevent, they are very afraid of terrorism and they forget the things that are happening in the British society like knife crimes, teenagers having problems, or teenagers having babies when they shouldn't, they forget to address these things, and they have bigger problems with them. The number of teenagers dying because of crime is bigger in London than in New York and they are not doing much about that, but they are doing a lot with the Prevent strategy and terrorism.*

There is an awareness among ESOL teachers that discussing Prevent in their classrooms is rather a process to label and stigmatise Muslim learners. There is an agreement among teachers also that it is counterproductive that the government is using education to identify potential relationships with terrorist groups while at the same time ignoring other important issues in British society. Teachers views of Prevent clarify, I would argue, why the strategy has been criticised by the NUT and UCU who voted for Prevent to be withdrawn (Khan and Cohen, 2016). Also, embedding or explicitly discussing Prevent in educational contexts has casted Muslim/teachers the role of a 'watchdog' (Lander, 2016). Most importantly, the government, through legislating Prevent, is contradicting the British values (Cohen and Waqas, 2017), and is preventing the transition between bonding and bridging social capital. As Dumas (2009) states that the long-term political discrimination and marginalisation of some communities will result in deeply-rooted distrust of state institutions. However, criticism of Prevent was challenged by the Security Minister, Ben Wallace, who argued, 'Prevent is not about singling out any particular group or ideology but is similar to other forms of safeguarding, …[the]review should expect those critics of Prevent to produce solid evidence of their allegations' (Home Office, 2020, n.p.).

6.4.4 The monolingual norm

The notion of monolingualism is the result of historical, social, and political factors related to nationalism and nation building (May, 2012), as well as ideological perspectives that consider using a language other than English as a threat to the unity of the nation (Cummins, 2000). Therefore, integration into a specific field/community, as Bourdieu (1991) points out, is bound to having the form of capital (linguistic, cultural capital) that is accepted and valued within that field. That is why many ESOL practitioners continue to consider bi/multilingual learners as deficient when compared with monolinguals (May, 2014).

ESOL teachers spoke about their experiences with their bilingual learners, and how they struggled to maintain a monolingual environment among their learners, not realising at the same time the realities of their learners' lives and the complexities of their communicative practices (Simpson, 2020). Tina said:

For some of these ladies they're just I don't know how to say it, but it's almost they haven't had the foundation, and if they're not them speaking English outside the classroom, if they're not proactive themselves they're not going to be able to learn...they go home and just speak their own language and that is a challenge.. Shayla expressed a similar viewpoint.

> *I mentioned earlier that they chatted a lot in class and I forgot that they actually would speak in their mother tongue, they would speak in their own language cause obviously it's easy in that environment, you forget, and so they would chatter in their chatter way in their own language ...I think the major challenge with teaching English is that if you come to the classroom and you learn, but you go home and don't do anything and you revert back to your own language then it's going to be a challenge and I think for most of the students that's what they were doing, they were going back home and with their husbands and their children even though a lot of them had children who were English speaking obviously in schools, but they were honest enough to tell me sometimes, yeah, it's just easy to go back to their own language at home, so that was a challenge.*

Cynthia expressed the same belief about bilingualism.

> *They don't go outside their communities. For example, some learners.. they talk Bengali during their breaks, and with the receptionists, they don't need to speak English... they don't speak English inside their houses, so they are not improving..*

Teachers complained that their learners used their native language to communicate with each other, and that they would still use their native language to communicate in their homes. Despite increasing interest in multilingualism, ESOL teachers continue to believe that the acquisition of English is "an ideally hermetic process uncontaminated by knowledge and use of one's other languages" (May, 2014, p.2). Theories in the field of SLA suggest that teachers need to cease perceiving their multilingual students as 'deficient', but instead permit them to bring to the classroom the dispositions and competencies that they have developed outside the classroom, and to allow to turn the classroom into a site for translingual socialization to help students develop their proficiency (Canagarajah, 2014).

6.5 Conclusion

Teaching ESOL to learners from a different faith and cultural background requires familiarity with their cultures. Rather than relying on stereotypical notions of culture and assuming that culture "provided particular rules for behaviour that everyone in a culture abided by" (Gonzalez, 2005, p. 33), teachers need to put aside the essentialist view of foreign cultures (Holliday, 2011) that depicted cultures such as Muslim cultures as homogeneous, poor, and underclass (Alexander, 2017). Teachers need to think of the cultures of their learners the way they think of their own cultures: heterogeneous, with different practices that are influenced by class, faith/sector, gender, state, within one group, as this will shape their perceptions of their learners and interpretations of their behaviours (Amanti, 2005).

Learners linguistic capital (their first language) is often undermined in ESOL fields. This is because ESOL is linked with nationalism and nation-building that constructs monolingualism as the norm and constitute educational policies on that norm (May, 2014). ESOL teachers think that learners' bilingualism hinders learners' ability to progress in English, although research in the field of bilingualism found out that additive bilingualism is a precondition to enhanced, cognitive, linguistic, and academic growth (Cummins, 2000). Based on this, teachers need to open up their classroom as sites for translingual social spaces, and to allow learners to bring to the classroom the dispositions and competencies they have developed outside the classroom to develop their competences (Canagarajah, 2014). This is what Moll (2005) call building on learners 'funds of knowledge', which will legitimise and validate their social, cultural, and linguistic identities and will make learning more meaningful for the learners (Norton, 2014), and will improve their engagement and participation (Mercado, 2005). Counter to that, ignoring learners cultural and linguistic resources will create feelings of worthlessness and disempowerment in language and literacy classrooms and will create resistance to domination to protect identity (Cummins, 1996; Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004).

The question is, how practical are these ideas when concepts of integration, British values and Prevent are required to be embedded and discussed explicitly in ESOL classrooms? The emphasis on the Britishness of British values is a reflection of the government’s fear that Muslim communities do not believe in or share similar values, and are not having a sense of belonging to British society, as what former Prime Minister Cameron stated in his speech at the European security conference in Munich in 2012 (Maylor, 2016). On the other hand, Prevent is another strategy that targets and demonises Muslim learners and will result in marginalising minority ethnic learners and downplaying their cultures, especially with a curriculum that does not include or recognize diverse cultures and values (Lander, 2017). This will result in ‘failed citizenship’ whereby minority ethnic communities feel excluded from the nation despite being citizens (Banks, 2015).

Chapter 7

Working in the field

7.1 Introduction

The discussion in this chapter is based on the fieldwork I conducted as part of my ethnographic work in a women's learning centre in East London. The women's learning centre offers a variety of accredited courses and drop-in sessions for women from a variety of cultures and backgrounds, in a female-only environment. However, the majority of the women who enrolled in courses and attended sessions were Muslims. I worked there from September 2017 to September 2018, a period required for fieldwork to get an in-depth understanding of the environment and the experiences of the people (Wolcott, 2005). As discussed in Chapter Five, my position as an ESOL and Functional skills teacher enabled me to have the role of a 'participant-as-observer' (McKechnie, 2008), which is the dual role of being a participant and an observer in the field.

This chapter focuses again on my second research question:

- **How do refugee Arab Muslim women negotiate the learning of English once in the UK, and what forms of intercultural communication affect their capacity to acquire the language?**

The aim is to provide a further and deeper insight into refugee and Arab Muslim women's experiences of learning English which facilitate their inclusion in British society. An interview with the centre manager, observations of ESOL classrooms, notes taken during several team meetings, and my own experience as a teacher in the centre provide a valuable insight into the topics discussed in this chapter.

7.2 Interview with the Centre Manager

Moussu and Llurda (2008) state that very little research has considered administrators' views on ESOL programmes and teachers. Interview with the Centre Manager, Sara (pseudonym), shed light on Muslim women's experiences of learning English, interculturality, and social exclusion.

Sara is British and was born in Britain, but her parental country of origin is Iran. She comes from an interfaith family (a Christian father with an Armenian origin and an Iranian Muslim mother), but she considers herself a Muslim who belongs to the Shia school of thought. Sara told me that she has a master's degree in psychology, and has been working with Muslim women in the UK for eighteen years during which, she has held different teaching, training, and managerial positions in schools, NGOs (Nongovernmental organisations), and universities.

When I asked her about the factors she thought are necessary to support Muslim women's English learning, she highlighted the need for teacher's empathy (or ethnocultural empathy, discussed in Chapter 2) and the need for ESOL teachers to put aside essentialist views of their Muslim women learners.

> *Throughout my career, in particular in management and I have been in management now for 8 years, I found that the non-English teachers have a better understanding of these women's backgrounds, and they can relate better, rather than making irresponsible comments, and I've been in meetings where the irresponsible comments have come out for example 'oh, yeah, that's what it's just like in their culture' or other comments, 'there's nothing we can do about that', 'they are like that', they, they, they and naturally as a conversation begins with they, or you begin a sentence with they, you're bringing automatically 'them and us' into it rather than what we're trying to achieve here, which is community cohesion ...*

It is argued that ethnic teachers' experience in race, class, and immigration played a significant role in establishing empathy with ethnic minority learners (Quiocho and Wyoming, 2000). However, there are obstacles that hinder having empathy such as not having previous knowledge about different people, or practical experience with other cultures - in this case, learners' cultures-, and the lack of ability to understand similarities and differences between one's culture and other cultures (Rasoal et al., 2011). This leads to perpetuating stereotypes of other people (Hanley, 1999).

Sara also talked about some teachers' attitudes that she has seen as stemming from a colonial legacy, the way of viewing the 'Orient' (Said, 1978), and from a 'subaltanist' position (Spivak, 1992) when dealing with women from non-Western cultures.

> *Also my values would not allow me to speak about a different culture in a derogatory manner whether I meant it 100% or whether it came out accidently. My professionalism and my values would stop me, and I found that often missing within certain people I've worked with, and by this I mean the white British .. And I don't think you can genuinely pretend that, you know, that you are generally an acceptor of different races and different cultures because after a while.. there're cracks in it, you can see a person who is faking it. And it's always like we're better than them, and we are reaching out mentality that I don't like... this colonial missionary attitude... let's go help these people out, let's inject an*

> *ounce of civilization.. and it's coming from above: I'm here to help you, I am this saviour for you... you are not there to save these women, you're there to support them, and if you're intelligent enough you can make that differentiation, if you're not, you're just gonna push them away from you.*

Being a Muslim herself, she talked about institutional racism and discrimination that Muslim women face in the UK. Sara was later made redundant and the responsibility of running the centre was given to a member of the staff who has less experience and qualifications, making institutional racism evident in the centre. Sara's view of the situation of Muslim women in the UK is explained in the following excerpt,

> *This country, it's a westernised modern country with seemingly very tolerant outlooks, and I say seemingly because unfortunately I have come across a fact, and it is a fact ... that ... tolerance ... unfortunately... there is institutionalised racism here and I have noticed that even as somebody who has as many qualifications as I do and as much education and years and years of experience that I have, there is still favouritism, and I've seen it as towards my white British colleagues. I am somebody who has been to public school, I went to private school, I went to, you know, the red brick UCL, so I've mixed with high society and that's kind of all I made in all my life, and I look at the executive level and all I can see there is again White British. If a position becomes available, even though it's illegal, it automatically seems to go to someone who is white British...and I'm speaking as someone who doesn't wear hijab, so again I don't have that barrier, but I think having the hijab in the place of work.. I think that even the equality and diversity law states that it shouldn't make a difference and you shouldn't be, you know, subject to discrimination because of it, I still think it's rife, and there are pockets of society where it's even more rife...*

Sara's perception of the employment of Muslim women in Britain sheds light on Muslim women's experiences of inclusion. They are encouraged to get the necessary training and language proficiency to contribute to the British society, but they face covert racism, direct or hidden discrimination, or in best situations the 'glass ceiling effect' when looking for employment (Miller and Callender, 2019). Indeed, they struggle to acquire positions in the field because they are not members of the dominant group (Bourdieu, 1986) and because of the established dominant actors of a field who try to maintain control over the field and keep out competition (Bourdieu, 1993).

7.3 "Are you planning to stay long here?"

ESOL classes consist of a diverse community of refugees and migrants, yet such diversity is not reflected among ESOL teachers. In the case of the women's learning centre, I was the only Muslim teacher in the centre where the vast majority of learners are Muslims, and one of few minority ethnic teachers in the several educational programs offered by the Trust specifically for Muslim communities. It is argued that teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds are still marginalised and disproportionately under-represented in Britain (Runnymede Trust & NASWUT, 2017; Gay, 2018). The following incident taken from my field texts could shed light on the challenges ethnic minority teachers face.

I was sitting at the teacher's table in my classroom packing my things near the end of the first day for me at the centre. It was a long day; a quick induction in the morning, teaching one of my ESOL classes afterwards and getting to know my students, and a team meeting in the afternoon. I was thinking about all the new things I learned about today when one of the teachers entered the room and reached out to one of the cupboards in the room. She asked while she was busy looking for something in the drawers,

"*Are you planning to stay long here*?"

Surprised by the question and not knowing whether she meant by 'here' the centre or Britain, I answered,

"*I can't stay here; I will go back home once I get my PhD*".

Still busy with the drawers, she asked me again, "How long will that take?".

"*Maybe three more years*", I answered.

She raised her head and with a neutral look on her face she asked, "*So you're staying in the centre for three years*?".

As mentioned earlier, prejudice and discrimination against black and minority ethnic (BME) teachers were tackled in the Swann report (1985) and in a joint report by the Runnymede Trust and The Teachers' Union (2017). According to the report, an estimation of 75% of BME teachers in the UK consider leaving the profession due to witting and unwitting racism and having to deal with stereotypical attitudes, and because of negative treatment that affected their health and well-being (Runnymede Trust and NASUWT, 2017). In addition, minority ethnic teachers face many barriers which limit their opportunities of employment and promotion. Miller and Callender (2019) highlighted several research studies that identified barriers such as subtle influence of informal networks that work as gatekeepers and exclude ethnic minority teachers, lack of acceptance, marginalisation and indirect racism. Such factors still affect minority ethnic teachers despite the implementation of policies that aim to reduce the negative consequences of race discrimination and racial inequality (Callender and Miller, 2019). However, ‘their permanence in the educational landscape of England is long-standing' (ibid, p.1).

Being the only Muslim teacher in the centre could throw light on the lack of ethnic minority teachers in educational contexts. Yet, this incident could also be linked to Bourdieu’s (1993) concepts of field and capital which help in understanding power relations in intercultural communication situations and can also be interpreted through Bourdieu’s idea of ‘symbolic violence’ where newcomers/migrants are treated as inferior (Web et al., 2002).

7.4 “We are not terrorists” - Embedding British values and Prevent in course contents

The following episode is taken from field notes based on meetings that included managers and teachers working in the Trust. It throws light on how ESOL teachers discussed delivering FBV and Prevent in classrooms, and how that would affect the learning experiences of their Muslim learners and their perceptions of inclusion in British society.

The quality manager at the centre invited the teaching staff for meetings to discuss how we (teachers) were going to deliver fundamental British values to our adult female learners in all ESOL, maths, ICT, and functional skills courses, as well as pre-entry level and drop-in sessions. Including British values and Prevent related topics in the course contents were seen as a necessity by the managers and leaders as they were working on addressing the 'needs improvement’ areas identified in the Ofsted inspection report. It was stated in the report (October, 2017) that:

- teachers do not ensure that learners have sufficient understanding of the dangers of those who may have extremist views
- that they lack confidence to discuss sensitive subjects with learners
- that learners show limited understanding of the rule of law, democracy, and the importance of celebrating diversity in society.

However, it was stated within the same report that learners are understanding of their peers; they courteously take turns to share their views in discussions, and that apprentices treat others with tolerance and fairness, and are knowledgeable about their responsibilities as employees in the workplace.

It was suggested by the Quality Manager in the meeting that fundamental British values (discussed in Chapter 2) could be used as a starter, a plenary or a lesson episode. The target was that by the end of each term, teachers would have delivered the five British values in all their courses. Moreover, we (teachers) were required to use the term 'British values' explicitly, and to link at least one of the values to the lessons – explicitly. We were also instructed to ensure that learners can explain what they understand about British values if asked. To reinforce the five fundamental British values among learners in the centre, posters of a hand graphic that represents the five British values were displayed in all classrooms, ICT room and the reception. Throughout the meetings that started in December and took place regularly every week, teachers shared the resources they used to deliver the five British values in their lessons.

After focusing on delivering the five British values in all courses for two academic terms, managers suggested that we start planning to deliver two Prevent topics, radicalisation and extremism, in all courses along with the British values. The plan was also to extend the promotion of British values and discussion of Prevent topics to pre-entry and non-accredited courses. The three key objectives for delivering Prevent, which were suggested by the Quality Manager, were that learners would be able to *define* extremism and radicalisation and could *provide explanation* to these two terms, that learners could give examples on how extremism and radicalisation could affect our community, and that learners would challenge and do something about extremism and radicalisation.

One concern that was discussed in the last quality meeting I attended was about the way teachers would be able to discuss Prevent topic with the learners in all levels in general, and the way to avoid potential misunderstandings with the learners that could arise because of discussing sensitive topics with them. One teacher shared a concern about delivering Prevent and mentioned that she was having a short discussion about extremism with her learners when one of the learners told her “we are not terrorists”, and she did not know what to say to that learner. There was another concern on how to discuss Prevent with learners in the pre-entry level and drop-in sessions whose English language proficiency is limited, and possible ways to deliver Prevent in very basic English. In that same meeting, two PowerPoint presentations, one about extremism and the other about radicalisation, were shared as examples of activities that could be shared with the learners during courses.

The two presentations contained slides that encouraged learners to report a child, a friend, or a family member if they noticed a change in their behaviour. Another slide provided examples of warning signs for radicalisation such as lack of self-esteem, behavioural problems, issues at home, etc. One of the teachers shared some slides that she prepared and used in her class. One of the slides contained poignant pictures of previous terrorist attacks done by ‘Muslim’ terrorists and in another slide, learners were asked to remember how many terrorist attacks happened in 2017. The slides were appreciated by managers and teachers and we were encouraged to use them in our classes.

However, to help address issues of misunderstandings and miscommunication, I suggested that it might be better for the learners to have ethnic minority and Muslim British teachers who should have an adequate knowledge of the British society and who could be able to discuss sensitive topics in a culturally appropriate manner. I also suggested that in order to improve the quality of the pre-entry courses and drop-in sessions, it would be necessary to bring bilingual teachers, tutors, and volunteers to help prepare course contents and to teach, as it is hard for the learners to understand teachers who speak only English.

I would argue that the discussions in the quality meetings summarised above could throw light on the reasons that Prevent is considered “the most controversial aspect” (Warrell, 2019) of the UK government’s counter-terrorism programme. The Prevent Duty, which aims to stop people from becoming terrorists, was extended to be included in “specified authorities” such as educational institutions (Home Office, 2015), and was explicitly changed in 2011 to “deal with all forms of terrorism and with non-violent extremism” (Home Office, 2015, p.3). However, it has been subject to scholarly debate and criticism because of the structural flaws such as the broad definition of ‘non-violent extremism’, paradoxical relationship of statutory duties such as ‘protecting children at risk and reporting risky children’, and the discriminatory potential against Muslim youths in the Prevent duty and its implications on human rights (Dudenhoefer, 2018). Extending Prevent into educational bodies has also been criticised by the Open Society Justice Initiative (2016) which in its principal findings report that is based on legal analysis, case studies and numerous interviews, contends that Prevent training is based on unreliable indicators. In addition, it was found that targeting “non-violent extremism” lacks scientific basis, creates the potential for systemic human rights abuses, and claiming that it is a precursor to terrorism has been discredited by the British government itself. The findings report also points out that Prevent operates in a climate marked by Islamophobia which “creates the risk that Muslims in particular may be erroneously targeted” and this “raises serious questions to whether they would have been targeted had they not been Muslim” (ibid, p. 17). Targeting Muslims through Prevent, as human rights lawyer Singh (2016) states, results in alienating law-abiding Muslims and causes them to question their place in British society. Moreover, while the British government is reinforcing fundamental British values, it is contradicting these values through the Prevent strategy (Cohen and Waqas, 2017). Importantly, Muslim teachers, in particular, face misconceptions about them, and the government’s Prevent duty made them feel undermined and suspected if they do not agree with it (Pells, 2017).

Prevent training that the teachers received required ensuring that learners know how to define extremism and radicalisation. I would question the necessity of knowing the definitions of both terms by *ESOL learners*, especially that the terminology of radicalisation has been subject to considerable scholarly debate that considered the term *radicalisation* ambiguous, relational, and a dominating concept which could cause a ‘chilling effect’ on human rights (Dudenhoefer, 2018). Moreover, the training teachers received required them to report anyone if they notice a change in their behaviour, and I would argue that the suggested list of radicalisation indicators (such as low self-esteem) is questionable, as it could result, for example, in reporting teenagers for puberty-typical behaviour (Dudenhoefer, 2018). Additionally, I would argue that ESOL teachers need to reflect on whether the slides shared in the meeting would be a constructive learning experience for the learners, or rather a derogatory one, affirming an idea that all Muslims are prone to violence and terrorism. The British government responded earlier this year (2019) and announced that it 'committed to carrying out an independent review of Prevent'. (Home Office, 2019, n.p.). The government explained that the Review would be an opportunity 'to understand the views of both critics and supporters' of Prevent (Home Office, 2020, p.2). However, while the review was scheduled to be completed together with a government response to it by 12 August 2020, the current context of COVID-19 pandemic had implications for completing the Review (Home Office, 2020). Therefore, the statutory deadline was removed 'to ensure that the new Reviewer has sufficient time and flexibility to complete the Review' (ibid, p.2). The new deadline for the Review to conclude has been set to August 2021 (ibid).

7.5 ESOL classroom observations

7.5.1 Promoting British values - ESOL Classroom observation

(July 2018)

I was invited by the ESOL teacher, Tina, to observe the first hour of her ESOL class. The class was a pre-entry level (basic English) with seven female learners. The teacher provided me with a brief learner profile in which she wrote that some of the learners were at the pre-entry level because they lack the confidence to communicate verbally in English, and are very quiet in class although they have literacy skills, and some have university degrees from their countries of origin. The teacher also pointed out in her learners' profile that the learners speak in their native language at home and in their local communities. Learners ages were between early thirties and mid-fifties, and all of them were Asian and Muslims.

The lesson was mainly a recap of the five British values and English rules taught during the course, as stated in the lesson plan. The first objective of the lesson was that learners should be able to identify the five British values and recognise their importance. The teacher reminded the learners that they had been looking at a different rule each week and they would go through them all in that lesson.

The teacher put on each table five pictures, each picture representing one British value, and asked the learners to work in groups and talk about what they could see in each picture. The first picture showed a polling station, the second one showed a person holding a microphone and speaking to a crowd, in the third one there were two persons bowing to each other, the fourth one showed policemen, and in the fifth picture there were a group of children of different ethnicities holding hands, and above them were signs that represent different faiths. Learners were hesitant to speak after looking at the pictures, but shortly afterwards they started speaking in their groups with very low voices, and used their native language to talk to each other. The teacher moved around their tables repeating to the learners they needed to talk, "*remember this is about talking, so talk with your neighbour*".

The class remained quiet with the learners almost whispering while discussing the pictures in their groups. The teacher then stood in front of one of the tables and called two learners with their names and urged them to talk together. She continued to urge the learners to talk before the teacher led discussion, "*Remember you're talking, you're saying what you can see*".

Throughout the teacher led feedback, the learners were able to describe what was in each picture and to identify the British value each picture represented. They were also able, with their limited English proficiency, to state their opinion when asked for it. While discussing the first picture, the teacher pointed to the picture that was projected on the board and asked the learners what they could see in it.

Learner 1: *polling station*

Teacher: *what is a polling station for?*

Learner 2: *for voting*

Teacher: *Why do we vote ladies?*

Learner 3: *Government ..*

Learner 1: *British value*

Teacher (*laughing*): *It is a British value? Why is it a British value?*

Learners were unable to answer. But the teacher changed the question and asked, *Is it important to vote or not?*

One learner: *it is important for the country and people.*

While discussing the picture that showed the policemen, the teacher asked the learners what they thought about the police.

Teacher: *Are the police good or bad?*

Learners: *Good*.

Teacher *(emphasising)*: *Good in the UK. Why are they good in the UK?*

One learner said something in a low voice. Then the teacher asked: *Are they good in all countries?*

Learner 1: *No, no.*

Teacher: *What about in the UK? The police good?*

Learner 1: *UK the police is good.*

Teacher: *Why? Why are they good?*

Learner 2: *Some police is good, some police is not good.*

Teacher (*surprised*): *Hmm. In the UK? Some are good? And some are not good?*

Learners: *Yeah, yeah in the UK.*

Teacher: *Why? How are they not good?*

Learner 3: *Sometimes.. using something..*

Other learners: *Yeah, yeah..not good..*

Then the teacher, changing the direction of the conversation asked: *Do you feel safe with the police in Tower Hamlets?*

Leaner 4: *Yeah. Anything happen they come.*

Learner 5: *Police come and help*.

Teacher (*ending the discussion on police*): *OK, they do a good job.*

In the next activity, the learners were asked to match five other pictures with the pictures they have already discussed. Then the teacher put on each table five pieces of cut-out papers naming the five British values, and asked the learners to match the pictures with the values. During the teacher led discussion, the teacher tried to encourage the learners to compare between the UK and their countries of origin. While discussing two pictures that showed a polling station and people voting, and which represented the British value of 'democracy', the teacher reiterated and stressed "*this is one of our British values, we live in a democracy, that means we can vote for our government*". Then she asked the learners, "*Is that true of all countries? Do you get to vote for your governments?"*

Learner 1 (in a low voice): *Yes, yeah*

Teacher: *Really? Are all countries democracies?*

Learner 1 (hesitantly): *Some countries, no..*

Teacher: *What happens in those countries? Do they choose who is in power?*

Two learners (in low voices): *No..*

Teacher: *No. And what happens if you don't choose your government? Is that good or bad?*

Learner 3: *Bad..*

While discussing another value ‘individual liberty’, the teacher told the learners, “*We have freedom, freedom to work, freedom to learn, freedom to speak, but freedom that cannot break the law*”. She asked one of the learners, “*Do girls in this country have the right to learn? Is it important? Is it good?*”

Learner 1: *Important.*

Teacher: *Is that true of all countries?*

Learner 1: *Every country*

Teacher (sceptically): *Every country?*

Learner 1: *every country need education*

Teacher: *But do all girls go to school? All around the world?*

Learner 2: *Yes*

Teacher, who started to become uncomfortable as the learners were not producing the answer she wanted, asked: *Are you sure?!*

A group of learners: *some countries.. Poor countries, and suffering.. Fighting, and civil war..*

Teacher: *But in the UK this is one of our rights.*

Learners: *Yeah..*

The teacher then continued with this example, *Do we have freedom to steal from the shop? Do I have freedom to steal from Tesco?*

Learners did not answer.

The teacher asked one learner, “*What happens to me if I steal?*”

There was no answer.

The teacher insisted and asked, *if I take something from the shop and I don’t pay what happens?*

One learner answered: *You break the law.*

Teacher: *And what happens to me?*

Two learners: *you get arrested.*

The teacher then moved to the next value which was 'tolerance'. She asked one learner, what do you think tolerance means?

The learner was unable to answer.

The teacher asked another question, *if you are tolerant, what do you do?*

There was no answer.

Teacher: *Do you accept or not accept?*

One learner, in a low voice: *Not accept*

Teacher (*nervously*): *Not accept? So you cannot be a Buddhist in England?! Is that what happens?! Can you be any religion in England, or do you have to just be one religion?*

A group of learners: *One religion*

Teacher (*with disapproval*): *One religion?! There is just one religion in England?!*

One learner, who picked up the answer the teacher wanted, said: *Many, many religion*

Teacher: *In the UK we are tolerant, that means we accept any religion... and any culture, so whether you come from Japan, from Israel, we are tolerant, and we accept.*

When I interviewed Tina, she expressed her frustration with the pre-entry level. She talked about the challenges she faces when teaching this level, she said:

> *The main challenge the fact that for some of them.. it's going to be near impossible to learn to read and write in English...Having a course that is suitable for them and something that will motivate them, but also teach them something has been a big challenge. So the course we run, I have found not suitable for them in that a lot of the courses available are kind of based on phonics, or are quite patronising, and quite repetitive, and quite boring. Um so I actually came to face things are quite frustrating with teaching the pre-entry partly because the course contents are so uninspiring.*

Tina also explained that there is not enough funding from the government for teaching pre-entry. The disparity in funding is confirmed in the Casey report (2016) in which it is stated that funding for ESOL has been slashed in recent years, and there is a significant funding gap for pre-entry levels.

> *The government doesn't ... there are very few funding opportunities for teaching pre entry. We have recently got a funding bed from a government program that is trying to stop isolation cause that's an issue with a lot of pre entry students but*

> *even that, the funding is minimal, it's not enough to have a centre that is dedicated to teaching these women..*

She highlighted the point that in order to get funding for a course, an evidence that learners are passing has to be provided. However, with a pre-entry level this is unachievable as the course is unaccredited. She concluded that providing this course is bringing no benefits for the learners and for the centre.

> *The government is cutting back everything and it's not their priority.. I think that especially maybe because a lot of the women are older, maybe they're focusing on the younger generation and also unfortunately with pre-entry there aren't any kind of set qualifications.. really.. so it's hard to gather the data on programs whereas with ESOL they're doing accredited courses, it's very easy for the government to show, you know, this many people are passing these courses, they're really achieving and I just think.. I think the government is investing where there's like a risk.. and I just don't think.. there's enough of a benefit for doing it almost.*

She also explained that the government is more focused on integrating younger learners into the British society rather than investing in providing ESOL courses for pre-entry learners. However, her perspective echoed that in government reports (Cantle report, 2001; Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper, 2018) issued after the riots in 2001 which viewed young British from ethnic minority communities as a threat to national unity and are susceptible to extremism and violence.

> *Their agenda I guess at the moment.. their agenda linked to ESOL is integration, to kind of make a more united, peaceful country, and I just think they're not so concerned with those pre-entry older students kind of influencing that or affecting that. I think they're focused on young people, they're more worried about young people like regarding kind of making sure young people are integrated, young people kind of don't do things that are against the British values, and I think that is the government's focus.*

Regarding the promotion of fundamental British values, the departmental advice document for all maintained and independent schools and educational institutions (DfE, 2014) stated that schools and educational contexts are required to meet the obligation of section 78 of the Education Act 2002 which require schools to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils. This guidance is specifically related to the requirements to actively promote fundamental British values and to challenge opinions or behaviours that are contrary to British values. The document suggested some examples of actions that schools can take such as including in parts of the curriculum material that discuss democracy in Britain in contrast to other forms of government in other countries (p.6), but the document stressed that it should be appropriate for the age of *pupils*.

Although learners were referred to as *pupils* in guidance documents for promoting British values (DfE, 2014), Ofsted inspectors emphasised that British values and Prevent should be taught explicitly and embedded in all material. It is useful in here to draw on studies which argue that language learning classrooms have failed to address issues of power relations which often value specific ethnolinguistic and cultural capitals (Darvin and Norton, 2015). Language and literacy are also used sometimes to marginalise ESOL learners, disempower minority groups, and treat learners' culture and language as something inferior (Cummins, 1996; Norton, 2000, 2014; Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004). This could explain the reasons of learners' lack of participation in speaking exercises, which in many cases is thought to be for cultural reasons when it could be because of many other factors such as post-colonialism, Occidentalism, and neo-imperialism, which affect the way learners perceive their teachers, and affect their willingness to engage with them (Diallo, 2014).

7.5.2 "Come fly with me" - Empowering learners in an ESOL class

(November 2018)

I was invited to observe the first part of Cynthia's ESOL class. It was an ESOL Entry 2 level class (highest level of basic English), and had nineteen female learners. Learners were from a variety of cultures and countries of origin such as Algeria, Turkey, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. The learning outcome of the lesson, as stated in the lesson plan, was that learners would become better at reading a text for gist and detail, and to improve their speaking and writing skills.

The idea of the lesson was inspired, as the teacher told me, from an EasyJet advertisement she found in the Metro newspaper while on the train. The advertisement was about a video EasyJet has released recently which reimagined a scene from the film 'Catch Me If You Can' in which Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio's character, Frank Abagnale, impersonates a pilot while surrounded by female cabin crew. In EasyJet's version, the pilot is a girl surrounded by a crew of boys. The aim was to inspire girls to become pilots. Cynthia searched for the aviation company's video and the scene from the film, and designed a lesson around them that included listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities.

Learners were sitting in groups and English was used as a lingua franca among them to communicate, besides their native languages. The class atmosphere was vibrant, and the voices of the learners were loud while they were socialising before the class started.

When the class started, the teacher told the learners they were going to watch two videos and asked them to identify the difference between them. She played the first video which was the scene from the film that used Frank Sinatra's song 'Come Fly with Me'. Before playing the second video, the teacher reminded the learners that after watching both videos, they would identify the differences between them. The teacher then put two pictures on the board for the two videos.

Teacher: *What are the differences?*

Learners at one table: *airport, the same*

Teacher: *OK they are in an airport, so this is something similar. Now something different..*

Learners at another table: *Different airports, different companies ..*

Teacher agreed and started writing differences on the board under each picture.

Other learners while pointing at the two pictures: *cabin crew.. children.. here children, but here adults*

Teacher while writing differences: *So one is with adults, the other one is with children.*

One learner (*excitedly*): *The girl, one day she want to be a pilot*

Another learner (*with similar excitement*): *she's a girl .. big dream for future!*

Teacher addressing the class: *Do you think big dreams come true?*

Learners (*with laughter*): *Yes.. No..I hope so … big future... encourage women become pilot..*

The teacher agreed with the learners, laughed with them, and asked the quiet learners if they had anything to add. She then distributed a worksheet she had prepared about the advertisement and asked the learners to work in groups to answer vocabulary and comprehension questions. Learners started reading and discussing the questions together using English and their native languages, while the teacher moved around the tables providing support and checking comprehension. The learners were loud, but they were at ease with each other and with their teacher, they were completely engaged with the worksheet, asking the teacher questions about the activities, and discussing some questions in the worksheet with excitement and laughter. The teacher also occasionally praised them.

The teacher then asked the learners to discuss in groups the last question in the worksheet, which was:

What do you think: Should girls pursue jobs like pilot, firefighter, police officer, entrepreneur, etc.? Why/Why not?

After five minutes, the teacher asked the learners to pay attention to her, and asked one learner, *Robina, what did you discuss in your group?*

Robina: *I think girls can do anything, but firefighter and police officer.. too hard.*
Teacher: *OK, so your group thinks some professions are too tough for girls*

Learners at that table: *Yeah*

The teacher then moved to another table and asked one of the learners what they thought.

Learner struggling to pronounce the word '*entrepreneur*': *Entrepreneur.. I like this.. Women can do all things..*

Teacher: *Yes, they can be entrepreneurs and do all sorts of things.*

Then the teacher asked another group: *what about the group here, what do you think?*

One learner making an effort to form a sentence: *Yes.. Because they can...*

Teacher: *Yes! Because they can! Good!*

Learners laughed.

Teacher addressing the class: *They can do what they want!*

Learners enthusiastically: *Yeah!*

Teacher: *Good, thank you*

Studies in second language learning contend that learners' attitudes towards language learning and progress are influenced by what they experience in class (Ellis, 2014). The idea of Cynthia's lesson and the atmosphere of the classroom can be linked with hooks' ideas of education for empowerment. According to hooks (1994), generating excitement in the classroom, hearing one another's voices, valuing everyone's presence, and seeing the classroom as a communal place enhances and sustains learning. But Cynthia's way of interacting with her learners can also throw light on the importance of the concept of ethnocultural empathy (Wang et al., 2003) in multi-ethnic and multicultural classrooms which enables teachers to connect with their students, and to interact appropriately with understanding (Mercer, 2016). Furthermore, I would argue that the teacher, who is an immigrant herself and who feels marginalised because she lacks 'legitimate' linguistic and social capital (Bourdieu, 1993) because of her accent and for being a newcomer, was able to relate with the learners, as it was reflected in her teaching style.

7.5.3 A good citizen - My classroom observation

(May 2018)

I was informed by the Quality Manager that she would be carrying out a formal observation of my class as part of the formal and informal classroom observations she was required to conduct throughout the year. We agreed that she would be observing my ESOL level 1 (upper intermediate) speaking and listening class. Level 1 was the highest accredited course taught in the centre as there were hardly ever any learners who were able to progress to level 2, and unlike level 1 of functional skills, level 1 of ESOL was never taught before, as it is not funded. Moreover, the funding the centre was receiving did not include providing textbooks for the learners. Therefore, I was asked by my inline manager to prepare a scheme of work and course contents that would help learners improve their listening and speaking skills. The topic would mainly be about citizenship, employment, work experience, job advertisements, interviews, etc. I was also made aware by the Quality Manager that I had to ensure that the lessons are explicitly linked with the five British values. Moreover, teachers were required to ensure that learner's attendance would not fall under 85% and that learners registered on accredited courses pass, progress into employment or vocational training in order to continue to receive funding for the centre, so free accredited and non-accredited courses continue to be provided for the learners.

The learners in this ESOL course were from different ethnic, cultural and faith backgrounds, and some of them came to the UK as refugees while others were migrants. Their countries of origin were Bangladesh, Kosovo, and Ethiopia. The challenge for me was to prepare a lesson that would be about one of the topics mentioned above, but would still be interesting and engaging, and to link it to the British values without undermining my learners' cultures.

The lesson I prepared was centred around a short film that raises issues of profiling. In the film, a man was sitting in a park and noticed a white male with a young boy of colour and started questioning the relationship between them. The man, suspecting that the white male could be a kidnapper, approached the white male with the kid and asked him about his relationship with the young boy. He did not believe the white man when he told him that they were father and son, although while they were arguing the white man told him that his suspicions were only based on the colour of their skins. The situation was about to get worse, but the white man's wife, who is a woman of colour, came to pick up her husband and son from the park. The film, the activities and discussion questions evoked debates about stereotyping, about good citizenship and what it takes to be a good citizen. My aim was to help learners develop their English and critical thinking skills through extensive and constructive discussions, and also develop their understanding of good citizenship.

To challenge the learners, I played the film halfway through without the sounds and asked them what they thought the two men were arguing about. Two learners made an assumption that the white male was trying to kidnap the boy, and the majority of the learners agreed. After I played the film again with the sounds on, one learner regrettably said, "*we are not different from the man who had suspicions!*". Some learners shared personal experiences of being subject to racism and racist comments because of the colour of their skin and their faith. One learner told the class an incident when she and her children arrived at a bus stop and heard one woman saying to her friend that those people come to Britain to live off benefits. The learner told the class that she turned to her and told her "*you know nothing about my life*". Learners also shared experiences on instances they labelled people because of their appearances and found out that they misjudged them. Another learner told the class a personal experience she had in a store. A man with tattoos approached her and told her that she dropped her wallet and he picked it up and gave it to her. They also discussed attributes of a good citizen, and worked together to transfer their personal perceptions on good citizenship into colourful posters and hanged them on the wall.

They were diverse in their backgrounds, cultures, and languages, but they listened attentively to each other and treated each other with respect. They were engaged with the exercises and needed minimal support from me. My role was to check that they were able to match vocabulary words taken from the film with their meanings, and were able to complete the cloze exercise. When I asked the learners what values they could link the lesson with, they could easily link it with ‘tolerance’ and ‘respect’. I reiterated that those were British values and values that also exist in their cultures and in many cultures, and they agreed. I asked them if they wanted to link any more values from their cultures to the lesson’s topic, and learners’ suggestions were ‘love’, ‘a sense of responsibility for the place and the people’, and ‘empathy’.

Feedback on formal observation was generally positive. Some of the positive comments included notes that the activities provided learners with links to real life experiences; good involvement and active engagement of learners with a good level of interest and concentration; raising learners’ awareness of concepts relating to equality and diversity and good citizenship. Feedback also included a note that I needed to clarify differentiation strategies on lesson plans and the scheme of work and to add more details in my lesson plan. I do not usually write detailed lesson plans and do not like to follow them strictly or be constrained by them as I believe that learning cannot be measured by a neat box and a time slot (Barton, 2019). There was another note that functional skills (English, ICT and Math) were not identified on the lesson plan and were not shared with learners. I was not sure that there was a necessity to link ESOL with functional skills. I sent an email to the quality manager asking for clarification and telling her that although ESOL is under the umbrella of Skills for life which includes literacy, numeracy, and ICT, but it has been standing as a separate specialism since 2001 (Simpson, 2018). However, we did not have an opportunity to discuss that note further. A week later, I read a note in one of my learner’s journals by which she expressed her happiness because that was the first time for her to be in a class where issues of colour and stereotyping were discussed, and that she felt empowered by the discussion.

7.5.4 ESOL class with Syrian families

(June 2019)

A Syrian woman I was introduced to invited me to attend an ESOL class specifically for Syrian families which takes place every Monday and lasts for two hours. The class was in a primary school where a spacious, sunny room was supplied with benches, chairs, tables, and a small board for ESOL classes. Next to the classroom was a smaller room with toys inside where families can keep their toddlers while they have ESOL classes. There were also two volunteers to take care of the children. On another corner there was a small kitchen, outside the kitchen door was a small table that had tea, coffee, milk, a kittle, and biscuits on it. I noticed a table near the classroom door and on it were new scarves, dictionaries, cooking books that learners can take for free.

The sessions were organised by a British charity organisation that provides support for Syrian refugees in the UK. Before the day of the ESOL class, permission was given for me to attend the class by the person responsible for the welfare of Syrian refugees in the city council. We arrived fifteen minutes before the beginning of the session, so I had time to introduce myself to the teacher and the volunteers. I found out that the teacher went to Goldsmiths about forty-five years ago where she taught and studied at the same time. A volunteer came up to me and greeted me saying in Arabic "Marhaba" which means 'Hello' in English. Surprised that she knew Arabic, I asked her where she learned the language, she told me she learned a few words in Arabic from the Lebanese people she met in Melbourne, where she is from.

There were 8 Syrian families and six volunteers in the classroom. Learners were at an entry level, and they are offered these ESOL classes as an extra learning opportunity. Before the session started, teacher and volunteers checked on late and absent families. The teacher approached me and asked me if I would like to help the learners throughout the session and I answered that I would certainly help. The session started with learning to read words beginning with /St/. There were ten words written on the board that started with /St/ which learners were required to write on their notebooks. Volunteers helped learners read and understand the meanings of the words, and I assisted the learners at my table. After this exercise, the teacher told the learners they would learn ways to ask if they could help someone, and different ways to accept or not accept help.
She then asked me to translate that to the learners.

The teacher then introduced three ways to offer help and wrote them on the board: *Can I help you? Do you need help? Let me help you*. The teacher moved one of the tables and asked one male learner to move it back where it was, while he was moving it, she asked him, "*Do you need help?*", the learner answered, "*No, thank you*". The teacher then elicited and suggested things that people might need help with such as, cooking, looking after the baby, washing up, etc. and asked learners to practice offering help and answering using the several ways she introduced and wrote on the board. She suggested to start the conversations with the question, '*what are you doing*?'.

Learners were generally struggling with meanings of vocabulary words, for example the teacher suggested saying '*No, thank you. I can manage*' when somebody offers help, but the learners could not understand what ‘manage’ means. Although the teacher explained that the answer means ‘*I can do it on my own’*, learners did not understand what ‘*on my own*’ meant. Learners at my table spoke with me in Arabic and told me they know the word ‘manage’ has another meaning, and I explained that words could have different meanings depending on the context, I also explained the Arabic way of saying ‘*on my own*’, and how in Syria they would give a similar answer in Arabic to ‘*I can manage’*. Before they could ‘dare’ to engage with the teacher, learners checked with me first if what they were going to say would be ‘correct’. They were afraid of giving wrong answers to the teacher. It struck me at that moment that I could fully understand why learners use their native languages when they speak together or work in their groups, and how it feels patronising when teachers insist that they must speak in English with each other.

The learners then worked on the exercises in their workbooks. The book which is called *English for Life* for elementary level was dense with the amount of exercises each page contained. The main objective of the exercises was to practice grammar and to check comprehension. There were no interactive activities that encourage speaking, or critical thinking. Also, there was no relevance to learners’ cultures as pages contained long texts about the lives of people from Europe, North America, South America, New Zealand, etc.

I noticed that Rafeef was highly interested in everything that was taught and practiced, even with exercises that learners struggled with, such as pronunciation and meanings of new vocabulary words. She had a neat notebook where she took notes of new things and reviewed them at home, and that was evident as she was able to remember meanings of previously taught words and to refer to things the teacher said in previous classes. She was able to understand what was required in the workbook exercises - though for some exercises the instructions were a little confusing - but she referred to similar exercises done before to help herself. She practiced speaking activities with other learners and was eager to speak confidently.

The teacher used imitating and eliciting techniques to encourage learners to practice offering help and accepting/not accepting help. She was patient and smiled often and had a calm voice. Her resources were limited to a small board and few markers, but she was never tired of giving examples, imitating, and explaining. The atmosphere was relaxed and positive and learners used Arabic to understand and English to practice. The teacher also tried to make learners laugh by eliciting hard and boring jobs that people do not usually like to offer help with such as pushing a car, cooking for a lot of people, and washing up and asked learners to offer help with, and their partners -happily- accepted help. It was a simple activity, but it did provoke laughter and made learners feel more relaxed. Cummins (1996) stresses the importance of building a relationship that is based on respect and trust between the learners and the teacher, and to acknowledge their cultures and languages in classrooms. Also, the teacher allowed the learners to use Arabic in group work and asked me to translate for them, a way of teaching and learning that many ESOL teachers might think would hinder learning English in language classrooms. Although this can be considered a practice of translanguaging as learners were allowed to use other languages, in this case Arabic as well as English, to better understand forms and sentences and to improve their engagement in the class, this might not be sufficient. This is because systematic training to prepare teachers to deal with multilingual classrooms has not been provided, and support for learners to feel empowered when using their first language and communicative resources instead of being merely ‘allowed’ has not been realised yet. However, there is a growing recognition in language learning approaches that take multilingualism as its starting point and ‘multicompetancy’ as its goal (Anderson, 2016).

7.5.5 ESOL and special learning needs

(November 2019)

I advised Amal (one of the participants in this study; details about her in Chapter 8) to register for an ESOL course at the women’s learning centre after she was told at another college in London that she had special learning needs and that they did not have the capacity to support her to improve in English. I was hoping that she could find some support and a space to socialise as she was feeling sad and lonely when she was told not to go back to the college. Fortunately, I was given the opportunity to observe Amal’s ESOL class. It was an Entry 3 Level (lower intermediate) with twenty-one female learners. I was not given details about the learners, but I could tell from my experience with the learners at the centre that they were from Bangladesh, Somalia, Ethiopia, Brazil, and I noticed another Arab learner besides Amal, who later told me she was from Yemen. I was not also given a lesson plan, but I knew later it was a grammar lesson about several tenses such as, present and past simple, past continuous, if-conditionals, and present perfect. The teacher was middle-age, white British who used to volunteer in drop-in sessions while I was a teacher at the centre, but was then formally employed to teach at the centre.

When I entered the class, the teacher welcomed me, but then made the following announcement to the class, "*This is Nsreen, I believe some of you know her, I believe she knows Amal, she's come to see how she can help her today, she's gonna help her"*. Still standing in front of the class beside the teacher, I could feel Amal's embarrassment and felt uncomfortable myself at the note the teacher made, which I thought was unnecessary. I chose to sit at a table away from Amal's one after I asked the learners if I could sit with them, just to steer the class's attention away from the comment the teacher made.

The teacher then made a quick recap of what they were doing, 'We were just talking about what we have done already this morning". There was a question written on the board that asked *What have you done this morning?* Which the learners worked in pairs to answer. The teacher and some learners were asking and answering questions about the correct ways to answer this question. The following are excerpts of a two-hours long class. I wrote the following notes while observing Amal and the rest of the class.

Learner 1: *Can we say I have woken up 7 o'clock this morning?*

Teacher: *No because you said 7 o'clock this morning, so I woke up at 7 o'clock this morning.*

Learner 2: *I woke up 7 o'clock* Learner

3: *I has wake up..*

Learner 1: *not wake up..*

Teacher *(interrupting)*: *I have, not I has, I have.*

Learner 4 correcting learner 3: *she has...*

Learner 2: *Ah, she has*

Then the teacher addressed two learners: *Rama and Fatima did you have a chance to talk or not?*

Fatima: *little bit, I have chance to talk little bit. Rama said she woke up 5 o'clock in the morning, she had a shower, she prayed, she read Quran.*

Teacher: *Well, yeah*

Fatima: *and she had breakfast*

Teacher: *if we're talking generally without telling times, you can say she has woken up early, she has prayed... generally with no time.* The teacher then asked the other learner*: Rama, can you remember anything that Fatima did?*

Rama; *I didn't have a chance..*

Teacher: *OK Fatima, you want to tell me about you then?*

Fatima: *This morning I woke up at 6 o'clock, I had a shower, I prayed. I go back to bed.*

Teacher: *Go back to bed?*

Fatima: *Yeah, go back to bed … Yeah, went back, went back to bed half an hour then I go up 7 o'clock. I took my children to school. I made breakfast.*

Teacher (*correcting*): *Go up? Sorry did you say got up?*

Fatima: *got up 7 o'clock*.

Teacher repeating: *So this morning Fatima has taken her children to school, she has made breakfast, she has come to class.*

Then the teacher asked the learners: *Anyone else like to tell me what they have done this morning?*

Teacher asking two learners: Y*ou didn't have a chance to talk to each other, did you?*

Then the teacher addressed another table: *Hana, can you give me one thing you have done this morning?*

The teacher continued to ask learners what they have done and continued to correct grammar mistakes rigorously.

Then the teacher asked: *Did I ask everybody? I think I asked everybody*.

I was thinking that Amal did not say anything and was completely neglected, but she was attentive, asked her group questions, and was writing notes on her notebook.

The teacher then suddenly looked at me and asked: *Nsreen, what have you done this morning?*

Me (*surprised*): *Oh, I have made my bed, I have skipped my morning coffee, and I have hurried to the centre.*

The teacher then moved to the next tense and said: *We're talking about a few tenses and things this morning*. She erased the question on the board, and said: *The second question, so when you looked out of the window probably you saw that it's … can anyone finish our sentence?*

Some learners: *It was raining, it has been raining..*

Teacher: *it has rained, or it was raining?*

Some learners: It was raining.

The teacher wrote the sentence on the board. Then one learner who was still thinking about the present perfect asked: *Can you say she has taken her children to school? Is that OK? She has taken?*

Teacher: *Yeah.*

The teacher went on explaining different tenses and if-conditional sentences, and asking learners to provide example sentences. It was a fast-paced class, and only a few learners participated and asked questions, others told the teacher that the past tense and present perfect tense confused them. I was surprised that several tenses and conditionals were given in the same lesson. The learners struggled with the idea of second-type conditional sentences. The teacher gave several sentences as examples to illustrate the concept of such sentences.

After a short while, the teacher introduced an activity which consisted of sentence beginnings written on cards that the learners had to complete. I moved to Amal's table to help her with the activity. I spoke with her in Arabic to explain the activity, and had her read the sentence beginnings. She was able to complete the sentences, but she was very hesitant and would not share her sentences before checking with me they were correct. The parts of the sentences that Amal completed were (written in italics):

As soon as the class finishes, *I will go home.*

I've got some spare time, *I can relax.*

I will go to the cinema *unless it rains.*

After the class, I had a short conversation with the teacher who was familiar with me as a former teacher at the centre. The teacher told me that she had to cover as many tenses as she could during the course since classes were held only twice a week because of the lack of funding. She realised that the learners struggled with the tenses, but she felt she had to cover them anyway. I had never taught level Entry 3 before, but I knew that there was excessive focus on grammar, as if the teacher wanted to cover the grammar given to three levels in one course. It was obvious that several learners left the class that day with little to no understanding of the tenses taught. I asked her about the different levels of the learners in the class as it was obvious that some learners were above Entry 3 while the rest were struggling, and she told me that they could not offer more classes where learners would be placed in their right levels because of the lack of funding. Therefore, they had to group learners whose levels in the initial assessment were Entry 2, Entry 3, and Level 1, and put them together in one level. I knew about that strategy and often objected to implementing it during my work at the centre as it was unfair for the learners.

Then I asked her about the support that Amal could have in the class and told her that she was able to answer and participate when she was offered support. The teacher told me that they could not provide such support for her, and because of that, she would not be able to register in an accredited course again after this course. I asked her about the remedial classes offered to learners who struggled with some skills where they could have one-to-one support from teachers. She told me that they stopped offering such classes because of the increased teaching load on the teachers. I sent an email later that day to the ESOL Lead and asked her if they could support Amal and allow her to enrol in accredited courses given the sensitivity of her situation. She replied back noting that they have had training on dyslexia recently, but '*it was mainly focused on making changes to the learning environment rather than on how to directly support dyslexic students'*, and therefore, *the teachers 'are not particularly well-informed*'. She also reminded me of the funding that the centre needed which was conditioned on the progress the students made and the evidence they could provide that most students were passing accredited courses. She ended the email saying that there was nothing they could do, '*It's so hard in the current climate where funding is mostly given for accreditations!*'.

Observing Amal in her ESOL class revealed that learners with special learning needs are not supported in ESOL classrooms. Since dyslexia is considered a disability and according to the law, people with dyslexia have protected characteristics as stated in the Equality Act 2010, it is considered illegal to treat people like Amal less favourably than others, or to put them at an unfair disadvantage (HM Government, 2010). However, Amal was treated less favourably than the other learners in the class, was stigmatised as the teacher labelled her as someone who needed help, and eventually was alienated in the class. Yet, observing Amal's class also revealed other issues related to the lack of funding which resulted in forcing ESOL providers to be in a position where they have not enough resources to offer enough classes for the learners. The teacher was also put under pressure because of funding issues, was overwhelmed with the material that she had to cover during one course and could not differentiate instruction. Asking me questions during the class did not stem from issues of insider/outsider position as we were familiar with each other, but from a position of a teacher who perhaps felt helpless in the face of the many issues she encountered in her ESOL class.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a deeper insight into refugee Arab Muslim women's experiences of learning English, interculturality and inclusion. My experience and observations in the field reveal that learning English can be a challenging and counterproductive experience for many women from refugee or ethnic minority background. The lack of training to promote fundamental British values in a way that does not undermine and devalue learners' cultural values is a key factor that affects learners' well-being in the classroom. Implementing the Prevent Duty in ESOL classroom is another issue that has only resulted in demonising Muslim learners and viewing them as potential terrorists (Cohen and Waqas, 2017). In addition, ESOL teachers are not receiving proper training to discuss sensitive issues with their learners in a culturally mindful way. I argued that such an issue could have been avoided if more teachers from Muslim and minority ethnic communities were employed to teach ESOL. However, findings from fieldwork revealed that there is an obvious underrepresentation of minority ethnic communities among ESOL teachers, mainly because of discriminating against them and because of the ill-treatment they suffer from which forces them to leave the teaching profession (Runnymede and NASUWT, 2017). Cuts in funding for ESOL provision has resulted in a lack of ESOL classrooms offered for ESOL learners and a lack of training for ESOL teachers to address the different learning needs of the learners. It has also made ESOL courses available for learners who would most likely pass the exams, which means that ESOL learners with special learning needs are deprived from learning English. Finally, the chapter also discussed how Muslim women, especially who wear the hijab, suffer from discrimination and institutional racism in workplaces. They are the most economically disadvantaged group in British society as they are three times more likely to be unemployed and looking for a job than women generally (The Women and Equalities Committee, 2016). Moreover, highly qualified women are often being overlooked because of the assumption that they are ‘submissive and weak’, with some women feeling they have no option but to abandon traditional Islamic dress in order to get a job (ibid).

Chapter 8 "Being in a foreign country is like living in a house that is not yours"

Analysis of Life History Interviews

8.1 Introduction

The chapter is based on life history interviews with three refugee Arab Muslim women from Iraq and Syria. It will discuss the first and third research questions:

- **To what extent do refugee Arab Muslim women's life histories and stories of displacement affect their adaptation to life in the UK?**

- **What experiences do refugee Arab Muslim women encounter when living in the UK and how do these influence their social inclusion?**

In addition, the chapter will add more depth to refugee Arab Muslim women's experiences in learning English, which is the focus of the second research question, and which has been discussed in two other chapters. The second research question is:

- **How do refugee Arab Muslim women negotiate the learning of English once in the UK, and what forms of intercultural communication affect their capacity to acquire the language?**

8.2 The participants

8.2.1 First participant: Amal

Amal (pseudonym) is a white middle-aged Arab woman from Iraq. She lives in South London and is married to an Iraqi doctor. She has two sons in their twenties who are university students in the UK. Before she fled Iraq in 1997, she was a university student and completed her first year in business studies.

The first time I met Amal, it was in an adult learning centre in South London. When I arrived, I found her waiting for me outside at the gate. She smiled and said "halaw" and extended her hand to shake hands with me. 'Halaw', is a greeting expression used most commonly in Baghdad and is taken -as Iraqis explained to me- from the English word 'Hello', but it has several meanings such as 'hello', 'you are welcome', and 'goodbye', depending on the context. Colloquial dialect of Baghdadis incorporated many foreign words that are borrowed from Semitic languages such as Sumerian, Aramaic, and nonSemitic languages such as, Turkish, Farsi, Greek, and English, to name a few, as a result of mass communication and globalisation (Al-Qaisy, 2008). Some foreign words from non-Semitic languages such as English and European words were incorporated into colloquial Baghdadi Arabic after World War I, but were changed to make them sound more Arabic (Al-Qaisi, 2008). Thus, the English word ‘Hello’ was changed to ‘halaw’. Moreover, there are other commonly used greetings in Iraq such as, ‘marhaba’ (Gorgis and Al-Quran, 2003), and the standard Arabic Islamic greeting ‘salam alaikum’ which means ‘peace be with you’ (Gorgis and Al-Quran, 2003; Evason, 2015). However, Iraqis in diaspora and exile cherish their Iraqi heritage in many forms, some of which are listening to folkloric music, reading Iraqi literature and poetry of prominent Iraqi poets, using colloquial Iraqi dialect, practicing Iraqi traditions, etc. (Al-Qaisy, 2008). Amal, who is originally from southern Iraq but used to live in Baghdad, expressed her ‘Iraqiness’ by using the colloquial dialect of the people of Baghdad besides the dialect of southern Iraqis when she spoke Arabic. Holliday et al., (2010) point out that people stress specific aspects of their culture when they are in a foreign setting and use their cultural resources at different times for different reasons.

When we sat to talk about Amal’s life in one of the classrooms, Amal introduced herself to me as an Iraqi from 'Najaf". Najaf is a city in central-south Iraq and is considered the spiritual centre of Shia Muslims (Cordesman and Khazai, 2014). Shi’ism is one of the two main branches of Islam, but it has several other subsects (Esposito, 2002). Shias, who are a minority Muslim group, constitute 10-13% of the world Muslim population, and live in four countries: Iran, Pakistan, India, and Iraq (Pew Research, 2009). Shias are a majority in Iraq and constitute 65% of the Iraqi population (CfR, 2014). However, Iraq is a multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multilinguistic country which has a community of Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Assyrians, Sunnis, Shias, Christians, Jews, Yazeedis, and other groups (Ketchell, 2014). Amal, as a Shi’it Muslim, cherished this part of her identity despite having been away from Iraq for many years. Yet for someone coming from Jordan, which is considered a Sunni Muslim country, she hesitantly referred to her city of origin, perhaps because of the theological disagreements between the two groups and because of the sectarian violence that has torn Iraq apart. It is noteworthy that Shias are considered ‘not Muslims’ by nearly half of the Sunni Muslim population (50% in some countries) in the Middle East and North Africa, and ‘heretics’ by some extremist Sunnis (Pew Research, 2012; CfR, 2014).

8.2.2 Second participant: Noor

Noor (pseudonym) is another middle-aged woman from Iraq. She is a pharmacist and works in a pharmacy in London. She obtained her undergraduate and post-graduate degrees from universities in the UK. She is married and has two daughters in secondary school.

Noor came to the UK with her husband and two daughters in 2004. I met her several times in the pharmacy where she works. The first time I met her, she greeted me by saying 'Salam alaikum', and took me to a back office where we could be away from customers and could talk without interruption. She pulled a chair for me and excused me to give a few directions to her Asian assistant and came back shortly. The pharmacy was a big one and had several sections, each with many shelves that contained a variety of products for different conditions and health issues. I watched Noor serving customers and patients who came to the pharmacy, she was kind and confident. She listened attentively to patients when they talked about a condition they suffered from and served them efficiently. She is also highly knowledgeable in her field as she discussed with patients the differences between different medicines, their components, side effects, etc.

We spoke in Arabic and talked briefly in the first meeting. I learned that Noor lived in Baghdad before she came to the UK, she described herself as a hard-working person as she works for long hours in the pharmacy (9-11 hours), and as a result she barely has any social life. She asked me to come to the pharmacy to meet her whenever I wanted during her lunch breaks, but I realised later during our meetings that she does not really have a 'lunch break' or even leave the pharmacy; it is rather the time when she could be less busy. She was still having a 'refugee leave to remain' status the first time I met her despite being in the UK for many years, and that made her feel anxious and constantly afraid of being deported. She was hesitant at the beginning to speak about her life. She asked me questions about myself, my research, and the reason I was interested in the lives of refugee Arab Muslim women. As we talked a little more, we discovered that we lived in the same area in Baghdad when I lived there many years ago. We also shared memories of different places in Iraq. Sharing personal narratives and experiences reveals the human side of the researcher (see Edwards and Hollands, 2013).

Moreover, Duncombe and Jessop (2002) state that rapport can be built in moments of real shared experiences between researcher and participants. While we were talking about my research, Noor asked me, *"I know very little is known about us, but do you* *think your research will change anything, or will it become just another study stacked on the shelf of one university library?"*.

8.2.3 Third participant: Rafeef

Rafeef (pseudonym) is a middle-aged Syrian woman who came with her husband and five children and step-children to the UK as refugees in 2017. I met her for the first time in her house, which is in a quiet neighbourhood in the outskirts of London, where she shared her story of fleeing Syria and arriving in the UK. We sat in the sitting room, which consists of a sitting room, a dining table and a fitted kitchen in one space. Rafeef prepared Arabic coffee (also called Turkish coffee) which is popular in some Arab countries to welcome me in her new home. The type of Arabic coffee that she prepared is made from a mix of finely ground dark and blonde roasted coffee beans, mixed with ground cardamom, boiled in a long-handled coffee pot and served in small cups with handles. As someone who is from the same region (the Levant) I knew the value of coffee and how it is prepared. Rafeef told me she was happy to have been able to find the coffee, the long-handled coffee pot and cups in some of the Arab shops in London. As we sat, she smiled and said "I made Arabic coffee for you" to make me feel welcomed. It is noteworthy that coffee ('qahwe' in Arabic) is deeply-rooted in the Arabic culture since it originated in the Arab world and spread from there to Turkey and Europe in the fifteenth century (Weinberg and Bealer, 2001; Civitello, 2007, McHugo, 2013). It is also an important aspect of Arab's social life (Brustad et al., 2010) and a symbol of hospitality (Shihab, 1993; Sedky, 2015).

Rafeef is in her late thirties. She has fair skin and green eyes, and wears a typical Syrianstyle Islamic dress. She has a master's degree in Islamic studies, which she obtained from the University of Damascus. She is from Hama, a city in west-central Syria which is reputed to be the most conservative Sunni Muslim town in Syria, though some districts of the city are significantly Christian (Whitaker, 2007). Rafeef's husband works in a restaurant in London, and her three stepchildren are studying in universities in London.

Before Rafeef started to talk about her experiences before and after coming to the UK, she wondered why I was interested in the topic of my research and asked, what came to be a rhetorical question, "*Why did you choose this topic for your research project?"*. Before I could answer her question, she said with assertion, *"I think it is agonising to talk about refugees' stories"*.

8.3 Pre-migration experiences

Loewen (2004) states that unlike immigrants, refugees have been forced to flee their home countries, and have experienced emotional and physical traumas at varying degrees. Refugees endure wars, violence, torture, loss of close family, denial of basic human needs, etc. before leaving their home countries (Fazel and Stein, 2002). However, before wars and violence, many refugees may have had completely different lives and may had enjoyed an affluent middle-class life.

Before Amal fled Iraq, she lived in Baghdad. She talked about her memories in Iraq with much passion despite having been away for many years. She recounted in her Iraqi Arabic:

> *I lived in Baghdad all my life before I left Iraq. Before the embargo, we had a good life, we used to travel every year to two or three countries to see the world. My life in Baghdad was full; I had my parents and my family, I had friends, I finished high school and went to university, I had hobbies and I had dreams for the future like any other person. But, we entered into a war after war, we couldn't have long lasting peace. I remember we were in Morocco when the Iraqi-Iranian war started and when we heard that in the news, my father decided we should go back immediately as my eldest brother had to join the army. We were in Switzerland when we heard that the Iraqi troops entered Kuwait and I remember my parents became very anxious as that meant another war, and we had to cut the holiday off and go back to Iraq.*

Before the Gulf War, Iraq used to be a thriving and modernised country with an aspiring middle-class (Bender, 2014). People in the Arab region have long compared rich and generous people to Baghdadis, as Baghdad used to be a rich city and the centre of trade and culture in the Arab world (Ghattas, 2002; Althawady, 2013). The wars that Amal mentioned were the Iraq-Iran war which was triggered over territorial and political disputes and have led to a long war that started in 1980 and ended in 1988 (Malvany, 2017). The second war, which is called the Gulf War, started when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 after disputes over oil fields in territorial areas, leading to a US-led anti-Iraq coalition war, and a comprehensive UN blockade which cancelled all international trade with Iraq and blocked anything from entering Iraq (Fattah and Caso, 2009).

Amal explained how all aspects of life in Iraq deteriorated under the UN sanctions. She said,

> *I got married in 1992 to a doctor and had my first child. Life became very hard under the siege, everything changed, and the situation was changing to the worse every year. Health and education services were deteriorating. Businesses stopped*

> *and many people left the country, but Iraqi doctors were prohibited from leaving Iraq at that time. Also we were afraid of everything... many dissidents were either detained or executed ...*

The Gulf War and the economic sanctions on Iraq had their catastrophic effects on Iraqi people. The middle class was almost completely wiped out and poverty spread (Ghattas, 2002) as a result of economic deterioration, hyperinflation, and the collapsing of the Iraqi Dinar (Zainy, 2003). Therefore, the situation in Iraq changed, as Amal mentioned, and middle-class Iraqis who used to be affluent and enjoyed economic, social, educational, and cultural developments in Iraq (UNESCO, 2000) could no longer afford to live in their pre-Gulf War standards (Ghattas, 2002).

Moreover, after the sanctions were imposed in 1990, the educational system started to gradually fall apart due to the lack of materials, such as textbooks, labs, deteriorating infrastructure, outdated curricula, poor training of teachers, etc. (Issa and Jamil, 2010). Also, the health care system deteriorated, as Amal mentioned, and many Iraqis died for simple medical conditions such as dehydration and infection due to the lack of medicine and basic necessities such as antibiotics, rubber gloves, heart medicine, which were banned entry into Iraq during the embargo (Al Jazeera, 2008).

Therefore, many Iraqi professionals left the country, as Amal mentioned, because of the disastrous effects of the UN-imposed sanctions among which was the closing down of businesses, low- payments, which fell to $6 a month, the worsening of medical services etc. (CASI, 1999; Ghattas, 2002). However, doctors had to learn how to treat diseases that had long disappeared such as Cholera (Ghattas, 2002). They were not allowed to leave the country, and were prohibited from having any training outside Iraq, and academic transcripts for medical graduates were banned to prevent them from leaving the country (Richards, 2000; Al-Shamsi, 2017).

Along with that was a firm grip on the country by the former Iraqi regime (Bengio, 2000) which intensified fear for some Iraqis who opposed the regime. Fear that Amal mentioned in her description of the situation in Iraq during the 1990s, was the prevalent atmosphere in Iraq especially among some of the Shi’iet Iraqis who opposed the former Iraqi regime (Burns, 2006).

On the other hand, Noor fled Iraq with her husband in 2003 after the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq. Before she fled, she lived in Baghdad while the sanctions were imposed. She expressed her thoughts on how some Iraqis coped with the sanctions. She said in her Iraqi Arabic,

> *I finished my school years and was accepted to study pharmacology at the University of Baghdad, and I got married and had my first baby. We tried to move on with our lives. We had hopes that the siege would be lifted and we would breathe again. I know people would say it was hard, but we learned to cope. It was hard the first two years as we were not used to harsh living conditions, but after a while we coped ... So if there was no water or electricity for a few hours because an air strike hit the power station, it wasn't the end of the world, we had generators, and they wouldn't save efforts to fix it within a short time. We made changes to our lifestyle. It's our country, we had strong educational and health systems, reputable universities, and we were wealthy, we couldn't give up on our country, so we were patient and hopeful.*

Noor had dreams for her future in Iraq even during the darkest years of the country. She had hopes that the war against Iraq would end and the sanctions would be lifted. These hopes for a better future for her country helped her cope with the adverse situation in Iraq. She would not give up easily on her country which she was proud of, and patience helped her survive the airstrikes and the sanction. Coping, which is a strategy that many Iraqis like Noor used to survive the sanctions, was practiced in varying ways depending on the abilities of the families. Some of the varying ways of coping were reducing food consumption and expenses, liquidating property, having a second job in the evening, working in jobs that were not previously accepted among well-educated Iraqis, such as taxi driving (Al-Nouri, 1997). Patience and hope had helped Noor and many Iraqis who stayed in Iraq. They believed that their once prosperous country which was recognised for having the best educational system in the Middle East and North Africa between the years 1970 - 1990 (UNESCO, 2000; Shlash et al., 2008), besides providing free and highly praised health care (Shlash et al., 2008; Zaidi and Abutiheen, 2019) was worth of some sacrifices.

Noor continued,

> *The most important thing that no one can deny is that people were safe, we would go out to work, schools, universities, markets, and do our usual things without being afraid ... But then peace and safety became things from the past ... After the fall of the Iraqi regime, chaos and violence erupted in the country in an unprecedented way. There were assassinations, kidnapping, cars bombing, destruction of landmarks and universities ... My father was a chemistry professor in one of the universities, and Sunni professors started receiving letters of threat ... some of them just got assassinated without warning. My husband received*

> *several letters from the Shia police threatening to kill him and his family if he didn't close the barber shop and leave Iraq.*

Noor has seen what many Iraqis who were in Iraq in the year 2003 have seen: Iraq sinking in chaos after the fall of the regime (Mustafa, 2018), and sectarian violence that erupted in major cities in the country, resulting in many assassinations that were based on sectarian affiliation (Hamdani, 2006; Jalili, 2007). Some assassinations included professors, intellectuals, lecturers, from a wide range of academic and scientific fields, besides the assassinations of teachers and students (Rubin, 2004; O'Malley, 2007; Issa and Jameel, 2010). Many Iraqis like Noor and her husband fled Iraq in 2003, the year that witnessed the largest migratory movement in the history of Iraq (Majeed, 2018).

Rafeef had also experienced fear and violence before she was able to flee her home country, Syria. After the Syrian revolution erupted, she remembered how her life was affected. She recounted in her Syrian Arabic,

> *Before the revolution, I lived in my hometown, Hama, and I worked at the university there as a lecturer of Islamic studies. I had my close and extended family, friends, and the community. I had a fairly good life. But everything changed. My husband and I got married a few months after the revolution, it was quiet and quick, without a wedding ceremony, or rituals or anything. I left Hama to live in Damascus where my in-laws lived, because my husband was working in Saudi Arabia. He already had three young children whose mother had passed away, so I needed to stay close to my in-laws so they could help with the three children. On the way to Damascus, I saw bombs exploding, airstrikes, dead bodies on the streets, buildings that have been destroyed... There were several checkpoints on the way, and at each one of them, some people usually get detained for no reason.*

The Syrian revolution that Rafeef talked about started in 2011. Protests erupted all over the city of Dara after the brutal torture and killing of some Syrian boys while being detained. The Syrian government responded to protests by killing protesters and imprisoning others (Al Jazeera, 2011, CNN, 2018). As brutal force was used to crush protesters, protests demanding the president to step down erupted all over Syria (Gregs, 2013). Unrest spread in Syria and the country soon descended into civil war, which was fuelled by regional and international powers intervening in the conflict by supporting the different warring parties (Berti, 2015).

Violence and civil war that has progressively escalated, had an impact on most Syrians' lives (Berti, 2015). Rafeef's life, like millions of Syrians' lives who were caught up in the war, had changed dramatically as they suffered from the consequences of the escalation of violence, such as chemical attacks, internal displacement, shootings, bombings, destruction of houses, power cuts, food embargoes, etc. (Mahmoud, 2015; Balanche, 2016; Huber et al., 2019).

Rafeef then described her experience in living in the capital city, Damascus. She said,

> *I lived in one of the Alawites neighbourhoods. Those neighbourhoods were safe from attacks and bombings as they were guarded by the Syrian regime's military forces which consists of Alawites gangs and militias serving the regime. It was not safe for Sunnis to live in those neighbourhoods, and Sunni neighbourhoods all over Syria became very dangerous […].*

In order to understand what Rafeef meant by 'Alawites' and 'Sunnis', it would be useful to know about the demographics in Syria, though the civil war has made it difficult to make a new accurate count of the population (Shoup, 2018; UNHCR, 2019). Syria used to be an ethnically, religiously, and linguistically diverse country. There were six ethnic groups in Syria; Arabs - who made 80% of the population, Kurds, Turkmen, Assyrians, Circassians, and Armenians (Khalifa, 2013; Sousa,2018). Religiously, before 2011, Syria had a majority of Sunni Muslims, who made 74% of the Syrian population including Arab and non-Arab Sunni Muslims, namely the Kurds, Turkmen, and Circassians (Beckouche,2017; Shoup, 2018; Commins et al., 2019). Alawites made 11% of the population in Syria, while Christian Syrians, who were of Assyrian and Armenian origin, made 10% of the population. The remaining 5% were divided between other sectarian groups such as Druze and Ismaili (Beckouche, 2017; Shoup, 2018; Commins et al., 2019).

Syria is run by Alawites who became the most politically powerful sectarian group, and whose members are the Syrian president and his inner circle (Alexander and Sherlock, 2012; Fisher, 2013). After the fall of the Ottoman empire, French rulers of Syria incorporated Alawites into the army to help them fight the Sunni uprising against the French occupation, and thus Alawites gained power since then (Alexander and Sherlock, 2012). In the 1970s, members of the Alawite group were encouraged to form neighbourhoods in strategic areas in Damascus, and they were given priority in jobs in security forces, police, intelligence, and the Syrian army, and in sensitive and highranking positions (Alexander and Sherlock, 2012; Balanche, 2016; Hourani, 2018). Thus, Alawi neighbourhoods which Rafeef mentioned, were formed and were protected by the Syrian Alawites army and militias, unlike the Sunni neighbourhoods which used to be the bastion of rebels and were under military siege, food embargoes and air strikes (Balanche, 2016).

Rafeef continued by describing her fears while living in an Alawites neighbourhood,

> *Although the area where I lived was safe, I didn't feel safe, we (Sunnis) always tried to avoid Alawites and the regime's 'shabiha', and we always had to say that we were supporters of the Syrian regime so they would leave us alone, but despite that, every now and then, the police would come into my flat to interrogate me about my husband, they told me if he was a supporter of the regime he should come back and fight against the rebels. I used to call my in-laws who would come in and would talk to them, and they would give them money. It was horrific each time, I was afraid they would take me. I remember exactly the last time I saw them, one of them was sitting on a chair and was writing notes in his notebook, and before he left, he told me that my husband had to come back.*
>
> *Also, I felt frightened all the time because I was afraid that 'shabiha' gangs might break into my flat at night, because it happened with some families whose houses were broken into.. We heard women's screams [...]. I also felt frightened when I needed to go out, I always thought of the possibility of getting attacked by the 'shabiha'[...].*

The 'shabiha' gangs that caused Rafeef to feel terrified very often are the gangs that the Syrian regime relied on to crackdown opposition among Syrians. Recruited mainly from Alawite sect, shabiha gangs are mafia-like thugs, heavily armed men who fight alongside the security forces (BBC, 2012). They are accused of carrying out a campaign of intimidation that has included sectarian attacks, slitting throats, breaking into homes of protesters, beating up occupants and setting their houses on fire (BBC, 2012; Alexander and Sherlock, 2012).

Amal, Noor, and Rafeef had hopes and plans for their future lives in their home countries. However, their lives changed after wars and violence tore their countries apart. The three of them experienced the atrocities of wars such as, air strikes, bombings, sectarian violence, destruction of infrastructure, deterioration of health care, food embargoes, power cuts, and fear which made their lives extremely hard in their home countries.

8.4 Trans-migration experiences

Trans-migration occurs during the transition from home to host country, and can be characterized by "extreme deprivation and traumatic experiences" (Anderson et al., 2004, p. 9).

Amal's experience of fleeing Iraq was extremely risky and horrific. Though happened a long time ago, she did not forget some key parts in the long and frightening journey of her flight. She recounted in her Iraqi Arabic,

> *We had to find an agent to help us flee the country. We paid a lot of money for him. The journey was very long and frightening; we first went to Yemen, then from Yemen we went to Amman, then headed from there to Turkey, before reaching Albania.*

Not wanting to trigger painful memories of experiences that happened a long time ago, I did not ask for more details about the dangers she faced or how she felt during the journey, but Amal, who speaks normally when she is well, stuttered when she talked about the following specific details.

> *We took an inflatable boat to travel from Albania to Italy. After arriving in Italy, we hid in a weapons train which was heading to Germany. My little child was with me, he was very little.*

People like Amal, who take these 'desperate journeys' to seek asylum in Europe, cross several borders, risk being detained, or kidnapped by human traffickers, and face the possibility of drowning in the sea (UNHCR, 2018). Fear and hopelessness are key factors that push people to 'gamble' with their money, their lives and the lives of their children, and to entrust their lives to 'nameless strangers' who charge them enormous amounts of money to smuggle them to Europe (Taylor et al., 2017). For many of the people fleeing their countries, sea crossing is the final part in the journey that involve considerable dangers, but for Amal, the journey did not end there, another dangerous trip had to be taken whereby several deaths of being crushed by train contents or accidents have been registered because of hiding in a train, truck, etc. (UNHCR, 2018).

However, when Amal and her husband succeeded in reaching what they thought would be their final destination, another hardship emerged, as she nervously described her experience in one of the cities in Germany,

> *We applied for asylum in Germany. We lived in Germany for a few months and had to share a flat with another family from Albania. We were very uncomfortable in the city we were placed in because people were racists, and*

> *officials in government offices treated us badly. After a few months of living in Germany, some Iraqi families who lived there too suggested to my husband that we should try to settle in London because doctors are needed in London, and my husband would have a good opportunity of finding a well-paying job and a better situation there.*

Amal's suffering in Germany reveals that hardships do not end when refugees settle in their country of destination. In most cases, especially in countries overburdened with refugees, they become victims of xenophobia, face stigmatization, and attacks on their shelters, as in the cases of arson attacks on refugee shelters in Germany (Crowe et al., 2016).

Similarly, Noor also described the long and dangerous journey she and her husband went through before they came to London. Noor recounted,

> *We decided we must leave Iraq. We paid an agent who told us he could send us to Europe. We first went to Syria and stayed there for a few months until the route was open. We then took cars to get to Turkey and from there, we went to Bulgaria... We took different transportation methods: an inflatable boat, a train, a plane, and crossed several borders before we arrived at Stansted airport in London and applied for asylum there. We didn't mind any country in Europe, my parents ended up in Sweden, our final point depends on the agent's plan, recommendation for the route, and the amount of money they are paid.*

The journey that Noor went through after fleeing Iraq is the typical journey that refugees take in pursuit of safety and a better life in Europe. It is called among refugees "the journey of death", they call the boats 'the boats of death', and the smugglers 'the agents of death' to refer to the numerous deaths along the journey (Motaparthy, 2015).

After arriving in their country of asylum, refugees like Noor have to endure other types of difficulties that exacerbate the sense of displacement. Noor remembered the shared flats, temporary residence permits, court appealing, years of waiting for a decision, being without a status and stateless, isolation, and the stress that accompanied all that.

> *After applying for asylum, we were taken to a refugee building in Hounslow where the flats and toilets were shared. One of my daughters became ill and had an allergic reaction because of the lack of hygienic standards in the flats, after she was checked they moved us to another unshared flat. We were given temporary residence permit for 6 months, we kept on applying for extension, but after the capture of Saddam, they refused to extend our residence permit, they told us 'your country is free now', and asked us why we wanted to stay. So we had to show them evidence of the violence that we faced back in Iraq and what my husband experienced [...]. We appealed in court, but it took several years of back and forth trips to the court and hearings during which we didn't have a*

> *status and I couldn't do anything. I couldn't study, work, travel, make friendships. I didn't know what to do so I tried to make myself busy with knitting and took whatever free courses that were offered like knitting, childcare, etc.*

Despite memories of hard times, Noor remembers well a teacher who helped her move on with her life.

> *I remember that there was an English course offered by a charity organization, I can't remember much details about that course, but like I said I joined whatever courses I could join, when the teacher there, and I still remember her name, took me aside and told me that my skills should not be wasted and helped me register in a college in Hammersmith, although I didn't have a status. And that was when things started to work out for me. I would never forget the support that came from her when I almost lost hope of continuing my education and getting my university degree, and I am forever grateful for that teacher.*

Rafeef's experience in fleeing Syria was loaded with anxiety and fear. She first left Syria crossing several borders heading towards Saudi Arabia where her husband was working. She would have stayed there if her husband had not lost his job and as a result, was not allowed to stay in the country. She recounted in her Syrian Arabic,

> *After two years, my husband was finally able to get a Saudi visa for us. Our journey started by taking a Turkish bus that came from Turkey and which was heading towards the holy sites in Saudi Arabia, and which was scheduled to stop in Damascus. We were with a Turkish group, but I was interrogated at the Syrian border and was asked about my husband, and I had to tell the officers I was going to Saudi Arabia for a short visit ... We crossed the Syrian border to the Jordanian border, and from there to the Saudi border, but we were interrogated for six hours there, they also took our fingerprints and we were inspected before we were allowed entry into Saudi Arabia. I lived there for three years, we were fine until in 2017 my husband, like thousands of others, was fired from his job and as a result our Saudi residence was cancelled, and we had to leave Saudi Arabia soon.*

The majority of Syrian refugees fled to neighbouring countries, namely Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt (discussed in Chater 4). Governments in some of those countries claimed that Syrian refugees have taken a toll on their economy and they were unable to support them (Chulov, 2018).

Regarding the Gulf states, Syrians could enter through a tourist visa, work permit, or if they had family there, which is costly because of the high fees imposed on expatriates, and which raised questions on media whether the Gulf states had more of a duty towards Syrian refugees than Europe given their wealth and proximity to Syria (Fathalla, 2015).

Moreover, in a trend called the ‘nationalisation’ of employment, the recent drive in the Gulf states has been to prioritise employment of locals (Fathalla, 2015). This is evident in some Gulf states’ plans to reduce the number of foreign workers systematically, and in the large-scale exodus of 1.1 million foreign workers who left the workforce in Saudi Arabia between the years 2017-2018, according to latest figures from the Saudi government statistics agency (Fahim, 2019).

Rafeef continued,

> *My husband told me that we either flee to Europe and apply for asylum there, or we go back to Syria to die there, and I broke down.. I told him I couldn’t become a refugee.. I told him I didn’t think I would be able to live in the West ... But in the end, we had to take that decision for the sake of our children, not for our sake. So my husband paid all our savings to an agent who told him he could put us on a plane to London. We were told that anything could happen to us before we arrive in London, we were also made aware of the possibility that we might face deportation, but we did not have any other choice.*

While the decision to leave one’s country might seem like a ‘decision’, it is in reality not a decision for millions of Syrian refugees who had no other choice but to leave everything behind, and to risk their lives while fleeing the country (The Journal, 2018; Malek, 2019). They have suffered from a brutal conflict that has torn the nation apart and killed hundreds of thousands of people, destroyed historic landmarks, infrastructure, hospitals, schools, utilities, water and sanitation systems, etc. (Huber et al., 2019). Therefore, they decide to flee although they are wary of the ‘indignities of displacement’ and of the loss of a home they once had (Malek, 2019).

Rafeef then provided a moving account of her experience in becoming a refugee.

> *We arrived at Heathrow airport, and for the first time we had nothing except the clothes on our backs, no home, no money, no clothes to change ...we had nothing at all. We were held in the airport in a big hall that was enclosed with metal chains from all sides, and there were other Syrians and asylum seekers like us from different countries in that hall. I sat there watching people arriving and departing, living their own lives. They seemed to have normal lives, while we were sitting in that hall and couldn’t even aspire for a simple life. I remember at that moment feeling sorry for myself and how we ended up.. It took all the power I had not to cry in front of the children, I think it’s an indescribable feeling. We were held in the airport from 6 pm until 3 am, It was cold and we weren’t wearing thick clothes because we came from Saudi Arabia and it was warm there. The children became very tired and hungry, we were all becoming really exhausted, and anxiety was an added pressure. They brought us toasted bread and chips and fruits to eat, it was a kind thing. Then they brought an interpreter and they asked us many questions, then they took photos of us and took our*

> *fingerprints. Then we were taken to a hotel in Croydon, and we stayed there for a week until they processed our files.*

The experience of displacement, as expressed in Rafeef's words, is one of the most significant experiences of loss that refugees face (Hamilton et al., 2007). It can result in multiple grief and loss experiences as refugees experience losses of a country, a way of life, family and friends, social status, profession, emotional security, cultural and religious acceptance and belonging, being able to interact and communicate with the wider society (Ibid). These multiple losses result in feelings of estrangement, yearning for the lost homeland, and loss of identity among Syrian refugees who struggle to adapt to life in foreign communities (Moussa, 2014).

Rafeef continued,

> *Then the second phase of this journey started, we were sent to a refugee housing centre in Liverpool. There were many refugees there, some were from Libya, Iraq, Algeria, and we stayed there for two months. We shared a flat with a Libyan family and it was something new to me as I haven't experienced sharing a flat with strangers before. It was hard but I kept myself patient and what made life easier there was the housing supervisor, she was a British Muslim and she was kind with us, she always asked us if we needed anything, and my husband told her he wanted to learn English, so she helped him register in a school to learn the language. As for me, I had to stay with the children who were not allowed to go to schools yet. They provided us with a GP and a lawyer because we needed one, and we were given £5 per day for each one of us. After that we were sent to another city in the North called Blackburn, we lived in a quiet and beautiful area there, it just reminded me of the countryside in Hama. I noticed there were many Muslims in that city, though I rarely saw any Arabs, but we avoided everybody.*
>
> *We were anxious, and my husband didn't work, the children didn't go to schools, so we didn't feel safe and settled. We stayed there for six months until we had our case approved and we were given a 'refugee leave to remain'. After a few months, we were provided with travel documents. They told us we could get British passports after five years, and it has been two years now, who knows, maybe in three years' time things will change and we would just go back to Syria.*

While difficult life circumstances, as Rafeef described them, often lead to demoralisation and hopelessness, and may be related to profound concerns of safety, trust, social role and society (Hassan et al., 2015), displaced Syrians use various positive ways to cope, such as praying, to reduce tension and stress, remembering former good times back in Syria, as well as other social activities such as the companionship of family and friends, engaging in social activities, attending a community activity or school, talking with a trusted person (Ibid).

Refugees like Amal, Noor, and Rafeef risk predictable dangers on their way to Europe such as, drowning, exploitation, robbery, abuse, death of family, etc., and endure uncertainty during their journeys, such as the possibility of deportation (UNHCR, 2017). However, suffering does not end when they arrive in their country of destination, as other challenges emerge such as, xenophobia, isolation, poverty, anxiety and uncertainty, all are conditions that could last for several years.

8.5 Post-migration experiences

Post-migration experiences occur when the refugees settle in another country and face additional stressors (Fazel and Stein, 2002; Loewen, 2004). These stressors stem from the challenges of becoming socially included in a society that is linguistically and culturally different. This section will offer a deeper insight into the challenges the participants faced in accessing ESOL provision and becoming socially included in the society as narrated by the participants.

8.5.1 Learning English

Amal's experience in learning English has been long and challenging. She started her story with this account,

> *In 2013, I was enrolled in a Functional skills (FS) course in a college in London. I spent three years there and finished Entry levels 1, 2, and 3 besides a maths course. Then I was shocked when the teachers told me that they would not let me proceed to a Level 1 course and that I would start from the beginning in ESOL courses but I should come back after 1 year. I asked for an explanation. I didn't know how I would spend an entire year without courses so I registered in another centre and paid for ESOL courses.*
>
> *I came back after one year and was enrolled in a Level 1 maths course. A few days after the beginning of the maths course, I was asked to meet the principal of the college in his office. The principal told me that I had to stop because I had been in the college for a long time (three years). He told me I could come back after one year.*

The lack of communication between Amal and her teachers made things confusing for her. She could not understand why she had to start taking ESOL courses instead of continuing with FS courses. She was deprived from taking courses for two consecutive years for what seemed to be funding issues the college was struggling with. While the

UK government requires that newcomers should learn English, yet, national policies regarding ESOL education is "inconsistent, contentious and contradictory" leaving many learners like Amal experience fear of isolation and a sense of inferiority (Simpson, 2016, p.4). Amal continued,

> *When I went back after one year, the same principal told me that I had to be assessed again, so he took me to a room and told me that I would be assessed in English, maths, and writing, and that I had fifteen minutes for each. He then locked the room and left. The principal was very tough with me. After the assessments, he told me that I was very bad, and he would not let me enrol in FS courses. I was upset and told my teachers about the principal, but they told me there was nothing they could do and if I wanted anything I should speak with the principal. They don't feel my suffering or put extra effort to understand what I want.*

Amal's description of the incident with the principal reveals a deep sense of being a devalued and disrespected learner because she did not have linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1977, p.653). In addition, the way the principal and her teachers responded to her questions reveals a lack of empathy, which Mercer (2016) highlighted as an important quality for teachers who work in multicultural classrooms and with minority ethnic students in order to be able to interact properly with them. Of a similar importance are the socio-emotional skills for teachers and their sensitivities to relational aspects with their learners (Underhill, 2013).

I was given the opportunity to speak with one of Amal's teachers at the college. The teacher is not a participant in my research but he accepted to express his views on the difficulties Amal faced in learning English. The teacher was a male with 27 years of teaching experience. When I asked him about the challenges Amal faced, he said that learners like Amal are usually '*trapped in a vicious cycle*' because they enrol in several courses but there is a certain level that they could not pass. When I asked him if there were specific skills she was finding difficulties with, he said, '*She failed Level Entry 3 because of speaking and because her handwriting is scrappy*'. I asked him if Amal could receive more support as she could have special learning needs, he said '*I know nothing about her background and they don't tell us if a learner has mental health issues or any other issues like stuttering*'. However, in learning cases like Amal's he stressed that '*I can't show empathy like middle-aged women*'.

The teacher's views explained some of the issues in ESOL provision that affect the learning experience of learners like Amal. On the one hand, they are left unsupported with their learning needs not addressed. On the other hand, the teachers are not being made aware of the backgrounds and histories of their learners, and therefore teachers resort to essentialist ideas about their learners, who are usually labelled as 'slow', 'unmotivated', etc. as Norton (2016) has discussed. Equally important are issues related to ways ESOL courses are designed and provided, which usually follow a 'one size fits all' when planning for qualifications and consider only the 'average ESOL learner' when designing courses for extremely diverse groups of ESOL learners (Kings and Casey, 2013).

When I contacted the Curriculum Lead in the college where Amal enrolled in several ESOL and FS courses, I was informed that Amal had an in-depth assessment before enrolling in an ESOL course for the new academic year of 2018/2019. Based on the results of the assessment, it was decided that 'o*ur organisation doesn't have specialist tutors nor the specific resources to help her progress further'.* I was also told that other colleges and adult learning centres with resources that suits Amal's specific needs were suggested to her.

Later when I met Amal, she was frustrated by what she was told by the assessor and the Curriculum Lead.

> *They told me I have dyslexia. So, after all these years they tell me I am dyslexic. And the colleges they suggested are too far from where I live, and the classes are always at night.*

Amal was finally diagnosed with dyslyxia (discussed in Chpater 3) and was referred to other adult learning centres. It is noteworthy that adults with dyslexia, who often acquire dyslexia as a result of a traumatic event, usually endure 'unhelpful and damaging comments from their teachers' and experience a lack of understanding from them (Dyslexia Action, 2012). Amal has experienced such damaging comments from the principal who told her she was "very bad" when he referred to her English skills, and in her teacher's description of her handwriting as "scrappy". An important point to consider here that Amal as a person with dyslexia has a 'protected characteristic', which makes it illegal to treat her less favourably in educational places, put arrangements that apply to everyone but put her at an unfair disadvantage, or treat her in a way that violates her dignity (HM Government, 2010).

On the other hand, Noor descried her experience in learning English as different from the experiences of the majority of refugee women. She said,

> *My story is different form the common story of most people. I was ambitious, I couldn't wait to work on my goals. Although our studies in the university back in Baghdad were all in English, they told me that the certificate that proves I completed my first year in university was only equivalent to a GCSE. So, I was told I must get an A Level when I applied for a university. I had to take English courses before applying for A Level exams, so I went to a college in Hammersmith and studied English for four years. I progressed quickly in my English language courses and did not face any difficulties. After almost six and a half years, we were given political asylum, and I was able after that to complete my university studies. I was even able to get my master's degree in pharmacology and completed a year of training shortly afterwards.*

Noor's linguistic capital and institutionalised capital were not recognised by the 'dominant actors' in the new 'field' (Bourdiew, 1993) and she had to start from a point below her actual level. However, Noor was highly motivated to continue her studies. She had a goal for the future and did not want to waste her life in exile. It would seem that the image she had for herself in the future, or her 'ideal L2 self' (Dornyei, 2009. P.29) which is a successful pharmacist who is able to communicate fluently in English, worked as a "powerful motivator" to help her learn English (ibid)

Rafeef talked about her experience in learning English through informal training and family learning sessions, because she was unable to enrol in formal accredited course.

> *A year ago, a tutor used to come to my house to teach me English because I had a three-year-old son, so I couldn't go to a college. She taught me for two months and then she stopped. She told me that my English was generally fine and above entry level, and I just needed more practice with speaking. She taught me things I have already known such as, counting from one to twenty, days of the week, greetings, etc., all of which I had already learned in the university back in Syria. But even that was fine with me, it was better than not having any lessons, and I was able to practice speaking with her. I ran into her once and asked her if she could come and teach me again, but she apologised and said she was busy with other students. She tutored all Syrian refugees and I think she wanted to stay with those who had no knowledge of English. I couldn't register in ESOL courses in the college because they are not free. Then I was told about free English classes for families that are held once a week, so I didn't waste the chance and registered to attend them. I am looking forward to the day I would be able to work, I used to teach in a college in Syria, but I won't be able to work here if I don't improve my English skills first.*

Rafeef is highly motivated to improve her skills in English. However, Rafeef is one of the refugees who were negatively affected by the cuts in funding for ESOL, which fell from £203 in 2010 to £90 in 2016, and mounts to 60% of reduction in funding (Foster and Bolton, 2017). This is negatively impacting refugees across England who would wait for months, and in some cases, years to access ESOL classes, and as a result, their lives remain on hold (Refugee Action, 2017).

However, the informal ESOL classes that she attended were not enough for her. She wanted to attend accredited ESOL courses, but was unable to do so. She explained,

> *I have to pay £500 to be able to register in a college. Right now, this is a big amount of money to pay for English courses. This is because my husband works now, so if I wanted to learn English, I have to pay. Unlike me, my husband was able to have formal English courses for free because when he registered, he was in Entry Level 1 and wasn't employed yet. He's in level 2 now and will finish in a few months, but even after he finishes, we will have to pay if I wanted to enrol in the college. The problem is that he has a part time job in a restaurant and doesn't make enough money – less than £12,000 a year – and we are not on benefits. Maybe in the future, when he gets a better paying job.*

Rafeef was also affected by the changing and unfair policies in ESOL. While the new policy states that ESOL Entry 1,2,3 courses are fully funded, they become half funded if the learners become employed (HM Government, 2018). However, as a Syrian refugee, she should be entitled to funding from the government's scheme to support Syrian refugees, and to the additional and exceptional funding that the government provided to support refugees in rebuilding their lives (discussed in Chapter 3).

Amal, Noor, and Rafeef faced different obstacles when they accessed ESOL provision. Amal went to several colleges and adult learning centres and paid considerable amounts of money for English courses, but she was unable to progress because her special learning needs were not discovered soon enough. However, she was finally told that she was a dyslexic learner, and that there were no resources to address her special learning needs. Before that, she was subject to humiliation and verbal abuse in some of the centres she attended. On the other hand, Noor's skills in English were not recognised although she had all her studies in English in the university, but she had to retake English courses because that was how the system works in the UK. Rafeef has been unable to improve her English skills as she is not eligible to enrol in free accredited ESOL courses. Her husband works in a low-paid job and they are not receiving allowance, thus enrolling in an accredited course where she has to pay £500 is not possible for her at the time. However, she tries to improve her English by joining unaccredited and free family learning sessions. The difficulties that Amal and Rafeef in particular faced in learning English have a negative impact on their post-migration experiences.

8.5.2 Experiences of social inclusion

This section will discuss the participants post-migration experiences in relation to social inclusion in British society.

8.5.2.1 Displacement

I will keep writing
Until my voice reaches the highest mountain peak
Until my voice is heard by all people
Throughout the endless dark nights
I feel nostalgic
I am lost and alone
There is a deep scar in my heart
I am not alive and yet, not dead
My voice is trapped inside my throat
I cannot free it
So I will keep writing
(A translation of an excerpt from a poem written by Amal)

Amal and I met several times in one of the cafes that she likes. She often shared with me poems that she wrote in Arabic and told me that she writes poetry to express the pain of losing her family and homeland. Johnson et al. (2009) pointed out that creative activities such as drawing, writing poetry, etc. can be effective self-coping strategies for trauma survivors, and helpful in expressing feelings and mitigating suffering.

When I first met Amal, it was twenty years since she fled Iraq, yet she still feels uprooted and displaced. She explained in her Iraqi Arabic,

> *Being in a foreign country is like being in a house that is not yours. I can't not remember Iraq every day and when I go out in the evening and walk in central London, the crowds and the lights remind me of the good old days in Baghdad. It's all gone now ... everything has changed. I just wish I could visit my mother's grave. I don't even know where she was buried.*

Amal's description of the UK as a 'foreign country' is a reflection of the state of homelessness that many Iraqis in exile feel; they are not capable of returning to their home country because of the unstable situations there, and yet, they are not capable of 'rooting themselves in their present location' (Majeed, 2018, p. 71). She is nostalgic about a past that will not come back, as post-invasion Iraq is no longer the place Iraqis had once known (Saleh, 2011; Majeed, 2018).

Amal continued,

> *What makes things harder for me is that I couldn't make any friendships with any Arab community in London, they are different here, they are detached, and the common thing about them is that they are constantly afraid.*

'Fear', as Amal mentioned, within some Arab communities was instilled by oppressive post-colonial states through the monitoring and controlling of the political and social fields (Chatelard, 2009). Because of fear, people are constantly advised to be careful even from the people they trust the most, as they could turn out to be informants for their post-colonial governments (Majeed, 2018).

Noor also expressed a similar feeling of displacement during our several meetings. She said,

> *We have lost our home country, our families, our lives, how can we forget all that? It breaks my heart to think how we used to be and how we are now. Look at Iraq now and how it is, is this a country? Just think about what happened to our universities, schools, the systems. A country that used to be called the cradle of civilisations, and now I think it will take another thousands of years to fix the damage that happened.*

There is a deep sense of sorrow inside Noor for the multiple losses that she experienced. Her feelings of displacement are worsened because of the destruction that occurred in her country at various levels (discussed in Chapter 4), and the despair and hopelessness of any future return. It is noteworthy that the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates which became Iraq in modern time, gave rise to what is thought to be the first civilisations of humans such as the civilisations of the Sumerians, Assyrians, Babylonians, etc., hence, it is called the cradle of civilisations (Haidary, 2009; Zaidi and Abutiheen, 2019).

When I asked Noor whether she felt she was included in the British society, her answer was moving. She said,

> *No matter how many years you spend in exile, you will always remain a stranger. And what is inclusion after all? How do you define inclusion? Are there any criteria for inclusion against which I can evaluate my situation and decide if I am included or not?*
>
> *But I can tell you one thing, we will never be safe and protected here. Even after becoming British, our citizenship could be simply revoked for any reason. From what I can see is happening in Britain now, they could tell us anything, like we should go back to our country of origin, or we are Muslims so we are always under suspicion, or any other reason. We didn't come here because we love living in the West, look at our countries, all Arab countries, they are either destroyed with wars or are sinking in corruption and poverty. Where are we*

> *supposed to go? There is also no job stability, the manager can fire you for the silliest reason, and equality and diversity law is in reality not in effect. I applied for several positions in hospitals, and I got all the training and the courses required and I am fully qualified for the positions I applied for, but when I go for the interviews I can see it is an English-only-environment, and as soon as they see you , you get a feeling you are not the type of person they want, although they make the interview and it is harsh and tough and everything but you never hear from them. I know I can be more than just a pharmacist working in someone else's pharmacy and I can make more money with my qualifications, but this is the limit, you can't go any further. And I am really surprised, if you look around it's a multicultural city.. So back to your question, am I included or not? I think the answer is known and clear.*

Noor asked pertinent questions about the definition of inclusion, as the terms 'inclusion', 'cohesion', and 'integration' (discussed in an earlier chapter) have been used excessively but they lack a clear definition and measurement strategies at all levels in the UK government (Donoghue and Bourke, 2019). Noor's answer uncovered many barriers to inclusion Arab Muslim women face. Starting from racism and Islamophobia, to alienation as a result of field, habitus and capital effects (Bourdiue, 1998), direct or hidden discrimination and finally the 'glass ceiling effect' (Miller and Callender, 2019), all of which are issues that have been recurring with refugees/migrants particularly Muslims.

Like Amal and Noor, Rafeef who came to the UK in 2017, is still thinking about her home country and members of her family back in Syria every day. The second time I met Rafeef, we were sitting on the riverside in her neighbourhood. It was a sunny, breezy day. We sat on the grass at the edge of the river and watched people rafting, swans passing, ducks catching fish. Along the riverbank, different kinds of trees and wildflowers grew, and up in the sky, squawking seagulls were flying. The wonderful view reminded Rafeef of the beautiful nature of Syria. She expressed,

> *All this beauty reminds me of the Euphrates and the Tigris, the Mediterranean coast, and the countryside of Hama. But Hama has turned into rubbles now, like most of the other cities and towns.*

She reached out for her phone to show me pictures she found on the Internet of her hometown, which was destroyed, and said while pointing to some places,

> *This is my hometown. Here, used to be my parents' house. I lived in this city for 27 years. Can anybody forget 27 years? I still remember the streets, the schools, the neighbourhoods.*

She pointed at a specific area and said,

> *There used to be a building here and …*

There were only rubbles in the picture. I waited for her to finish her sentence, but she broke down into tears. Then she continued,

> *I always say even if the entire country is turned into rubbles, I still want to go back. My dear mother's grave is there, all my life, my memories. Nothing here will make me forget my beloved Syria.*
>
> *And I always wonder why all that happened to us? I think it is a chance to reflect and think where we went wrong and how we can improve.*

Rafeef like the majority of Syrian refugees, is experiencing grief for the destruction of her home country which is considered one of the oldest civilisations that dates back to 8000BC (History, 2017). As a refugee who was left with no choice but to flee her home country, feelings of displacement are profound. However, there are cultural and religious factors that influence how Syrians experience and express suffering, such as the notion of the acceptance of fate which is reflected in valuing patience when facing adversity and loss (Hassan et al., 2015). Moreover, a widespread view among Syrian Muslims and nonMuslims, is that catastrophes may be seen as an opportunity for reflection and growth, and an occasion to strengthen one's faith (Deuraseh and Abu Talib, 2005; Sadr, 2011), which is evident in Rafeef's reflections.

8.5.2.2 Islamophobia

Some of the incidents that happen to Noor in the pharmacy can be linked to Islamophobia, but she said such incidents do not happen often.

> *Some people are disrespectful, some even shout at me at the pharmacy. After all these years of studying and working hard to improve myself, I get treated disrespectfully. Some people come to the pharmacy and when they see me they call me a 'terrorist'. One day a lady came into the pharmacy and asked me if I was one of the people who did the terrorist attack in France. I think she just wanted to insinuate that all Muslims are terrorists. I just tried to remain calm and just told her I didn't. She then criticized my outfit and the way I looked, I didn't say anything to her and remained silent.*

Despite being educated and productive, Noor is being rejected and oppressed by some people in British society. Like the majority of Muslims in the UK, Noor is experiencing 'Islamophobia' and being powerless towards racism. Noor was also 'othered' and viewed as an oppressed woman, which explains why she was criticized for wearing the hijab.

These feelings and attitudes towards the 'Others' are a result of the classification of societies as 'the West' and 'the non-West', and imagining non-Western people as inferior and simple, and in need of help from the modern and sophisticated West (Holliday, 2011). Furthermore, asking members of minorities to fit in or to 'assimilate' in the context of racial discrimination and ignoring their rights could result in further resentment (Modood, 1992).

She also remembered an incident that had caused a lot of emotional pain, and exacerbated her feelings of displacement and the indignity that accompanies it.

> *The first time I wanted to travel to visit my parents in Sweden, I was treated badly. The female officer pointed at my carry-on bag and told me she would not let me take it inside the airplane. I told her it was within the size and weight allowed inside an airplane, but she refused. I asked for an explanation for refusing to allow me to take my carry-on bag, but she told me I was rude and called the airport police for me, and the police came and took me handcuffed as if I was a criminal, all of this because of a discussion over a carry-on bag. The police asked me if I wanted a lawyer, but I told them the whole incident and told them that I didn't do anything wrong. The interrogation lasted for 11 hours, and the police were biased with the airport officer. I lost my flight and I called a lawyer eventually and paid money for him to get me out of that situation. And now I have to present a declaration every year. One of my university doctors at the time of the incident advised me that if I wanted to survive here I had to remain calm and to avoid arguing with anyone.*

After this incident at the airport where Noor found herself powerless, she was offered advice by an academic which added to her feelings of oppression and estrangement. The incident and the advice were an example of the idea of the unheard voices of those who lack power, and the dominant and hegemonic voices of the powerful in every culture (Said, 1995), and Noor, must subscribe to the former.

Rafeef told me she constantly reflected on her status as a refugee and the agonising feeling of being estranged. She mentioned some incidents that exacerbated her feelings of estrangement and exclusion.

> *A refugee will always be powerless wherever he/she goes. There is a popular proverb in Syria that says, 'He who leaves his home, loses his dignity'. I felt that to be so true when one day I was walking with my daughters in a shopping centre and two women gave us a scornful look as they moved past us. In another instance I heard some young men saying 'Go home', I didn't look to see if they were speaking with me, but I think they were.*

8.5.2.3 Uselessness

During my meetings with Amal, she often described her life as empty and useless.

> *It's the same thing every day, nothing's new. My sons are studying in different universities in the UK and have left the house. I have nothing to do. There was an open day at the college and I wanted to enrol in an office skills course, but they told me I should have at least passed ESOL Level 1, so I couldn't enrol in that course or any other course. I really want to have a job, I want to do something for myself ... I think I am completely useless.*

When I suggested to her to teach Arabic in a school, she cried, to my surprise, and told me even if she wanted to teach Arabic, she had to have a proof that she had the required level of English, even if she wanted to work in low-skilled jobs, such as a receptionist, or reservation officer in a travel agency, she still had to have that level of English.

Amal's feeling of worthlessness is a result of 'post-displacement' factors such as poor English, unemployment, discrimination, etc. which have an impact on mental health, and affect the integration of Iraqi refugees (Wright et al., 2016). This is evident in what Amal explained to me the last time I saw her, she explained that not being able to have a job is worsening her feelings of loneliness and uselessness.

Similarly, Rafeef has been in the UK for more than two years, but has been unable to make any progress in her situation. She has not been able to enrol in accredited English courses to improve her English skills, and has not been able to work either because of that. She expressed a deep sense of uselessness and said,

> *There isn't enough money.. I want to work but I can't.. Some charities give Syrian refugees food vouchers and provide us with tea, sugar, cereal, sanitary items, etc. according to the number of persons in the house. I wish I didn't need to use those vouchers, and was able to work and provide for myself and family instead.*

Dignity has become a widely used concept in human rights documents and humanitarian aid programmes, though it manifests differently in different cultural contexts (Holloway and Grandi, 2018). Dignity is a very important concept in Arab and Muslim culture (El Gantri and El Mufti, 2017). The concept of dignity is reflected in cultural and religious traditions that urge people (women and men) to live in dignity by being strong, and to preserve their dignity by working and providing for their needs, which is something Syrian refugees in different parts of the world expressed to have lost as a result of displacement (Ibid). The loss of dignity can be sensed in Rafeef's experience in using food vouchers, but yet, she feels helpless and unable to change her situation, creating by that a feeling of uselessness.

To sum up, Amal, Noor, and Rafeef used the words ‘foreign country’, ‘exile’, ‘stranger’, ‘powerless’, ‘loss of dignity’, to express their feelings of displacement. Memories of their lost home countries and the multiple challenges they face in their new communities some of which are the lack of bonding and bridging, and the lack of social ties because of the ‘culture of fear’ worsen thier feelings of isolation and loneliness (Malek, 2018) and make them unable to move on. Other factors such as alienation, discrimination, racism, and unacknowledged linguistic and institutionalised capital, all seem to hinder inclusion and to exacerbate their feelings of displacement.

8.5.2.4 Second generation - Children of participants

Although the participants’ children are not a focus in my research, Amal, Noor, and Rafeef spoke about their children with anxiety and hope. For example, Amal spoke about the price of living in the West,

> *I appreciate the feeling of freedom and safety in London, but there is a price for everything. My sons were brought up in London, so they think and behave like the English people. I speak with them in Arabic and they speak with me in English, they have become more English than Iraqis. There's nothing I can do now to change this; they have lost their Arab Muslim identity forever.*

Similarly, Noor talked about her daughters who have lived all their lives in London, and how they developed ‘hybrid identities’ (Bhaba, 1994). She said,

> *I send my daughters to an Arabic school on Saturday where they learn to read and write Arabic, and learn reading the Quran. I tell them about Iraq, and how it used to be and why we left. They grew up to be conservative, but still they are more British than Iraqis in the way they think and the way they behave. It is unquestionable that they will be different, I don’t blame them, sometime I offer advice, that’s all.*

Rafeef also reminds her son and daughters of their Syrian Muslim identity. She explained,

> *I told them there will be things that they will appreciate in the British culture, but it is also their duty to reflect the true essence of Islam and to reflect a good image of all Syrians.*

Amal and Noor wanted their children to inherit their Iraqi Muslim identity. For Amal, she feels sorry that her sons have lost their Arab Muslim identity as a result of living in the West, whereas Noor seems to understand that being Western is a normal consequence of living all their lives in the UK, because as Modood (1992, p.23) argues, "they are a product of the British society". As for Rafeef, she encouraged her children to be multicultural, and at the same time reminded them not to assimilate.

While Amal, Noor, and Rafeef talked about what difficulties and challenges they face in the UK, they also talked about their sons and daughter with a lot of pride. Amal talked about her two sons and described them as intelligent and becoming highly educated. Her face always lit up when she talked about her sons' success stories. She said,

> *My youngest got three A* and got accepted in one of the top universities in the UK. My eldest has started his PhD in computer science, he tells me he is going to be a scientist and a well-known university professor. I am so proud of them.*

Similarly, Noor spoke about her daughters with pride.

> *My daughter is in year 11 in one of the most reputable private schools in London. Before she moved to that school, I told her I would work day and night to pay for her tuition fees, but we were happy when she got high scores and got a fully funded scholarship in that school. She tells me she wants to go to medical school and I tell her it's going to be a long and hard journey, but I am really happy for her and proud of her.*

Rafeef is also proud of her stepdaughters and stepson. The three of them are in universities in London.

> *My son is studying computer engineering and I am happy for him. The girls are studying economy and commerce in one of the top 20 universities in the UK. They are doing very well too, and are planning to do their post-graduate studies afterwards.*

Amal, Noor, and Rafeef are proud mothers. I would argue that their children's success provides a compensation for the hard decision of flight, risking their lives so their children could have theirs, and some relief from the pain of displacement, the difficulties they live with, and having to spend the rest of their lives in exile.

8.6 Conclusion

Amal, Noor, and Rafeef's life histories shed light on the lives of many refugee Arab Muslim women like them. Their pre-migration experiences reveal that their countries, Syria and Iraq, were torn by wars and conflicts. They have witnessed chaos, fear, violence, and the destruction of their countries' infrastructure, and were forced to take the 'decision' to flee their countries, when in fact they did not have any other choice (Malek, 2019). However, after settling in the UK, the pain of losing a home country they once had remains strong and affects their adaptation to life in the UK. Deep inside, they still feel like 'strangers' in a forced exile, but there are many factors that exacerbate that feeling. These are the lack of bonding and bridging which lead to isolation, unemployment, uselessness, and poverty. In addition, unrecognised linguistic capital, cultural and institutionalised capital because of racism and discrimination, are all factors that hindered inclusion and limited their opportunities in British society.

Acquiring a level of English proficiency in order to be able to progress to employment is essential. Yet, there are factors that make achieving that goal nearly impossible. The lack of resources and teacher training to address special learning needs, namely dyslexia, among adult ESOL learners is an important factor, though according to Equality Act, 2010 adult learning centres have to make adjustments to accommodate the learning needs of dyslexic learners (Legislation. Gov, 2010). Other factors include restrictions on accessing ESOL provision, in the form of expensive courses and tutors, which deprive many from the opportunity to learn English, and consequently deprive them from any opportunity to get employed. Amal and Rafeef wanted to be useful citizens and wanted to "make a productive contribution to the nation's economy" (Denham, 2009, p.2). Yet, not being able to improve their skills in English stood in their way. Their experiences are very much explained in Said's words,

> *Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in an exile's life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. (Said, 2000, p.137).*

Chapter 9

Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together the findings discussed in the three data analysis chapters in order to answer the overarching question of the study:

How do the experiences of refugee Arab Muslim women living in London affect their capacity to learn English and their social inclusion?

Experiences of refugee Arab Muslim women were organised in three stages, premigration, trans-migration, and post-migration experiences, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of their stories of displacement and experiences of inclusion. These three stages are proposed by Fazel and Stein (2003), who point out that refugees in general experience two major transitions that can affect their lives profoundly. First is the flight from their home countries which is characterised by traumatic experiences, and second their arrival at the country of settlement, a stage that is characterised by low personal resources in a country that differs radically from their home countries.

In order to understand experiences under the three migratory stages, three sub-questions were added:

- To what extent do refugee Arab Muslim women's life histories and stories of displacement affect their adaptation to life in the UK?

- How do refugee Arab Muslim women negotiate the learning of English once in the UK, and what forms of intercultural communication affect their capacity to acquire the language?

- What experiences do refugee Arab Muslim women encounter when living in the UK and how do these influence their social inclusion?

The next sections will focus on each question separately, and will in the end be combined to answer the overarching question of the study.

9.2 Refugee Arab Muslim women's stories of displacement

This section will address my first sub-question:

- To what extent do refugee Arab Muslim women's life histories and stories of displacement affect their adaptation to life in the UK?

The discussion in this section will be based on findings from the pre-migration and transmigration experiences of the participants, as discussed in Chapter 8. The participants' post-migration experiences will be addressed in subsequent sections. The findings under the three migratory stages in this study matter, because they enrich our understanding of the displacement circumstances and experiences of inclusion of refugee Muslim women from Iraq and Syria, the two Arab countries where millions of refugees and forced migrants come from (Reid, 2020).They also contribute to the literature that helps understand the refugee experience, which ultimately aims at finding ways to better support this vulnerable and marginalised group in the society.

Home (an excerpt)

You have to understand,
That no one puts their children in a boat
Unless the water is safer than the land
No one burns their palms
Under trains
Beneath carriages
No one spends days and nights in the stomach of a truck
Feeding on newspaper unless the miles travelled means
something more than the journey

Warsan Shire (2017)

In writing her well-known poem, *Home,* Warsan Shire wanted to provide a better understanding of the refugee experience. Her poem throws light on the grief that refugees experience as well as the harsh and traumatic experiences they go through as they seek 'a life' in another place. This poem, though poignant, is an authentic expression of refugee Arab Muslim women's experiences of flight.

The three participants in this study Amal, Noor, and Rafeef had similar pre-migration experiences. Although the reasons for the wars in Iraq and Syria were different, both countries were afflicted with similar war atrocities. Life history interviews revealed that before their flight from their countries, the three of them had aspiring lives. Amal and Noor were studying for their undergraduate degrees, Rafeef had a teaching job that she liked, and they had dreams and plans for their future lives in their home countries. They had their patents, their close and extended families and friends, they had bonds with the people and communities in their neighbourhoods and cities. They had a strong sense of belonging to their home countries.

All that was taken away from them and their lives were changed dramatically as their countries were afflicted with wars and violence. Amal and Noor survived the massive airstrikes that hit Iraq in 1991 and lived under the comprehensive siege for several years. They described how the adverse situation in Iraq under the embargo and how life changed and became very hard. They talked about the deterioration of the health and education systems, the lack of food and medicine, and increased rates of mortality, particularly among children because of malnutrition, the spread of diseases, the destruction of the infrastructure and public facilities, the closing down of many businesses, and the breakdown of the economy (Halliday, 2000). Rafeef went through similar hardships after the uprising in Syria which developed into a civil war that destroyed the country. Like millions of Syrians, she endured airstrikes, sniper shootings, bombings, and suffered from food embargoes, destruction of health facilities and power cuts.

In addition, both Noor and Rafeef experienced sectarian violence in Iraq and Syria. Noor recounted the chaos and the sectarian violence that spread after the invasion of Iraq in 2003. She described the fear she lived through because of the assassination campaign that targeted Sunni Muslim figures (Hamdani, 2006; Jalili, 2007), the detention and torture of some of her close family, and the letters of warning in which they were threatened to be killed if they did not leave. Rafeef described living under the fear of getting detained where she would be tortured and raped, and recounted having the Alawite police coming into her flat several times, interrogating her, asking about her husband, and having to declare her loyalty to the regime. She also lived under the fear of the possibility of being attacked by the Alawite 'Shabiha' gangs (discussed in Chapter 8). The three of them were forced to leave their countries as staying there became extremely hard and dangerous. Amal fled her country in 1997 with her husband and child after it became impossible for her to live a dignified life under the embargo. Noor left Iraq in 2003 with her husband, child, brothers and parents for fear of being killed.

Both Amal and Noor left without knowing what their final country of destination would be. Rafeef was able to leave Syria to live in Saudi Arabia for a few years. After her husband lost his job, they were forced to go back to Syria, but instead of going back to an expected fate, they fled to London in 2016.

Then Amal, Noor, and Rafeef described their experiences of becoming refugees. These are the trans-migration experiences that refugees experience in their transition from home to host country, and are characterised by extreme danger, fear, anxiety, deprivation, etc. (Anderson et al., 2004). Their 'journeys of death' involved paying large amounts of money to the 'agents of death' (Motaparthy, 2015). They also involved leaving everything behind, and travelling long distances and crossing several borders while being told to expect anything to happen to them during the journey. Refugees like Amal, Noor, and Rafeef who take these 'desperate journeys', risk being detained, kidnapped by human traffickers, or getting drowned in the sea (UNHCR, 2018). Amal and Noor had to endure the horrific experience of crossing the sea on an inflatable boat with their young children where they could have drowned, and travelling while hiding with their children inside trains that were not made for carrying passengers, where they could have suffocated, or could have been crushed by the train contents, or by any other accident. Rafeef was interrogated by the Syrian military force at several checkpoints before she arrived in Saudi Arabia during which she was at great risk of getting detained and separated from her children. She boarded a plane that was bound for London after leaving everything she once had behind her, expecting the possibility that she and her family might get deported.

However, hardships for all three women did not end when they arrived in the host countries. They had to wait for long periods of time until a decision was made for their cases. During these months they suffered fear and anxiety, shared flats and toilets, and lived in poverty and isolation. Amal, who thought that Germany would be her final destination, could not endure racism and ill treatment from officials there and took another journey from Germany to the UK where she looked for a better situation. Noor and her husband went through extremely hard times when their application was refused, and when they were told by an officer that Iraq became a safe country after the invasion and the fall of the Iraqi regime, and therefore there was no reason for them to stay in the UK. They had to wait for several years during which she lived in isolation and could not study or work. However, she never forgot a teacher who noticed her in one of the free knitting courses she joined, and who helped her register in ESOL courses before she had an official status. That support was like a beam of light in the middle of the darkness, and her life started to become better after that, as she expressed. Rafeef and her family had to wait several months until a decision was made during which her children were not allowed to go to schools, her husband was not allowed to work, and each one of them had to survive with £5 a day.

Displacement may have a stronger impact on refugees than on any other group, as they deal with the loss of home and country as well as the traumatic experiences of war and flight (Coughlan and Owens-Manley, 2006). They would also need to address the demand for adaptation and resettlement in a new cultural setting, using different approaches and techniques such as those suggested by Matsumoto et al. (2009, discussed in Chapter 2). However, their adaptation depends as well on their post-migratory experiences in the host country. Those experiences for Amal, Noor, and Rafeef in relation to learning English and social inclusion will be discussed in the following sections.

9.3 Experiences of learning English

This section will address the second sub-question:

- How do refugee Arab Muslim women negotiate the learning of English once in the UK, and what forms of intercultural communication affect their capacity to acquire the language?

In order to address this question, the discussion in this section will be based on findings discussed in Chapters Six, Seven, and parts of Chapters 8 where the participants talked about their experiences in accessing ESOL provision.

Findings from interviews of ESOL teachers (Chapter 6) reveal that the four ESOL teachers had commonalities and differences in their perceptions and teaching approaches which can have an impact on the learning experiences of their learners. The following sub-headings represent the themes that emerged when discussing ESOL teachers' perceptions and approaches, as well as the participants' experiences in Chapters Six, Seven, and 8.

9.3.1 Learners’ motivation – Teachers' perceptions and participants’ experiences

Gonzalex (2005) has discussed that teachers tend to view their minority ethnic learners’ cultural practices from a lens of deficiency. This is evident in three of the teachers’ views, where they tended to make generalisations when they spoke about motivation issues among their learners. For example, Tina believed that the women in her class, in general, do not prioritise learning, they do not have dreams, or aspire to anything, or look forward to employment because they prioritise their families and children. It is again the ‘stereotype threat’; the tendency to affirm stereotypes in situations of unfamiliarity of other cultures, instead of examining other reasons that could affect motivation. In the same sense, Tracy criticised the cultural and religious practices of her learners, which she believed were factors that limited their progress and motivation. Cynthia pointed out that she needed to put a lot of effort in the class to keep her students motivated, but she also thought that they prioritised their families. However, Shayla tackled motivation problems in a different way. Instead of blaming her learners' cultural and/or religious practices, she tried to maintain a level of motivation among her learners by improving their learning experiences, and by bonding with them and building constructive relationships with them. As explained in Chapter 6, Norton’s construct of ‘investment’ is well exemplified in Shayla’s approach with her students, as she said, “it’s being able to move them from not wanting to be there, to want to be there”.

Considering the experiences of the three participants in my research, Amal, Noor, and Rafeef in relation to motivation, life history interviews and classroom observations revealed different stories. The three women were highly motivated to learn English and to get employed. Amal showed impressive persistence throughout the many years during which she joined several adult learning centres and colleges, paying for costly ESOL courses at times when she was not eligible to enrol in funded courses. In the classroom, she was paying extra attention trying to keep pace with the teacher and the learners, and was engaged with her group in the class activities. Rafeef wanted to progress to the level of English required to be able to teach in schools. Although she was unable to enrol in accredited ESOL courses, that did not discourage her from joining the free weekly family learning classes. In these classes, she was eager to learn new forms and vocabulary words and was able to build on previously learned forms. Noor joined ESOL classes as soon as she could as she wanted to continue studying for her undergraduate degree. She progressed in her ESOL courses without difficulties, she passed her A Level exams, went back to her undergraduate studies, earned her post-graduate degree in pharmacology, and was eventually employed. Her story can be linked to Dornyei's (2009) theory of motivation and Norton's concept of investment (2016). Yet, Amal and Rafeef were also highly motivated; they also wanted to move on with their lives, and wanted to work and contribute to their families' income, but they did not achieve the same results as Noor's. If Noor was an 'ideal' ESOL learner who had all the characteristics to succeed, was she *a typical* language learner?

Life history interviews and classrooms observations also provided a deeper insight into the obstacles that Amal and Rafeef faced. For example, Amal was a learner with special learning needs (dyslexia) and needed additional support. However, she faced the same issue in the college and the women's learning centre that she lastly joined. In both places she was told that they did not have the resources or teacher training to help learners with her condition. She was given a list of other centres where students with special learning needs would find support. However, these centres were either too far and thus commuting would be really difficult for Amal, or they were mainly rehabilitation centres for women with previous offenses. As discussed in Chapter 8, dyslexia is considered a disability and according to the law, it is illegal to treat people like Amal less favourably than others, or to put them at an unfair disadvantage (HM Government, 2010). Rafeef faced barriers as well, but of a different type. She was unable to join accredited ESOL courses because of the family's low financial income. As a Syrian refugee, she was entitled to support as stated in the government's Resettlement Scheme for Vulnerable Persons (RSVP). This includes funding for ESOL, which should be provided and used to overcome barriers that could prevent refugees from accessing ESOL courses (Home Office, 2019). However, she was told that because her husband found a job and the family had income, she was no longer eligible for free ESOL courses. In addition, not being able to join an accredited ESOL course and improving her skills in English would be a barrier to getting the British citizenship in the future, as she will be required to pass the citizenship test in addition to having to pass an English language test at level B1 (lower intermediate) (Simpson, 2019).

9.3.2 Cultural competence and ethnocultural empathy

Two important factors in ESOL classrooms are related to cultural competence Hanley

(1991) and ethnocultural empathy (Rasoul et al., 2011; Mercer, 2016). Findings from Chapters Six, Seven, and 8 reveal that teachers' multicultural teaching experience and background are very likely to affect the learning experience of their multicultural and minority ethnic students such as refugee Arab Muslim women. ESOL teachers who were young with few years of experience in teaching, who never had any experience with the people and cultures of their learners, particularly Muslim women, or never had life experiences that enable them to connect with their learners are less likely to be able to avoid the 'stereotype threat' (Steele and Aronson, 1995). They are also more likely to subject their students to unwitting, unintentional, or unconscious racism which can happen because of mistaken beliefs, unfamiliarity, or a lack of understanding of students' cultures (MacPherson, 1999).

Tina who is young with few years of teaching experience, and who never had any previous experience with Muslim cultures viewed the Muslim women she taught as women who lack self-esteem and self-confidence, and who come from a homogeneous culture where the norm for women is to be devalued and to be subordinate to men. Her way of dealing with her female Muslim learners reflects ideas that were built on subjective judgements, particularly when some students were late sometimes for the class. She perceived being sometimes late or speaking casually in the classroom as signs of a lack of respect for time and for other people. Though it could stem from good intentions, feeling that she needed to teach her learners the "*balancing act of being respectful"* could be linked to Said's (2003) discussion of "the civilizing mission", particularly when she justified punishing late students by stressing that "*we are doing this for them"* and "*reminding them that this is for them*". Moreover, taking the position of a 'subalternist' (Spivak, 1992), she wished she could impose her cultural views on her female learners to make them follow a better way of life than their current way of life, which she thought "*they didn't necessarily like*". Though their excuses, such as having an ill child that they had to look after, or having an appointment with a GP, can be valid excuses, she was against the idea that they were the ones who had to look after their ill child, believing this was a cultural flaw within her learners' cultures.

Tracy, who never had any previous experience with people from Muslim cultures, acknowledged that she unconsciously held negative perceptions about Muslim women and Muslim cultures. She was aware that they were based on racist ideas and notions of White supremacy, and found herself in a constant need to actively challenge these thoughts and attitudes towards Muslims in general. Hence, cultural competence is necessary in educational settings as Hanley (1991) has pointed out, as it enables teachers to understand the cultures and histories of their minority ethnic learners, and to be in a better position to help them. However, Tracy, who had over thirty years of experience in educational contexts, was different in the way she dealt with her learners. As a mother herself perhaps, she was more understanding of their needs. Though she used expressions such as, "*I've got to accept"*, "*let's face the reality"*, "*I had to start from where my learners are"* to explain the techniques she used to help her deal with her learners, they were survival techniques rather than being based on a genuine understanding. Nevertheless, she also found joy in her learners' appreciation of her as their teacher, and in noticing their interesting personal qualities, which eventually helped "*override the nonsense that might be in the background"*.

On the other hand, Cynthia who is from a non-Western country, who was a migrant herself, and who found herself lacking the cultural, social and linguistic capital in the UK did not hold views based on stereotypes and acknowledged that the Muslims she met in the UK were not a homogenous group. Cynthia's class was also an example of showing understanding for ethnic minority learners. The women socialised before the beginning of the class and were chatting and laughing and were a little loud. Even when the teacher entered and started the lesson and the women paid attention to her, the happy and vibrant mood did not change. Cynthia often encouraged the learners and accepted their answers, and this I believe, influenced the women's positive attitude which was reflected in their remarkable level of participation. She mentioned to me that she used to tell her students that she was a migrant like them, and that she learned English and improved her skills that she became able to teach it eventually, and they could also reach that level if they wanted. Perhaps as someone who has a different cultural background and language, this was a way for Cynthia to establish commonalities between herself and her learners, which I argue is a successful way to relate with the students' experiences and to make connections with them.

Shayla, who is an ethnic minority and who have been teaching learners from ethnic minority groups for twenty years, and therefore "*had that grounding*" as she expressed, was able to accept her students and to respect their cultures, and to learn from them as well. Shayla also did not consider talking spontaneously in the class disrespectful to the teacher or disruptive of the class etiquette. She was aware that for most women, ESOL classes were an opportunity to socialise, besides being English language classes. Moreover, she mentioned important characteristics that an ESOL teacher should have which can be related to ethnocultural empathy such as, respect for people's cultures and the ability to connect with students. Interestingly, she referred to her background, upbringing in the West Indies, experience of migration, and her long years of experience in teaching, as important factors that made her able to respect and love her students and enabled her to relate to their experiences.

Examples of respect for multiculturalism and care for minority ethnic learners were reflected in the ESOL class for Syrian refugee families, which I had the opportunity to observe. Care and respect were reflected in the way the teacher interacted with her students and the way the students felt about the class and the general atmosphere. The teacher was 70 years old; she had spent many years in her life teaching in different settings before she volunteered to teach ESOL to Syrian refugees. She did not treat the learners from a position of power, but from a position of care. For example, at the beginning of the class, she checked on late students and asked the other students to check on them and to find out if they were well. She had very few resources in the class (a small portable white board and few markers), but she was patient and never got frustrated when students did not understand. Instead, she tried repetition and used different examples and activities to help them understand. Importantly, she often smiled and used humour to ease any tension that could build up among the learners when they had difficulty understanding. The students respected her and liked her class more than the formal ESOL class they joined, as they told me.

Thus, it can be concluded from the findings in Chapters Six and Seven regarding cultural competence and ethnocultural empathy, that the backgrounds, long years of teaching experiences, type of migration experiences and personal characteristics of the teachers are factors that can make ESOL teachers able to understand, connect with, and relate to their learners' experiences. It can also be stressed that it is a significant quality that ESOL teachers need to have. One of the advantages of having ethnocultural empathy is that it helps people control their own prejudice and subjective judgements against people from different cultures (Wang et al., 2003). This is important for ESOL teachers as they teach and interact with learners with different life histories and experiences. It is particularly important when teaching refugees who may have been through traumatising war experiences, as discussed in the previous section, and when teaching Muslim women because of the widely held negative perceptions of Muslim women and Muslims in general. It would be useful here to note that when I interviewed the centre manager, Sara, she commented on some of the ESOL teachers' attitudes which she described as stemming from a "*colonial missionary attitude"* whereby she noticed that some teachers approached their Muslim learners with ideas such as "*let's go help these people out, let's inject an ounce of civilisation"*. It is noteworthy that it has been argued that a demographic match between teachers and learners can bring positive learning outcomes (Figlio, 2017). It is suggested that teachers who are from minority ethnic communities are more empathetic and less likely to subject students to negative stereotypes and subjective judgements (Gershenson and Dee, 2017).

9.3.3 Fundamental British values and Prevent in ESOL classes

The teachers in this research had different views and understandings of the British values and of the ways to deliver them in the class. As mentioned in Chapter 7, it was stated in Ofsted final report (October, 2017) that teachers do not ensure learners have sufficient understanding of FBV and of the dangers of extremist views, and that they lacked the confidence to discuss sensitive subjects with learners. However, official training on how teachers could teach the British values explicitly or embed them within the material, or how to discuss Prevent related topics with their multicultural, multi-ethnic, marginalised, and mainly Muslim female learners was not provided. Teachers who already feel undertrained to teach and discuss sensitive topics in multicultural settings (Maylor, 2016), and who are not prepared or enabled, through training courses, to teach with confidence, knowledge and understanding in diverse classrooms (Lander, 2014), were mainly left to sort it out on their own. My research sheds new light on how teachers may respond to Prevent and to the demand of teaching FBV and how that can affect the experiences their female Muslim learners have in ESOL courses.

Teachers may adopt the dominant discourse and essentialise their learners while teaching FBV, particularly when teaching them explicitly. For example, Tina found teaching FBV an effective way to educate her learners about respect and punctuality, and pointed at the British values poster to remind her learners of the value of *mutual respect* when they sometimes spoke casually in the classroom. She might have found herself obliged to address the notes that the Ofsted inspection team pointed out in their final report when she stressed to her learners while reviewing *democracy* within the five BV *"this is one of* *our British values, we live in a democracy*", and when she asked her pre-entry learners to define the value *tolerance*, and then stressing again "*in the UK we are tolerant*". With the absence of effective teacher training on promoting FBV in adult learning centres, she only found departmental advice documents with few suggestions on how to promote the British values such as, including material '*appropriate for the age of the pupils, ... that discuss democracy in Britain in contrast to other forms of government in other countries*' (DfE, 2014, p.6). As such, she felt she had to abide by that guidance and made that comparison frequently in the class by asking questions such as, "*Are all countries democracies? Do you choose who is in power? Do you get to vote for your governments*?" without realising that such questions can be patronising for the learners. It is noteworthy that this departmental guidance document was found by one of the teachers and distributed among us (the teachers) as a document that contained useful examples on how to teach FBV.

Yet, this could be a form of 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu, 1992) wherein certain identities are emphasised and legitimised. It is also argued that concepts of Britishness cannot be taught in a "didactic or authoritarian way", but rather should be introduced in a way that includes elements of critical thinking and open discussions which values learners' voice (Habib, 2016). Tracy's approach to teaching FBV can be considered a reflection of this view. She preferred to focus on issues that could matter to the women she taught such as, anti-Muslim sentiments and hate crimes in her classrooms to raise her learners' awareness of their rights as British Muslim women, instead of teaching British values in a way that could negatively affect her learners well-being. Cynthia considered the five values as rather "*human values*", instead of being only British values, and taught them without emphasising their Britishness. She criticised the rule of not allowing the learners to pray in the centre, and considered that a contradiction of the values of respect and tolerance of diversity, a contradiction that the learners themselves have noticed. It is worth noting that this rule was changed after the issue was brought to the Ofsted inspection team's attention, who stressed to us (the teachers) and the managers that learners' needs must be addressed. I would argue that an incident like this could be considered to reflect the need to provide an intercultural training for teachers who teach in multicultural settings, whether in pre-service or in continuous professional development (CPD) courses, as this training will positively influence the learning experiences of the learners.

As mentioned earlier, FBV came as part of the government's Prevent strategy, which is reported to have contradicted FBV (Cohen and Waqas, 2017) and to have created "*a chilling effect on the freedom of speech*" (Open Society Justice Initiative, 2016). My research builds upon the accepted knowledge that the Prevent duty in educational settings is counterproductive (Khan, 2018), and sheds new light on how teachers responded to that duty, which directly affected the learning experiences of Muslim learners in general. The Prevent Duty in educational settings is another dilemma that ESOL teachers are left to deal with on their own and which I would argue can affect the learners' experiences in a negative way. Although I had left the centre before Prevent was going to be included in teaching materials starting in the new academic year, I joined the meetings wherein teachers and quality managers gathered to discuss how they were going to ensure that learners have sufficient understanding of the dangers posed by those who may have extremist views, as was stated in the Ofsted report.

There was an agreement among the teachers that embedding Prevent would be hard and challenging. Although Tina thought that the government wanted to embed Prevent to encourage integration, she acknowledged that it would be quite a challenge to have conversations about terrorism in a way that would not be confusing or would not cause misunderstandings. She was aware that such conversations would affect the Muslim women in her classes because they would feel they were the targeted group if terrorism was discussed. Tracy expressed that she felt worried from the idea that Prevent would require teachers to report their students for signs of possible links with terrorism. She preferred to think about it as "*an approach that is akin to safeguarding"*. She mentioned the thousands of deaths that happen in the UK every year from different problems and not paying attention to them. Similarly, Cynthia believed that there were other problems within the British society that the government needed to deal with besides terrorism. However, despite a general discomfort with embedding Prevent among the teachers, they felt they had to respond to that duty, and importantly before the next Ofsted's inspection visit. This raises legitimate questions on whether teachers are being coerced to assist in the so-called 'war on terror' (Coppock, 2014). Yet, there was no training provided for the teachers, and the only '*training*' teachers had was in the form of weekly meetings wherein teachers shared some concerns and shared their views on how to educate learners about extremism and radicalisation.

As mentioned earlier the teachers were obliged to respond to the Prevent duty and were left to find out how to do that by themselves. Regrettably, when one of the teachers said in the meeting that she did not know what to say when learners told her '*we are not terrorists*', nobody had an idea about how to deal with such situations. This was also evident in Tina's class as she preferred to close the discussion and to steer it into another topic when the learners started criticising the police in their basic English, but before she did that, she reinforced a positive idea about the police, '*they do a good job*'.

Another concern that was shared was related to the difficulty –nearly impossible way- to discuss Prevent related topics with learners in pre-entry levels and drop-in sessions. Again, regrettably, when I suggested that it might feel more comfortable for learners in pre-entry levels to have bilingual British Muslim teachers discussing such sensitive topics with them, and when I suggested that bringing teachers from minority ethnic communities might enhance the learning experiences of learners in pre-entry levels in general, nobody commented on that suggestion.

9.3.4 The monolingual norm

As discussed in Chapter 3, multilingualism in ESOL classrooms is not realised. This is mainly due to far-right politicians' rhetoric which linked multilingualism with 'a breakdown of social cohesion and a threat of extremism' (Cooke and Peutrell, 2019). However, besides the political rhetoric which has an impact on ESOL policy and practice, many ESOL teachers subscribe to an 'English only' approach in their classrooms either for ideological or pragmatic reasons, but reinforcing by that negative attitudes towards multilingualism (Cooke, Bryers, Winstanley, 2019). Despite an increasing interest in multilingualism, ESOL teachers continue to believe that the acquisition of English is a process that is 'uncontaminated by knowledge and use of one's other languages' (May, 2014). This belief was prevalent among ESOL teachers who criticised the learners for going home and speaking their own languages there, using their native languages within their communities, and for speaking in their mother tongue in the classroom.

ESOL policy and practice is not reflecting the reality of the learners and the complexities of their communicative experiences (Simpson, 2020), that is, while ESOL learners are multilingual, ESOL practices are monolingual (Simpson and Cooke, 2017). As I discussed in the previous section, teaching pre-entry and entry level learners was very challenging, as teachers insisted in communicating with the learners in English, and the learners either did not understand or were not able to communicate back in English. Moreover, I argue that ESOL policy and practice are not reflecting the multicultural and multi-ethnic realities of the learners. It is also argued that learners would benefit in terms of academic achievement and in terms of their morale when there is a demographic match between teachers and learners (Figlio, 2017). In the case of Muslim women learners, I argue that having a multicultural and ethnically diverse teaching staff would help in tackling sensitive topics in a culturally informed and appropriate manner. However, I had suggested that it would be useful for the learners to bring bilingual/multilingual teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds to teach learners in pre-entry and entry level, and to help in addressing sensitive topics, but it seems that suggestion was not valued. Four teachers left the centre including Cynthia, Shayla, and myself and we were all replaced with young, White British teachers.

9.4 Refugee Arab Muslim women experiences of social inclusion

This section will address the third sub-question:

- What experiences do refugee Arab Muslim women encounter when living in the UK and how do these influence their social inclusion?

It will be based on findings discussed in Chapter 8 and in relation to post-migration experiences of the participants. Post-migration experiences occur when the refugees settle in the new country. In this study, post-migration experiences consist of the participants negotiation of English language learning after settling in the UK, and their experiences of social inclusion in the British society. As the first part of post-migration experiences was discussed in the previous section, the focus in this section will mainly be on the participants' experiences of social inclusion and the factors that affect their inclusion. Arab and Muslim refugee women may aspire to improve their English skills, find employment and become productive, and start new lives in their new British society despite an intense feeling of displacement, there will be factors that will hinder their real social inclusion.

9.4.1 Background to social exclusion

Immigration to the UK has been viewed by the right-wing parties as a threat to the unity of the British society. Several immigration acts were passed wherein legislations were introduced to control and reduce migration numbers (discussed in Chapter 3). These were intensified when the Conservative government came into power in 2010 and introduced policies, such as the 'Hostile Environment Policy', to reduce the number of immigrants in the UK, and passed acts that gave weight to the 'public interest' regarding immigration (Lords Library Briefing, 2018). Initial anti-immigrant sentiments were mainly against non-White immigrants and were reflected in campaigns such as the 'Keep Britain White' campaign (Goodhart, 2013). However, it eventually spread to include immigrants from Europe. It is argued that the outcome of the Brexit referendum is a reflection of 'a widespread anti-immigration sentiment' that resulted from a growing concern among Conservative voters in Britain over immigration and freedom of movement between Britain and the EU countries (Bulman, 2017, n.p.). There were other concerns such as competition of labour from the EU (Grice, 2017), and other concerns such as economic sovereignty and national identity being deteriorated if the UK remains in the EU (Clarke et al., 2016). However, the major factor for Brexit, as argued, is 'imperial nostalgia' (Hirsch, 2020) and 'prejudice against immigrants' which was reflected in the tripling of hate crimes reported in areas inhabited by immigrants (Johnston, 2017).

This leads to a crucial junction regarding sentiments towards Muslim refugees. If a closer examination of attitudes and policies towards immigrants from the Commonwealth and Europe has shown us a predominant xenophobia and anti-immigrant feelings in Britain, I would argue they are pervasive towards Muslim and Arab refugees, which affect their inclusion in the British society. This is because media reports about Muslim communities depict Islam as a violent religion and a threat to the West (Smith, 2002; Khan and McMahon, 2016). The creation of an image of Muslims as predominantly 'terrorists' and a threat to the British people and their way of life dates back to the aftermath of World War I when an image of the Arab Muslim as inferior and incapable of self-government was formed to rationalise colonisation of the Arab states (Said, 2003). But this image of the Arab Orient as someone to be feared and to be controlled was further affirmed after the Arab-Israeli wars (ibid).

Later, international developments such as the allied coalition against Iraq, the terrorist attacks on September 11 and the subsequent invasion of Iraq, the propaganda campaigns to justify the so-called 'War on Terror', all focused public attention on Muslims in Britain and a derogatory image of Islam was created (Vertovec, 2002). These propaganda campaigns fuelled acts of aggression against Muslims and there were reports of serious attacks against Muslims in the UK, particularly Muslim women (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, 2002, Allen and Nielsen, 2002). However, the ‘abuse by the media’ (Allen and Nielsen, 2002) influenced the public opinion and perception of Muslims in Britain substantially. Media coverage focused on reports on radical Islamic groups and their claims such as, it is not possible to be both British and Muslim, and that Islam excuses acts of terror, asserting this way Islamophobic stereotypes (Modood and Ahmed, 2007). Yet, it is inevitable to question the motives of the media in its focus on radical Islamic groups and their false claims about Islam. After the July 7 terrorist attacks, Muslims in the UK were framed as terrorists and a threat to civilisation, although such attacks had severe implications for British Muslims' own welfare (Khan and McMahon, 2016; Elahi and Khan, 2017).

The rise of a terrorist group that was named the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the culmination of wars in Iraq and Syria, and the terrorist attacks in Britain and other countries in Europe that were linked with this group reinforced Islamophobic and antagonistic attitudes against Arabs and refugees in Britain (Doyle, 2017). Yet, the news coverage about terrorism does not differentiate between terrorist groups and Muslims, which as a result reinforce non-Muslims' perceptions that ‘all Muslims including Muslim terrorists, are similar’ (Von Sikorski et al., 2017, p. 830). This kind of a general perception of Muslims was reflected when a customer asked, upon seeing Noor (the pharmacist), who is visibly Muslim, whether she participated in the terrorist attacks that occurred in France. This general view of Muslims is also verbalised when she was called a ‘terrorist’ by other people who came to the pharmacy. Muslim women who are visibly Muslim, can be subject to harassment or verbal abuse (Allen and Nielsen, 2002). As Rafeef has experienced being looked at scornfully by some women, and was told to ‘go home’ by other people while walking in a shopping centre with her daughters. Thus, building on the discussion in this section and the experiences of the participants face because as Muslims, it becomes more likely for them to be socially excluded than included.

9.4.2 Social networks

Relationships within Arab communities in Britain are affected by political factors mainly because Arabs come from a politically charged area and therefore, distrust has become a survival necessity to protect themselves from being assassinated in the country of settlement, and to protect their left-behind family members from regimes' acts of revenge. These fears were articulated by Rafeef (and several other Syrians) who told me that they had family back home, and so they could not express their political views openly, or trust people easily because the regime's undercover men were mingling around Syrians in the UK. This fear was also endorsed in Amal's comment that Arab communities are different in the UK, "*detached"* as she described, and fear, as she stated, is the common sentiment among them, making it hard to form real friendships with anyone. Moreover, British Muslim communities in general are being treated as a security concern, as though they are guilty by virtue of their faith alone (Pargeter, 2015). This has culminated with the introduction of the government's anti-terrorism legislation Prevent, which gives the UK authorities the right to seize travel documents and issue temporary exclusion orders, and which, as discussed earlier, alienates Muslims and treats them as if they are a separate and different *community* that requires particular monitoring (Pargeter, 2015) [my emphasis]. This was expressed by Noor who said, "*we will never be safe and protected here"*. Thus, the situation of Arab communities in the UK defies Putnam's (2000) argument which is based on the idea that bonding is necessary for refugees/migrants, and is good for fostering reciprocity and solidarity among groups such as ethnic groups. It is noteworthy to state again her that his ideas received criticism because he ignores the negative aspects of community life that is affected by policies and by social, economic, and political factors, though on the surface, relationships seem to be based on trust and reciprocity (Leonard, 2004).

9.4.3 Employment challenges

Arab and Muslim women can also feel excluded because of their unrecognised social and cultural capital, or transcultural capital. Capital, which is considered the basis of power in any given field, is not distributed equally among agents of the field (Joy et al., 2018). As discussed in Chapter 2, a field contains people who dominate and people who are dominated, and constant relations of power and inequality operate, as more powerful agents decide what legitimate capital is, and try to preserve what is produced in a field (Bourdieu, 1984, 1993). In the case of newcomers such as refugees, they struggle to acquire a position in the field because they are not members of the dominant group, and do not have the valued dispositions (habitus), or social and cultural capitals. However, when they try to improve their value to gain a better position in a field, they fail, because the established dominant individuals try to keep out competition and maintain control over the field, so it cannot be “occupied by anyone other than the possessors of properties identical to their own” (Bourdieu, 1984, 1993). These positions of power and domination and inequality are evident in Noor’s story. She wanted to move to a better job in terms of position and payment and attended courses and training to be fully qualified for the new position. However, her efforts failed, perhaps because she is not a member of the dominant group and does not have the required habitus to be fully accepted by the dominant members, although she is highly qualified and is often called for interviews. As she expressed that in her own words, “*When I go for the interviews, I can see it is an English-only environment, and as soon as they see you, you get a feeling you are not the type of person they want”*. This dilemma is often experienced by Muslim and minority ethnic women in general. The same experience of unfairness was expressed by the manager of the women’s centre, Sara. Although she is British, was born in Britain and lived all her life in the UK, she sadly expressed, “*there is institutionalised racism here, and I have noticed that even as somebody who has as many qualifications as I do … there is still favouritism … and it is rife”*. Regrettably, both of them mentioned the diversity and equality law and considered it ineffective in workplaces. Additionally, there is the “glass ceiling effect” which holds back all non-white minorities (Modood, 1997), that Noor suffered from and expressed experiencing it by saying, “*I know I can be more than just a pharmacist working in someone else’s pharmacy and I can make more money with my qualifications, but this is the limit, you can’t go any further”*. In a similar sense, Sara expressed experiencing the ‘glass ceiling effect’ by saying, “*if a position at the executive level becomes available, even though it’s illegal, it automatically seems to go to someone who is White British”*. As Hirsch (2020) points out, “In Britain’s rigid class society, there is still a deep correlation between privilege and race”.

Considering Amal and Rafeef, they are unable to access employment because of the barriers they faced which stood against acquiring the level of English conditional to having a job. Both of them have cultural capital that can be transferrable and “made active at their new places of residence”, what is referred to as transcultural capital (Meinhof and Triandafyllidou, 2000). Amal is skilled in Arabic and writes poetry and prose. She is an energetic person and could teach Arabic in a school or a languages centre. Rafeef has her post-graduate degree in Islamic studies and was a lecturer in a university in Syria. She hopes that one day she could do the same thing and teach in a university or a school so she could have the opportunity to counter the dominant idea that Islam is linked to terrorism. She hopes, through teaching, she can clarify the essence of

Islam which does not conflict with the British/Western way of life and values. However, refugees are often faced with institutional policies that do not support the transcultural capital that they bring with them (Meinhof and Triandafyllidou), and may be subject to "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu, 1993) wherein they are "denied resources and are limited in their social mobility and aspirations" (Web et al., 2002). Being given the opportunity to work or learn a new skill such as office work, as Amal wished, would help in supporting their well-being and, would shield Amal against feelings of loneliness and uselessness. It would help Rafeef feel dignified and able to support herself and her family, as she felt immensely ashamed for having to use the food vouchers. In this sense, Fullilove (1996) contends that developing a sense of belonging, which is necessary for the well-being of refugees, depends on strong, well-developed relationships with nurturing places. However, when refugees experience a predominant atmosphere of rejection in the host country due to factors such as anti-immigrant sentiments, discrimination against Muslims, Islamophobic rhetoric of politicians, combined with a declining social and economic status, sentiments like nostalgia for the home country and of being exiled will be intensified (Han, 2005; Vordermeyer, 2012). These feelings were reflected in Amal, Noor, and Rafeef's expressions who considered themselves in a '*foreign country*' and in *'exile'*, and perceived themselves as *'weak'* and *'strangers'*, and their prevailing sentiments were expressed by saying *'lonely'*, *'useless'*, *'lost dignity*' and '*I will never forget*'.

9.4.4 Hybrid identities of participants' children

Although the participants' children were not a focus for this study, the participants spoke about their children's identities. It is argued that first-generation refugees/migrants have a sense of 'mono-affiliation to the country of origin', particularly refugees whose decision to migrate is not voluntary, yet, feelings of 'multiple belongings' are often experienced with second generation refugees (Wagner, 2017). It is argued that they are able to develop hybrid identities (Bhaba, 1994) that enable them to have multiple community and cultural identifications, allegiances, multiple attachments, and hyphenated identities, as discussed in Chapter 2 (Modood, 1992, 2011; Vertovec and Rogers, 1998; Boland, 2020). This was evident with the participants in this study whose children developed hybrid identities whereby they have dual belongings and are able to negotiate and identify with both cultural backgrounds. In some cases, the children identified more with Britain and the British way of life and English became their first language, as in the case of Amal’s sons. While her sons understood Arabic very well, they preferred using English in all forms of communication. Amal expressed feeling powerless when she spoke with her sons in Arabic and they spoke back in English, 'I speak with them in Arabic and they speak with me in English, they have become more English than Iraqis. There's nothing I can do now to change this'. On the other hand, Noor considered the Saturday Arabic school essential in her children's lives and ensured that they go regularly to learn Arabic. This was useful, as Noor expressed, in preserving their Arabic language and Islamic values as they grew up. Rafeef is also keen to send her younger children to the Saturday school in order not lose their Arabic and/or their connection with their faith.

Although the three participants acknowledge the challenges of living in a Western community in terms of preserving the Arab Iraqi and Syrian cultures and Islamic values within their children, but they are also aware of the opportunities that their children can have in Britain particularly in terms of academic progression and graduate and postgraduate degrees from reputable British universities. Amal, Noor, and Rafeef believe that excelling in schools and universities will provide their children with the backing needed for a future better than theirs, and will eventually ensure that their children will have the good lives they wanted for them. Importantly, this will fulfil their reasons for fleeing their home countries and will compensate living in ‘exile’ for the rest of their lives. Indeed, it is common among refugee parents, who have made significant sacrifices, to have well founded hopes for their children and to envisage 'happier, easier, and more fulfilling lives' for them (Atwell et al., 2009, p.677). In the same sense, children's high aspirations for education and employment is greatly influenced by their parents hopes and support (ibid).

9.5 Reflections

Having just provided detailed answers to the three sub-questions, I now combine the responses to present a reflective summary that answers the overarching question of my study:

How do the experiences of refugee Arab Muslim women living in London affect their capacity to learn English and their social inclusion?

It would be useful to reiterate that underrepresented individuals might be left voiceless with their stories and experiences often remain unknown. Groups whose voices are not heard may continue to exist in the margins of the society which could further alienate and estrange them (hooks, 1992). For this reason, this study is significant in the way it has foregrounded the stories and voices of refugee Arab Muslim women who are often marginalised and misperceived.

As discussed earlier, refugees experience displacement more drastically than any other group, due to the forced and often sudden nature of migration experience, linked to violence and persecution. The impact of losing home and country continues after resettlement and is reflected in persistent feelings of being uprooted and exiled even after spending many years in the host country. Yet, they would still need to adapt to a new society that is culturally and linguistically different and to face the challenges of becoming socially included. In the UK, social inclusion consists of "learning and using English" and making "a productive contribution to the nation's economy" (Denham, 2009, p.2) However, accessing ESOL provision and employment represent different barriers and challenges, as this study revealed.

With regards to learning English, this study has contributed to highlighting the different types of challenges refugee Arab Muslim women experience when accessing ESOL provision, as well as the factors and practices that contribute to positive learning experiences, which ultimately affect the learners' capacity to learn English. The challenges include pressing issues such as the lack of training to address special learning needs, and cuts in government funding for ESOL that resulted in unaffordable course costs for refugees who need to learn English. There are other issues that negatively affect female Muslim learners such as, ESOL teachers not having adequate knowledge about Muslim learners, or practical experience with their cultures. This causes mistaken beliefs about learners' cultures, puts students under the risk of the 'stereotype threat' (Macpherson, 1997), and subjects them to unwitting racism. Moreover, ideological beliefs held by some ESOL teachers can make learners targets of prejudice and patronising words and actions in classrooms. Similarly, not having socio-emotional skills and empathy (Underhill, 2013; Mercer, 2016) which are necessary qualities for teachers particularly in multi-ethnic and multicultural classrooms can lead to insensitivity and intolerance in classroom encounters between teachers and learners. On the other hand, this study has also shown that there are factors that can make ESOL learning a constructive experience. ESOL teachers who have long years of experience in teaching minority ethnic and Muslim learners, have socio-emotional skills, are familiar with the behaviours and cultural practices of the learners, and have knowledge about the backgrounds and histories of learners are more empathetic towards their learners, are more tolerant of their students and more understanding of cultural differences.

Other issues in ESOL classrooms are reflected in adopting a monolingual approach in ESOL classrooms which, as discussed earlier, does not reflect the realities of ESOL learners and their communicative practices (Simpson, 2019). As demonstrated by this study, many ESOL teachers subscribe to the ‘English only’ concept which perceives bi/multilingualism a deficiency. Therefore, any form of communication that is not in English would be considered unwelcomed and unproductive. Whether this concept among ESOL teachers stems from an ideology or a belief in language teaching and learning, it has consequences on ESOL learners particularly in pre-entry and entry levels. In many instances, communication between these learners and their teachers halt because they find themselves unable to communicate and express themselves in English. This is in addition to feeling disempowered as their linguistic resources (capital) become irrelevant. On the other hand, this study has also demonstrated that teachers who allow learners to use their home languages to communicate and to aid in learning English provided a meaningful and positive learning atmosphere and experience for their students.

Moreover, the securitisation of ESOL which is reflected in embedding Prevent criminalises Muslim learners and is negatively affecting their well-being and their learning experiences. This study has revealed that whilst Prevent has become statutory in adult learning centres, ESOL teachers are not receiving proper training on how to tackle sensitive topics like extremism and terrorism in a way that would mitigate long and short-term negative effects on their learners, if there is any. Ultimately what is at stake are Muslim learners who are being demonised and discriminated against in educational contexts, who are being treated as potential suspects, and as a result, have become alienated and disengaged. However, it is fair to note that even the majority of ESOL teachers themselves feel uneasy about implementing Prevent, but feel obliged to do so. It is inevitable to question the impact of Prevent on the learning experiences of Muslim ESOL learners, their well-being, and consequently their perceptions of social inclusion.

Additionally, this study suggests that there is a lack of proper training to promote fundamental British values in adult learning centres in particular, in a way that does not undermine adults, their cultures and their life experiences. This can result in promoting them in a way that can be counterproductive, patronising, and marginalising for already vulnerable and marginalised groups as refugees and minority communities. There is also a lack of intercultural communication training combined with a lack of in-depth knowledge on sensitive issues such as FGM (female genital mutilation), extremism and terrorism, which when tackled by ESOL teachers can demonise and stigmatise Muslim learners. Finally, as revealed by this study, there is an underrepresentation of minority ethnic communities within ESOL teachers. As I argued in this study, there are many benefits for having more teachers from minority ethnic and Muslim communities to teach Muslim learners such as supporting learners in pre-entry and entry levels, preparing course material, and tackling sensitive issues in a culturally appropriate manner. Yet, generally speaking and not only in pre and entry ESOL levels, the benefits of having a demographic match between learners and teachers have been discussed in a growing body of literature. I would also add to the benefits an enhanced sense of belonging and perception of social inclusion amongst refugee/migrant learners. In addition to the demographic match, this study has demonstrated that teachers with backgrounds and life experiences similar to the those of their learners, can identify more with their students' life experiences and can be more understanding, and as a result, are able to build constructive social relationships with their learners. Literature has emphasised the importance of positive, affirming, and respectful relationships between teachers and students on learning outcomes and motivation (Cummins, 1996; Norton, 2000; Amanti, 2005; Ellis, 2014; Darvin and Norton, 2015). However, while it has been discussed that there is generally an underrepresentation of minority ethnic communities within the teaching profession, the apparent underrepresentation of adult Muslim female learners within ESOL teachers in adult learning centres in particular should also be questioned.

On the other hand, this study demonstrates that there are other challenges that have an impact on refugee Arab Muslim women's experiences of social inclusion. Anti-immigrant sentiments and Islamophobia in particular, are affecting the lives of Muslim women, particularly women who wear the hijab. This was evident in this study as participants who wear hijab expressed being verbally abused because they are visibly Muslims. This study contributes to the literature that tackles Islamophobic sentiments which are reinforced by media depictions of Muslims as a homogeneous and an uncivilised group, right-wing political rhetoric that warns against Muslims and their alleged threat to the British society, and terror attacks perpetrated by terrorists whose ideology and actions are claimed to be a reflection of the beliefs of all Muslims.

Moreover, statements by officials in the British government have stressed the importance of employment in order for migrants/refugees to be socially included in the British society. Yet, this study revealed that this is not as simple as it seems. The participants in this study who were eager to work, experienced an exclusion from job opportunities because they could not provide proof of the level of English required to be able to access employment. As discussed earlier, they faced barriers that prevented them from either enrolling in accredited courses or getting support to be able to pass exams. Nevertheless, even Muslim women who were able to find employment experienced being discriminated against in recruitment and promotion opportunities because of anti-Islam sentiments and prejudice against refugees/immigrants, as discussed earlier. However, hopes for a better future for the participants' children will remain the positive outcome of displacement and provide reassurance for Amal, Noor, and Rafeef that the experiences of flight and displacement were worth the sacrifices they made.

To sum up, the participants endured hardships and faced challenges in each migratory stage. In the post-migration phase, barriers to learning English, the lack of strong networks, and anti-Muslim sentiments are substantial difficulties that have an impact on their lives. These are combined with pre-migration and trans-migration traumatic experiences of wars and having been forced to leave their home countries, all of which, exacerbated feelings of being displaced and uprooted, and negatively affected refugee Arab Muslim women's social inclusion in the British society. Finally, some readers may wish to question whether the participants' pre-migration socioeconomic class may have had an impact on their post-migration experience of social inclusion in British society. Whilst it is true that the three refugee Arab Muslim women had come from an urban middle-class background in Iraq and Syria which would perhaps make them more critical of life in the UK, I would maintain that forced exile is hard to live with, particularly in a predominant atmosphere of Islamophobia and discrimination. Would experiences of social inclusion be different with refugee Arab Muslim women from a different socio-economic class? Perhaps a future research study that includes participants from different backgrounds would answer this question.

Implications for ESOL provision going forward

This study identified a number of challenges that influence how refugee Arab Muslim women experience social inclusion in British society. In this section, I will present implications of this study and its findings with regard to ESOL provision. As discussed in this study, learning ESOL has been emphasised as an important requirement for the social inclusion of refugees/migrants, yet, there were several factors that made learning and progressing in ESOL a challenge for many learners. It is doubtless that the majority of ESOL teachers strive to enhance their practices to provide a positive and constructive ESOL learning experience for their learners. I would like to contribute to the discussions and suggestions that aim to develop ESOL learning by offering some suggestions that are based on the findings of this study.

- There is a necessity to have a general familiarity with the cultures of Muslim learners. This can be done through workshops or seminars offered by individuals who are either knowledgeable about the cultures and traditions of Muslims, or have experience through long exposure and immersion with Muslims and their cultures. There is a need for ESOL teachers to have knowledge about the backgrounds of their learners and the circumstances that brought them to the UK.

  Having such knowledge and familiarity might help ESOL teachers avoid stereotyping and classifying their learners under reductive labels. Equally important, is training to address special learning needs, particularly addressing the learning needs of learners with dyslexia.
- This leads to considering empathy and socio-emotional skills, which I argue should be a characteristic of teachers who work with minority ethnic learners coming from marginalised communities, such as Muslim communities. Though these skills may be cultivated through continuous training, I argue that they should be looked for when choosing and appointing ESOL teachers. In doing so, it is important to see beyond answers or comments such as ‘I want to reach out and help’ and to look for teachers who are genuinely empathetic.
- Another factor that would help in reducing power relations and making connections with the learners is having a demographic match between ESOL teachers and learners. As argued in this study, there is a noticeable underrepresentation of ESOL teachers from Muslim and minority ethnic

backgrounds. Having more teachers from minority communities, who would also be bi/multilingual will address the needs of learners in pre-entry and entry levels.

- There is a need to make ESOL courses more relevant to the learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This includes preparing course material that learners can identify with. For example, course materials can include photos and discussions of cultural traditions and practices of people from different countries including the countries of the learners. This could also include folktales and popular short stories by storytellers from the learners' cultures. Another example would entail listening exercises that include non-native speakers in order to acknowledge learners' communicative practices and to defy the native-speaker model (Byram, 2008). These are just a few examples that a multicultural ESOL course material could consist of, which would differ from the current rigid and employment-led courses which do not include any reference to the multicultural backgrounds of the learners.
- I would also suggest that the promotion of FBV should be in an engaging and inclusive way. This can be done by providing training for ESOL teachers to lead and encourage discussions about FBV in a way that can open opportunities for constructive discussions which, besides promoting FBV, would also acknowledge the learners' cultural values. I would argue that this would positively influence learners' understanding and perceptions of FBV, and would improve their sense of social inclusion.
- Obviously, extra funding for ESOL is much needed in order to develop the provision and to provide the necessary training for teachers and would enable them to address the different needs of the learners. Extra funding would also mean that more classes can be offered, and as a result, more learners, particularly women, from minority ethnic communities would be able to enrol in ESOL classes. This would increase the number of women who would be able to access employment eventually.
- Finally, this study demonstrates that the securitisation of ESOL is causing harmful effects on Muslim ESOL learners' well-being and sense of social inclusion. I would certainly add my voice to the voices of teachers and professors in the NUT and the UCU, as well as voices of human rights organisations, who criticised Prevent and voted for its withdrawal. The government responded to

calls for an independent review of Prevent in educational contexts, and the result of the Review is due on August 2021.

Methodological contribution

It is argued that sometimes the most important contribution made by a thesis is a methodological innovation which could be adopted by other researchers, who will then add to it (Thomas, 2003). One of the contributions made by this study is through combining the two qualitative research methodologies, narrative enquiry and ethnography, which allowed for rich sources of multi-perspectival data to be provided. As a research method of narrative enquiry, life history interviews are often used to enhance understanding of the life experiences of marginalised and underrepresented groups (Kerr, 2016) and people whose lives have been affected by policy and public discourse (Lanford and Tierney, 2019). Therefore, this method was used to explore the experiences of refugee Arab Muslim women and has shed light on their three migratory experiences and how they are making sense of their lives. Using this method in my study with refugee Arab Muslim women has been a powerful way to challenge misconceptions about a stereotyped, excluded and often a silenced group, and a way that has given them voice wherein they told their stories in their own words. But this is mainly because of the quality of the relationship and the trust that develops between the researcher and the participants which reduces the chances for giving accounts that go beyond what is in the public record (Jakson and Russell, 2010). The relationship between the participants and myself enabled them to confidently express their feelings and points of view about the political events that changed their lives substantially, which is something very uncommon and even dangerous for people in the Arab region and in exile. The cycle of distrust and fear has persisted after resettlement in their new home countries resulting in experiencing further marginalisation and silencing. However, because of the trust that built up between us, they provided moving accounts of their experiences of exclusion and of the challenges they face in accessing ESOL and in employment, which are usually accounts that remain untold by vulnerable, undermined, and marginalised people like Muslim refugees.

On the other hand, the ethnographic part of the study was a valuable experience through which I was able to collect rich and diverse data through multiple methods, and importantly, through being directly engaged in the field as an ESOL and functional skills teacher. I had the dual role of the observer and the participant, which is known as 'participant-as-observer' (McKechnie, 2008). My role as a teacher had many benefits for the study. It enabled me to be a member of the group and to gain an 'insider's knowledge' (Cohen et al., 2018), it allowed for a type of interviews with ESOL teachers that were far from being 'contrived' (Silverman, 2013), and it reduced the 'reactivity effect' (Watts, 2011) of the observer on the observed through the familiarity and informality that was built between the teachers, learners, and myself. In essence, my ethnographic role allowed me to have diverse perspectives from many people who know and understand the field, which ultimately helped have a deeper understanding of the women's experiences in learning English. In fact, the two methodologies enabled me to understand the field much better from both sides – the deliverers of ESOL classes and the students in these classes.

Another methodological contribution was made through the presentation and analysis of the data. As discussed in Chapter Five, the 'narrative revolution' (Lieblich et al., 1998) in the human sciences led to the emergence of a new way of representing data which mainly added life into the language used by presenting it in a way similar to the one associated with writing stories (Bochner and Riggs, 2014). In this study, presentation of data collected from life history interviews followed a more narrative style of reporting. Although the stories of refugee Arab Muslim women were sectionalised and organised under three migratory stages, I preserved most of the data from transcriptions and the excerpts still offered 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) that situated their experiences within the broader social, cultural, political, and economic contexts.

Further research

More studies that explore post-migration experiences of refugee Arab Muslim women would be needed. This study is limited to the experiences of women from Iraq and Syria, so studies that would include women from other Arab countries such as that conducted by Hamdan (2010) in Canada, would provide additional insights on Arab Muslim women's lives. There are studies that focused on refugee Arab Muslim women from a specific country of origin such as Hatoss and Huijser's (2010) study on Sudanese refugees' resettlement in Australia. Although Hamdan's (2010) study included Arab Muslim women from different Arab countries, it did not state whether they were refugees or immigrants, and only focused on Arab Muslim Canadian women's perceived gender roles and how they negotiate and construct their identities in the Canadian context. However, the researcher acknowledges the need for broader research that explores the lives of Arab Muslim Canadian women prior to migration as well as factors that could affect their lives after they settle in Canada.

As I have just mentioned, this study is restricted to the UK and specifically the London context. A similar study in other areas in the UK where there are Arab communities such as Manchester, or Leicester could be interesting too. A wider comparative study that includes the UK and another English-speaking country that have communities of Arab Muslim refugees such as the United States, New Zealand, Canada, and Australia could be insightful in terms of comparing ESOL/ESL provision and the amount of funding, and how Arab Muslim refugee women negotiate inclusion in different contexts. A comparative study was conducted by Julios (2003) who explored and contrasted the provision of English as a second language and bilingual education policies in London and New York cities. However, her study investigated the effect of ESOL/ESL policies on two different non-English speaking communities, the Bangladeshi community in Tower Hamlets London, and the Hispanic community in Manhattan New York. Nevertheless, the study was useful in shedding light on the differences of ESOL policies in both cities which are a reflection on the overall perception of immigrants in both contexts.

I would also suggest that research projects about minority communities need to be conducted by, or include among the research team, researchers from the studied communities. However, for research studies in which there is not an ethnic/cultural match between the researcher and the people studied, additional competencies are required from researchers. In their discussion paper that addresses research with black and minority ethnic people, Vickers et al. (2012) recommend that researchers who engage with people from minority communities need to be culturally competent to be able to understand the complex nature of the identities of the individuals they study. They argue that cultural competence is necessary to avoid relying on 'simplistic explanations' and essentialised perceptions that only perpetuate disadvantage and discrimination when researching different ethnic and religious groups. Yet, studies conducted by minority researchers have some advantages, the most important of which are 'the lenses through which they see social reality', an ability to observe the nuances of behaviour, and the quality of understanding of the issue that they provide (Zinn, 1979, p.5).

Finally, more narrative research in the field of education that studies underrepresented and marginalised people is needed to 'disrupt common understandings, perceptions, and practices … to give voice to often silenced knowledge' (O'Grady et al., 2018, p.154, 156). It is important to note here that as much as research contributes to the field of study, it contributes to the personal growth and development of the researcher. In this sense, my journey during the course of this research project has remade me in a profound way that its contribution to my life and to my future research interests should be acknowledged. Not only my interests and life views have changed, but I learnt to be more critical, learnt to enquire about things rather than accepting them at face value, and have come to value seeing things from different angles. On an emotional level, spending extended times completely alone in a foreign country enabled me to see the value of patience and perseverance in challenging times. Importantly, I developed the habit of reflecting on my thoughts, stances, and evaluations of things said or done around me. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p.61) powerfully put it, 'Being in this world, we need to remake ourselves as well as offer up research understandings that could lead to a better world'.

Appendix A: Teachers interview questions Tina, ESOL and maths teacher

1. Can you talk about your background, where you were born and brought up and what made you become an ESOL teacher?

2. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

3. Have you taught women with different cultural and religious backgrounds before?

4. What do you think about the cultures of your learners?

5. What kind of challenges do you face when you teach the women in your classes?

6. How do you deal with these challenges?

7. Are there any pressures on ESOL providers from the government regarding courses and provision?

8. What do you think the women you teach mostly need to be able to improve the qualities of their lives?

9. Do you consider them British citizens or ethnic minorities? Why?

10. What is your perspective about forced and voluntary migration to the UK?

11. What do you think about promoting fundamental British values and embedding Prevent in your classes?

Tracy, ICT and ESOL teacher

1. It would be really useful to learn more about you, could you tell me something about your background, where you were born and brought up, and how did you become a teacher?

2. How many of teaching experience do you have?

3. Have you ever taught women from different backgrounds?

4. Could you tell me what you really think about Muslim cultures?

5. Have you faced any challenges in teaching the women in your classes?

6. What do you think the women mostly need to be able to improve the quality of their lives in the UK?

7. How do you view migration to the UK?

8. Do you consider the women you teach British citizens or minority ethnic groups? Why?

9. What do you think about having to promote fundamental British values and embedding Prevent in your classes?

Cynthia, ESOL, ICT, and maths teacher

1. Can you tell me about your background and why you came to the UK?
2. Why did you decide to become a teacher? How many years of teaching experience do you have?
3. Do you have experience in teaching women from Muslim backgrounds?
4. What do you think about the cultures of your learners?
5. What kind of challenges do you face with the women you teach?
6. What do you think about migration to the UK?
7. Do you think the women in your classes are British citizens or minority ethnic groups?
8. What do you think about promoting fundamental British values in your classes?

Shayla, ESOL and functional skills teacher

1. Can you tell me about your background, the place where you were born, where you were brought up, and anything you like to include about yourself.

2. How did you become a teacher, and how many years of teaching experience do you have?

3. Do you have experience in teaching women from different cultural and religious backgrounds?

4. What is your perception about the cultures of your Muslim learners?

5. Do you face any challenges with your learners in the classes?

6. How do you deal with the challenges?

7. What do you think the women mostly need to be able to progress?

8. What do you think about migration to the UK?

9. Do you consider your learners British citizens or ethnic minorities?

10. Were you asked to promote fundamental British values in your classes?

Appendix B: Ethics form

Research Projects
New guidance: Ethics forms (see Appendix)

New guidance from the Departmental Ethics Committee is that all students conducting research should fill in an ethics form:

You should complete an ethics form and bring it to your tutorial.

Where you have ticked 'yes' in any of the boxes on page one, you will usually need to have completed page two, and tutors will need to add their comment to page two. However, the guidance from the Committee states that where students have ticked 'yes' against:

> 1. Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent? (e.g. young children, children, adults with learning or communication difficulties, patients).
> Note that you may also need to obtain satisfactory CRB clearance (or equivalent for overseas students).

And

> 2. Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited? (e.g. children at school, parents, patients, people in custody, members of organisations)

...it will be taken as read that appropriate safeguards are in place, and therefore the second page does not need to be completed. We are more concerned with

> 5. Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g. race, bullying, sexual or drug activity)?

Both tutor and student need to have signed all relevant pages.

Tutors will send the relevant forms to the Departmental Research Committee.

Department of Educational Studies

Ethical Practice in Research Form

Name: Nsreen Saleh	**Degree: MPhil/PhD**
Student Number:33494548	**Year of Degree: First**
Title of Research: Uprooted and exiled: Experiences of displacement, learning English and social exclusion in the lives of refugee Arab Muslim women living in London	
Supervisor: Dr. Vicky Macleroy, Dr. Julia Hope	

Section 1:

	YES	NO	N/A
I have reflected carefully on the research that I propose to undertake.	✓		
I have reviewed the 'Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2004)' and 'Good practice in Educational Research Writing' published by the British Educational Research Association (BERA). Note that, depending on your research topic, you might need to review other published ethical guidelines (e.g. BPS, BSA).	✓		
I have discussed the ethical aspects of this research with my supervisor, and my research complies with these guidelines.	✓		

Section 2:

Research Checklist:	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
1. Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent? (e.g. young children, children, adults with learning or communication difficulties, patients). Note that you may also need to obtain satisfactory CRB clearance (or equivalent for overseas students).	✓		

2. Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited? (e.g. children at school, parents, patients, people in custody, members of organisations)		✓	
3.In the case of action research will the researcher inform the sponsor/host of the work they propose to undertake? (e.g. head of school)	✓		
4. Will the research be carried out without the knowledge and/or consent of the participants? (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places)		✓	
5. Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g. race, bullying, sexual or drug activity)?	✓		
6. Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?		✓	
7. Will the study involve prolonged data collection or repetitive testing?		✓	
8. Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?			✓

If you have ticked ‘no’ for all questions in Section 2, then please sign below and arrange for your supervisor to sign this form. If you have ticked ‘yes’ to any of these questions, then please complete and sign the second page of this form.

Signature of student: Nsreen Saleh	Date:
Signature of supervisor:	Date:

There is an obligation on the supervisor to bring to the attention of the Departmental Ethics Committee any issues with ethical implications not clearly covered by the above checklist.

Section 3:

Please provide a brief outline of your research:

The research will explore the experiences of refugee Arab Muslim women when accessing ESOL provisions in London, and will explore cultural and social barriers that hinder their integration in their new communities. The research will also explore the experiences of ESOL teachers when teaching this particular group, the challenges they face, and the support they need to help them deal with the challenges they face.

Please set out the ethical issues arising from your research:

Qualitative interviews with the women will entail revealing sensitive information about their lives, their experiences after becoming refugees, and their perspectives about life in the UK. Qualitative interviews with ESOL teachers will also reveal personal perspectives about their experiences in teaching these women.

Please identify how you intend to address these ethical issues:

Participation in the qualitative interviews will be voluntary. All participants will remain anonymous. Data from qualitative interviews will be reviewed with the participants, and approved by them before discussing them in the research.

Comments of Supervisor

Nsreen has consulted the necessary ethical guidelines and she is very aware of following ethical procedures to ensure the anonymity of her participants. Nsreen will make it clear to the participants that participation in her research is voluntary. We have discussed the sensitive nature of her research and conducting the interviews with her participants.

Signature of student: Nsreen Saleh	Date: 02/11/2017
V.R. Macleroy Signature of supervisor:	Date: 03/11/2017

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

This project has been considered using agreed Departmental procedures and is now approved. This approval is valid for a maximum period of five years.

You must now submit this form to your Programme Administrator. If you do not subm your dissertation (or research report) will not be able to be submitted. If you do not submit the required deadline, your research will not be considered until the next meeting o Committee, and you will not be able to proceed with your research until it has been conside

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