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'Maybe I can tell to you my story…' Language learning motivation, identity and the needs of adult ESOL students in England

by

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List of Abbreviations

CEFR	Central European Framework of Reference
E2	Entry Level Two
E3	Entry Level Three
EAL	English as an additional language
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELT	English language teaching
ESL	English as a second language
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
IATEFL	International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ILP	Individual learning plan
L1	First language
L2	Second language
L2MSS	L2 Motivational Self-System
LSA	Learning support assistant
LSF	Learner Support Fund
NATECLA	National Association of Teachers of ESOL and Community Languages to Adults
SDT	Self-determination theory
SELT	Secure English Language Test
SLA	Second language acquisition
UK	United Kingdom

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As this thesis shows, you cannot separate the person from the context, and I would not have been able to complete this PhD without the many people around me who have helped in a myriad of ways.

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This thesis is for Thomas. You inspire me every day and I am extremely proud to be your mum.

Declaration

I confirm that this thesis has been composed by myself alone and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree at another university.

Abstract

The majority of research into language learning motivation continues to favour a quantitative design, focusing on the experiences of children and young adults in the English as a Foreign Language classroom (Boo et al., 2016). This thesis, however, focuses on the motivation of adults who have chosen to enrol on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses in England at the intermediate level, from forced and voluntary migration backgrounds. The study combines a longitudinal perspective from students alongside cross-sectional views from teachers, providing an in-depth investigation into the factors that can affect language learning motivation in this context. Data were collected through the academic year 2020/21, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, in two stages: a longitudinal interview study incorporating responses to a survey and weekly text messages from student participants; and online interviews with ESOL teachers. A dialogic approach encouraged student involvement in the analysis, with narratives constructed across the academic year. The Douglas Fir Group's transdisciplinary framework (2016) was used as a conceptional framework and Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), specifically the Organismic and Basic Psychological Needs sub-theories, was used as a theoretical framework. The findings suggest that increasing confidence when speaking English with local people and becoming self-sufficient are important motivational factors, along with regaining past identities. These have clear links to the need for relatedness (with locals and classmates), competence (feeling confident in their language abilities) and autonomy (becoming less reliant on others and taking control of their education). The impact of teachers and peers was important, as was the multicultural city where they lived and the opportunities they perceived to be open to them. This thesis challenges the notion that the 'migrant' experience is uniform across contexts and provides novel ways of collecting data remotely with an often hard to reach group.

1   Background to the Thesis

Research into language learning motivation is usually focused on how teachers can motivate their students to want to learn the target language, helping them to visualise themselves using the language in the future. This type of research is typically set in expanding circle countries, where children or young adults are attending compulsory language classes and have limited contact with L1 users. This thesis aims to investigate a different context, one where adults are attending non-compulsory language classes to learn the local language of the country where they are settling/settled. There is often a presumption that anyone who moves to England will want to speak English and those who do not are met with suspicion and negativity, particularly in the right-wing press. Adults, in general, are the least likely age group to enrol in education as courses need to align with their busy lives and financial commitments rather than simply being enjoyable (Learning and Work Institute, 2021). From my experience as an English for Speakers of Other Languages (hereafter referred to as 'ESOL') teacher for just over a decade, I have seen students often struggle to vocalise their reasons for studying beyond saying it is because they live in an English-speaking country. However, it should not be presumed that they do not have future plans that involve English or more immediate needs that English will fulfil, such as being able to talk to a doctor without an interpreter or understand official letters.

Adult migrants may arrive in England for a variety of reasons such as claiming asylum, seeking employment or re-joining family members. ESOL students could therefore originate from anywhere in the world and classes are multicultural, multilingual and include students from a wide range of educational backgrounds with a variety of language learning needs. Learners may have spikey profiles, meaning their skills in English may not be uniform, but they are usually assessed against criteria that place them at an ESOL level. ESOL in England has its own levels, which can be linked approximately to the CEFR (adapted from Mishan, 2019, p.3):

Table 1.1 *ESOL Levels*

ESOL Level	CEFR	EFL Levels
Pre-Entry	A0	Starter
Entry Level One	A1	Beginner
Entry Level Two	A2	Elementary
Entry Level Three	A2+-B1	Pre-intermediate
Level One	B1-B1+	Intermediate
Level Two	B2-C1	Upper-intermediate/Advanced

Once a student reaches the higher levels of ESOL, their reasons for studying may no longer be for survival and with the opening-up of opportunities through their increased level of language, their future plans may also develop. In addition, the literacy requirement at the higher levels is such that is it unusual for students to progress if they are illiterate in English and their L1.

Understanding why a student has chosen to enrol on a course is essential for any teacher to support student achievement, retention and course satisfaction. How that motivation fluctuates during an academic year, the factors that sustain motivation, and students' decisions to continue studying or leave the course, have not been investigated before in this sector of language learning education. The addition of a pandemic, which resulted in high levels of fear and uncertainty for anyone attending educational courses in-person, provided an unexpected factor that had the potential to affect students' motivation. This thesis reports on a study completed in three stages during the academic year 2020/21, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in England. It investigated the language learning motivation of adults who enrolled at the (pre)intermediate level of ESOL, with the aim of informing pedagogy and theory in this area.

1.1 Adult ESOL in England

The movement of people around the world is not a new phenomenon. During every war, famine and financial crisis, people have left their homes to seek sanctuary and follow the dream of a new future in different countries. England is no stranger to immigration, in part due to the British Empire, its involvement in conflicts overseas and the status of English as a lingua franca. In the wake of the Brexit vote of 2016, the number of EU nationals migrating to the UK has steadily dropped (Sturge, 2022, p21) and the immigration laws changed during the data collection for this thesis in early 2021, whereby all EU nationals (except Irish citizens) would require a work visa and apply through a points-based system to emigrate to the United Kingdom. During the pandemic, net migration was down due to worldwide travel restrictions but prior to this, in 2019, the main reasons for moving to the UK was study, closely followed by work and then other reasons such as resettlement schemes for asylum seekers, and the reunification of families (2022, p20).

ESOL courses are open to anyone over the age of 16 who does not speak English as their first language and is settling or has settled in England. Accredited courses are government funded and offered by colleges of further education, local authorities, and charities. ESOL students may be new arrivals or people who have lived in England for many years, surviving with a low level of or no English. The teaching of ESOL has gradually evolved over time, becoming more regulated and recognised as a distinct sector of English language teaching but as it is one of the devolved responsibilities, provision varies across the United Kingdom. In the twentieth century, ESOL provision in England was unregulated and often relied on the good intentions of local people who often lacked the relevant training needed to teach this population of learner, relying on EFL qualifications such as the CELTA. Around the turn of the century, the UK government commissioned two reports (Moser, 1999; DFEE, 2000) which aimed to organise and regulate ESOL teaching as a growing need for English language teaching had been identified.

In 2002, the Skills for Life Agenda was introduced in England, providing a curriculum, teaching materials and examinations for adults attending ESOL

classes (Rosenberg, 2007). Twenty years later, the curriculum and teaching materials have not been updated, with units such as 'Technology' and reading texts about the 1998 World Cup, now serving as historical documents rather than cutting edge discussion prompts. The Skills for Life Agenda was disbanded in 2009 and in 2015, the exams were downgraded after a well-publicised cheating scandal whereby people were 'buying' certificates for university entry and British passports (Main & Watson, 2022; Gov.uk, 2014). The certificates involved were not ESOL Skills for Life qualifications, but the subsequent investigation and overhaul of exams used for citizenship and university entry resulted in the introduction of the Secure English Language Test (SELT), which did not receive government funding and therefore ESOL courses could not offer it as part of the provision. For the past seven years, ESOL courses have offered exams that only serve to move students from one level of ESOL to another. They are not accepted on any other courses and if people aim to progress to university, they either need to complete GCSE English or take an IELTS exam. If they want to stay in the country, they will require the SELT, but they will not be prepared for this test during their ESOL course.

Figure 1.1 Overview of the organisation of ESOL in England

Funding

Government funding by the Education and Skills Funding Agency through the Adult Education Budget.

Fully funded up to Level 2 for unemployed students in receipt of benefits. Employed learners pay fees with the government contributing 50% of course costs.

Course funding is reliant on summative exam results, student attendance, retention

and progression routes.

Adult ESOL in England

Levels

Courses are offered at every level from complete beginners (Pre-Entry) up to Level 2 - see Table 1.1

Curriculum and Teaching Materials

Produced by the Basic SKills Agency on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills in 2001.

Sets out the skills and knowledge required at each level of ESOL.

Skills for Life teaching materials produced in 2002 for every level except Pre-Entry Level.

Skills for Life Assessments

Summative examinations are offered by a range of exam boards, both internally and externally set and marked.

Each ESOL provider can choose their exam board.

Three exams are offered at each level: speaking and listening, reading, and writing. There are no exams at Pre-Entry Level.

Exams are used to move students from one level to the next.

An additional change to the sector in the past 10 years has been the reduction in funding. From the period 2009-2015 there was a 50% cut in government funding (Refugee Action, 2016) resulting in a reduction in guided learning hours and classes available, particularly for adults. ESOL courses are part funded through government agencies, currently the Skills Funding Agency, with anyone in employment paying the remainder of the fees and anyone without recourse to public funds paying full fees. Anyone claiming asylum in England must wait six months before being eligible for public funds, after which time they can attend fully funded ESOL classes but are not allowed to earn money through employment.

1.2   Rationale for the Research

I started teaching ESOL in April 2007 whilst completing a teacher training diploma and working on alternative education projects for a charity in Bradford, West Yorkshire. Bradford is a multicultural city and I had grown up there surrounded by people of different nationalities, ethnicities, cultures and heritage languages. As a descendant of Irish immigrants, I was in the minority in Bradford in the sense that everyone in my family spoke English as a first language, and the majority of my school friends spoke a heritage language with relatives, for example, Urdu, Punjabi, and Japanese. Due to the high levels of immigration in Bradford, the ESOL provision is large and well-established, and this is where I first started teaching in a college of further education. In the search for a permanent, full-time contract I moved to the West Midlands where I had been offered a less-precarious role at a smaller college. I taught every level from pre-entry to Level two to classes of teenagers and adults from all over the world. Prior to the funding cuts in 2015, I taught classes in a range of community settings such as church halls and advice centres until all the provision was moved to the main college site.

The changes to ESOL provision that I experienced as a teacher around 2015 led me to apply for a master's degree as I hoped a higher qualification would provide some job security. I was also looking for an academic challenge as it had been six years since I completed the Level 5 subject specialism in ESOL and I believed that as a teacher in the lifelong learning setting, I should lead

by example. The focus of my research came from my admiration for the adults who attended classes at the higher levels as they had enough English to survive but chose to continue studying whilst juggling their busy lives as employees and parents. I also enjoyed teaching the higher levels as the students were able to have discussions and debates on a wide range of topics, as well as doing more project work, choosing issues important to them to research and present to the class. I had some agency over the curriculum, being allowed to write my own schemes of work on the proviso that the students were sufficiently prepared for their exams, i.e. I could tailor my teaching towards the students' needs but they had to pass the exams at the end of the course.

Investigating the impact of this exam-focussed provision was the aim of a study I completed for my first MA dissertation in 2016, where I researched my own classroom and those of my colleagues (Sidaway, 2018). The students involved in this study indicated a wide range of reasons for studying, from improving job prospects to helping children with their homework, with these goals keeping them motivated rather than the imposed goal of passing a summative assessment. The repeated assessments in the form of practice tests and exam resits only served to demotivate students, particularly when those who failed were moved into a workshop and not allowed to continue learning with their classmates in the exam class. The results of this study enabled me to redesign the ESOL provision at that college so all students could stay in the same class for an entire academic year and were not removed mid-year if they did not pass an exam. Instead, teachers provided extra support to help them achieve specific language goals and peer support was encouraged throughout the year.

ESOL course design varies across providers and decisions such as timetables and examination boards are often made by those in management positions, which is partly why I was able to redesign the timetable at the college where I was working in 2018. ESOL provision has been referred to as 'fragmented' (Simpson, 2012; Foster & Bolton, 2017) and since 2014, there have been repeated calls on the British government to support an ESOL Strategy for England, with the most recent from NATECLA in 2022

(*NATECLA - ESOL Strategy for England - ESOL Strategy for England - 2022*, n.d.) as strategies have already been implemented in Scotland and Wales, although the Scottish strategy expired in 2020. For people wanting to attend ESOL courses, this means their access to ESOL courses is a postcode lottery, with multi-level classes offered in community settings, and single level, exam focused classes offered in colleges of further education. The majority of all ESOL provision in England has been in urban rather than rural areas as this is where the need is greatest.

Research into the language learning motivation of adults attending ESOL courses in English speaking countries has been largely neglected in the literature (Ushioda, 2020), perhaps because there is a presumption that living in England provides students with the motivation to learn. The fact that English language learning is inherently important for adult migrants (Baynham, Roberts et al, 2007; Cooke & Simpson, 2008) is not under debate here as they are living in a country where English is required for most daily tasks. However, merely living in an English-speaking country does not provide everyone with the motivation to enrol on an ESOL course, neither does it explain all the individual differences in learner motivation. Another reason for the lacuna of research in this area may be because these students are often difficult to access due to their busy lives or because insider or practitioner research is also lacking. For people who may have suffered trauma or are going through the unpredictable process of applying to remain in England, they may feel very vulnerable talking to an outsider, especially if the research is conducted in the language they are learning. EFL research, in contrast, is usually conducted in the shared L1 of the participants if they are learning in their home countries. If they are in an English-speaking country, they are there on temporary student visas with the aim of returning home at the end of their course, and therefore far less vulnerable. There have been arguments for and against the separation of ESOL and EFL research in the literature (see Mathews-Aydinli, 2008; Williams & Williams, 2007) but it could be argued that a lack of distinction has contributed to the neglect of research into the adult language learner context.

In designing this study, I saw myself as an insider through my identity as a former ESOL teacher. This made it easier to have access to teachers and students in the sector who spoke freely, secure in the knowledge that I would protect their identity and understood their context, mindful that research into motivation can influence the motivation of participants (Lamb, 2018). One of the main aims of the project was to inform language learning motivation theory and ESOL course design, with the hope of gaining insights into the student experience, and therefore my standing as an insider will be reflected upon throughout the thesis.

1.2.1 Changes to the Research Plan

The original study that I designed when applying for ESRC funding and planned during the first six months of my PhD, is not the research found in this thesis. I had originally intended to visit ESOL classrooms across a range of provision, both in colleges and community settings, to conduct a comparative case study of exam washback and its impact on adult learner motivation around England. The Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in a nationwide lockdown in March 2020, the closing of all in-person education and the cancellation of exams, meant that I had to quickly redesign my project.

By September 2020, only one ESOL provider was responding to my messages and still allowed me to visit their classrooms to distribute a survey and recruit students for an interview study. After that point in the term, everything had to be conducted remotely as Covid-19 cases were rising once more and local lockdowns meant that I was not allowed to travel to the city where the students lived and studied. Therefore, I had to take a rather different and creative approach to designing my study, as I did not know whether the student participants would be able to provide data electronically and there was a high probability that some or all would withdraw from the study due to ill-health. For example, I had hoped to include card-sorting activities in all of the student interviews but the participants found this too difficult to complete due to low levels of computer literacy, and so it was abandoned before the second interviews.

The decision to include teacher perspectives on student motivation was made to counterbalance my inability to incorporate any ethnographic elements into the research. The examinations had to be removed as a focus as it was not known whether any ESOL exams would be offered in that academic year and so the focus was widened to any factors that affected student motivation during a course. These factors were those identified by the participants themselves, rather than any predetermined elements chosen by me or highlighted by prior research, in the hope that their voices would be central to the thesis.

All research is messy, and it is important for researchers to reflect on how decisions were made to ensure transparency and reliability of the findings (Gadella Kamstra, 2022). Considering this, in Chapters 3 and 9, I have included reflections on the difficulties and the opportunities provided whilst conducting research remotely with a potentially vulnerable and often hard-to-reach group of learners, during a pandemic, in the hope that it may encourage future research on this population.

1.3   Location of the Research

To ensure the anonymity and pseudonymity of the participants, the names of the towns and cities where they were based will not be shared. As previously mentioned, the general context for the study is England, as ESOL provision is different in each country across the United Kingdom. I chose England for a number of reasons, namely, it does not have an ESOL strategy so there is a wide variety of provision, it has the largest number of ESOL learners of all the countries in the UK, and it is the country where I have the most professional experience. I have taught classes to all ages and levels, in community and college settings and prepared students for Skills for Life exams with different exam boards for 11 years, so I believe I am well-placed to conduct this research.

The city where I piloted the data collection instruments was unknown to me professionally, but their curriculum, levels and exams were not. The city where the five student participants were based in the main study was chosen partly for its diversity and partly because of access. In September 2020,

people in England were still living in fear of Covid-19 and there was not yet a vaccine, so it became extremely difficult to access ESOL classrooms, both online and in-person. This was a city that had welcomed new arrivals from around the world for hundreds of years. After being badly bombed during the Second World War, the city became known as a city of peace and reconciliation as local people helped to rebuild both English and German towns. Following the immigration trends of most cities in England through the 20th century, people have made new homes in the city from Europe, the Indian sub-continent and the Caribbean in response to calls for workers in the local industry. In the 21st century, the opening up of the European Union saw an increase in migrant workers from Eastern Europe along with people arriving from Africa and the Middle East claiming asylum due to war and conflict. The city is therefore multicultural and unlike other large towns and cities in England, has not experienced race riots or periods of unrest, indicating that it is potentially a welcoming place for new arrivals although this can never be guaranteed.

1.4   The Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic began a few months before the start of data collection for this thesis, affecting how, where, when and why I collected certain data from the participants. Until March 2020, when England went into lockdown and all education was moved online, the majority of ESOL provision had been delivered in traditional classroom settings (Higton et al, 2019). The financial costs associated with online courses and the low computer skills of ESOL students, particularly at the lower levels, were the two main reasons for this (Higton et al, 2019). Five years prior to the pandemic, a study by Matulionienė and Pundziuvienė (2017) had explored the potential benefits of blended ESOL courses finding that most students were positive about the opportunities this approach could provide for language use away from the traditional classroom setting. However, there was a concern that not all students' levels of computer skills were equal and offering such courses could lead to the exclusion of older students or those who did not have enough money to invest in the technology and internet access required. ESOL students may be seeking asylum and therefore

unable to work, meaning they cannot afford to pay for broadband at home or easily access devices such as smartphones or laptops, and are therefore more likely to enrol on a classroom-based course as this is lower-cost and does not require any technology or internet access.

The pandemic therefore introduced the majority of ESOL teachers and learners to online learning. Looking at the UK population as a whole, a report by Good Things Foundation (2022) found that there are 1.5 million households with no internet access, 2 million households who struggle to afford broadband and 10 million UK adults who lack the most basic digital skills such as the ability to send emails. Those on low incomes are more likely to fall into these categories due to the high cost of broadband and digital equipment such as laptops and tablets. In addition to this, during the Covid-19 pandemic, 65% of the population video-called for the first time (Lloyds Bank UK Consumer Digital Index, 2021) meaning there was a high chance that those first online lessons during lockdowns were a new experience for both ESOL teachers and students in terms of software use and teaching mode.

The introduction of online ESOL courses was an unexpected factor that had the potential to impact language learning motivation, both positively and negatively. I had never taught online so I was keen to understand the experiences of the students at this time and how they were navigating this change, whilst learning English during a pandemic. Much has been written about the resilience of refugees in general (Hutchinson & Dorsett, 2012), with ESOL courses aiming to provide safe, welcoming spaces where resilience is not relied upon to succeed. However, with the closure of some of those spaces and limited access to local people and communities outside of their homes, the role of resilience could not be ignored when investigating language learning under these conditions. In addition, as will be shown in this thesis, not all ESOL students are refugees and the resourcefulness of adult language learners of all backgrounds needs acknowledging in the literature.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, ESOL enrolments and achievements in England dropped during the academic year of 2020/21 (National Statistics, 2022). Enrolments usually occur in August/September each year and in 2020, this was when adults discovered whether their local ESOL provider was offering online, in-person or hybrid courses. As can be seen from Table 1.2, there was a participation decrease of 20,720 (21.86%) at entry levels and 1660 (9%) at Level 1 with an achievement decrease of 10% at entry levels and 8% at Level 1. Enrolment and achievement levels returned to the pre-pandemic levels by September 2021, by which time the UK government had announced the end of lockdowns in England and all educational institutions were expected to fully reopen.

Table 1.2 *Adult ESOL enrolments and achievements 2021/22 (National statistics, 2022)*

	All Participation			All Achievements		
	2019/20	**2020/21**	2021/22	2019/20	**2020/21**	2021/22
Entry Levels	94,780	**74060**	94360	46450	**28930**	41390
Level 1	17,890	**16230**	17220	7690	**5590**	7270
Level 2	6,400	**6080**	6170	3030	**2100**	2650
Total	115030	**91980**	113260	56620	**35980**	50540

One criticism of research which relies on volunteers is that only the most motivated will participate and they will not adequately represent the wider population (Rosenthal, 1965). This is particularly troublesome in motivation research, especially when there is a longitudinal element, as the research in this thesis contains. The participants in this thesis came from the 2020/21 cohort and from the data in Table 1.2, it could be inferred that only the most highly motivated students enrolled in that academic year with the remaining students taking a year off to return once the lockdowns had ended and a

vaccine was available. The extent to which this is true will be discussed in relation to the responses collected from the students and teachers who volunteered their time. The challenges faced by those learning English during the pandemic were unpredictable and wide-ranging and therefore much can be learned from how the students navigated this time and persevered with their studies, however motivated they may have been at the start of the course.

1.5   Expected Contribution of this Research

This thesis aims to investigate the language learning motivation of adult ESOL students attending an ESOL course in England. From the viewpoints of both students and teachers, the motivation of this much-overlooked group of language learners will be investigated using a range of data collection methods. The voices of adults attending English language provision in England have been largely ignored in the language learning motivation literature, with the majority of theories being conceptualised and tested in EFL environments. A gap in the literature is, of course, not in itself a reason to conduct research as there are arguably many different contexts in which to collect data on a topic. However, as I will argue in the next chapter, much can be learned from the experiences of 'non-elite' language learners whose decision-making power is vastly different from children learning languages at school or young adults at university. This sector of education does not generate the monetary wealth of global ELT, but this does not mean it does not deserve the same status as EFL in the literature. As Cooke and Simpson (2009) explained more than a decade ago, due to the precarity of ESOL provision and the powerlessness of the students, the learners are 'inaudible' in policy making, research and their daily lives (2009, pp1-2). In recent years, there have been calls for research on language learning motivation and second language acquisition in general, to take more of a social justice approach to research, considering the experiences of a wider range of learners (Ortega, 2019; Ushioda, 2021) and this research is an attempt to answer that call, in the English context.

The focus of this research is on language learning motivation, rather than the ability of adults to learn a language. Arguments for children being better language learners have been widely disputed in the literature (Bongaerts, 1999; Kinsella & Singleton, 2014) as it is usually the adult's outside commitments that can lead to slower progression rather than the inability to learn after a certain age. Indeed, as recent research has shown, many adults are able to become 'expert' language users even being mistaken for native speakers (Dörnyei & Mentzelopoulos, 2022). Therefore, with the presumption that anyone has the ability to learn a language, motivation can be explored as a factor that may impact progression.

This thesis will be separated into nine chapters, beginning with an overview of the relevant literature (Chapter 2) and the research methodology employed (Chapter 3). The findings will be displayed in separate chapters, including the pilot study (Chapter 4), with the lens of enquiry narrowing through the thesis as the participant numbers reduce and the depth of analysis intensifies (Chapters 5 to 7). The findings will then be discussed together in relation to the literature (Chapter 8), with implications for language learning motivation theory, language teaching and learning, and ESOL policy appearing in Chapter 9.

2   Review of the Literature

For educators, understanding why students have chosen to enrol on their course is highly important for retention, achievement and student satisfaction. In adult education where learning is not compulsory, identifying initial motivation can be particularly valuable for designing courses that correctly meet the needs of the learners. As Dörnyei states:

> Motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process; indeed, all the other factors involved in L2 acquisition presuppose motivation to some extent (Dörnyei,1998, p.117)

As adult ESOL courses are not compulsory, motivation may be assumed in this context perhaps stemming from pressure from the wider society or a need to assimilate, but this does not mean that it will necessarily be sustained. A range of factors may affect learner motivation, both internal and external, depending on the students' motivations to enrol, their past learning history and their interactions with the target language during the learning period, for example. Very little research has been conducted in this area of English Language Teaching with regard to motivation (Ushioda, 2020), especially studies that are longitudinal in design, following students through an ESOL course or for an extended period of time over several years. As Yousefi and Mahmoodi (2022) discovered in their review of language learning motivation research between 2010 and 2019, there were no studies set in adult education from the 100 included in their systemic review; all were based in schools or universities. This echoed the findings of Boo et al. (2015), in their systemic review of 416 studies from 2005-2014, where only seven concentrated on adult learners in a new country. As will be discussed in this chapter, there is a lack of focus on the experiences of learners in English speaking countries in adult education rather than higher education, who are of working age, often with family commitments that may take priority over their own learning.

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of the research into language learning motivation, with a focus on Self-Determination Theory, related wherever possible to the context of adults learning English in England.

2.1   Theoretical Underpinnings of the Research

Over the past 60 years, there has been a wealth of research focused on language learning motivation, instigated by Gardner and Lambert's landmark study in 1959. As Gardner suggests, language learning motivation is '…the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes towards learning the language' (cited in Noels, 2001, p.43). This was the start of a move away from viewing language learning motivation in the same terms as motivation for learning other skills or subjects. This study divided language learning motivation into two groups, instrumental (the desire) and integrative (favourable attitudes). If students could see a reason to learn a language and felt a connection to others who used it, they would be motivated to learn and improve.

In 1985, Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory was developed as a principle of motivation within mainstream psychology, separate from the work of Gardner and Lambert. This was adapted by SLA researchers such as Noels (2001) who utilized it within the analysis of language learning motivation. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is comprised of several sub-theories which can be viewed independently or combined, depending on the focus of the research. Al-Hoorie et al (2022) in their systematic review of applied linguistics studies that used SDT from 1990 to 2020, highlighted that the vast majority of studies focused on university students, mostly from China and Europe, with researchers taking a quantitative approach to their data collection. In their call for new directions in SDT research, there was no mention of the adult ESOL context, forgotten by the reviewers in a similar vein to those who went before them. There was, however, an acknowledgement that there should be a focus on learners with African, South Asian and South American language backgrounds and a move to case study and intervention-based research, rather than the traditional survey design that has saturated the literature (Al-Hoorie et al., 2022).

Self-Determination Theory has perhaps been overtaken in language learning motivation research by the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2009) as the field began a socio-dynamic stage in the 21st century. The socio-dynamic

turn has viewed motivation in a dynamic way that fluctuates depending on a range of external and internal factors. The L2MSS was created out of a large-scale study into the motivation of school children to learn English in Hungary (Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006) and the researchers were surprised to discover the prevalence of integrativeness as a motivating factor for the participants as the children had no obvious connection to L1 speakers. This was linked to instrumentality and the participants' attitudes towards English-speaking communities. The L2MSS suggested two possible L2 selves, the ought-to and ideal L2 self, developing the work of Markus and Nurius (1986), along with the learning experience which concentrated on the students' relationship with the target language in the present. This theory has been tested in a range of settings such as Chile (Kormos & Kiddle, 2013), Indonesia (Lamb, 2012), and Saudi Arabia (Moskovsky, Assulaimani, Racheva, & Harkins, 2016), where the students were learning English in their non-English speaking home countries. Covering a range of countries and cultures, the main factors that influenced the correlation between the L2MSS and language learning success in these studies were students' geographical location (Lamb, 2012), social class (Kormos et al., 2013), and their initial level of English (Moskovsky et al., 2016). The learning experience influenced the participants' ability to plan their future (ideal L2 self), which then influenced their motivation and proficiency. Particularly from Lamb's (2012) work, it was clear that their learning experience had the largest effect on their motivation as it also influenced their ability to plan for an ideal L2 self, corroborated by Kim and Kim (2011) in the Korean context.

It is extremely difficult to find a study that uses the L2MSS in the adult ESOL context, with none appearing in recent systematic reviews of quantitative studies (Al-Hoorie, 2018; Yousefi andMahmoodi, 2022). This may be explained because this is a hard-to-reach group or because they are not part of the 'elite' multilingual group that generally contributes to global ELT. Partly due to this lack of research in the ESOL context, I chose the L2MSS as the theoretical framework for a study I conducted with six women attending a multilevel ESOL class in England (Sidaway, 2022). Unlike children attending foreign language classes at school, the women attending the adult ESOL

class in this study were predominantly learning to fulfil their language needs in the present rather than the future. An 'ideal L2 self' was difficult for them to imagine as their main priority was acquiring enough English to help their children with their schoolwork. An 'ought-to L2 self', in some cases, came from their children who told them to speak English at home and there was a fear of the family losing the L1, and perhaps the heritage attached. The 'learning experience' was the dominant factor as their experiences in class and particularly their interactions with classmates during tasks and at break times, were extremely important for maintaining their motivation through the course. This study highlighted the differences between adult and teenage learners and those learning in their home country and people living in a new environment. For teenagers and young people at school and university, the ideal L2 self is often important as they are planning future careers and travel and the ought-to L2 self comes from parental and societal pressure to pass exams, which are again linked to future professional success. The apparent differences experienced by people at different stages of life, could suggest that the L2MSS may not be the most appropriate theoretical framework for older students. In addition, the difference between the needs and hopes of students living in their home country versus migrants with no choice of which language to learn, also requires highlighting. Adults in the middle of their lives, residing in a place not of their choosing, without the parental pressures of childhood, may be less likely to be driven by ideal or ought-to L2 selves. Indeed, they may have already achieved an ideal future self, which has now been disrupted through migration and may not seem attainable again.

Another theory that has focused on the motivation of children is the Expectancy-Value-Cost model. This looks at the degree to which the learner expects to be successful in their learning and the value they attach to their engagement in individual tasks along with the perceived psychological cost (Barron & Hulleman, 2015). This theory has, in the main, focused on learners in compulsory education or university, studying a wide range of subjects, aiming to discover reasons for course drop-out (see Kosovich & Hulleman, 2015; Schnettler et al., 2020; Wang & Xue, 2022). This model has not been used widely with adult learners, perhaps because it requires a longitudinal

design which is easier to incorporate into a study of young people attending school or university as they are expected to attend classes for more than one year. There are crossovers with self-determination theory as the views of the learners in terms of the internalisation of goals is clear. However, as there is a strong focus on individual tasks, I would need access to the scheme of work for the course or access to the classroom to discover which tasks the participants are completing. As the data for this thesis was collected in 2020/21, I was unable to access the classrooms and the uncertainty of exam cancellations and changing government restrictions meant that it would not be possible for me to discover the classroom tasks prior to the data collection.

A return to Self-Determination Theory is therefore proposed, as there is more of a focus on the psychological needs of language learners in the present, the power they hold both in and out of the classroom and how this interweaves with their language learning motivation. The participants would be able to choose which aspects of their language learning and use of English they would include in the data and different aspects of the theoretical framework could be utilised for different participants.

2.2   Self-Determination Theory

As previously discussed in this chapter, Self-Determination Theory emerged from mainstream psychology and examines how people may be motivated to do different tasks for different reasons, connected to their individual lives. External factors such as career benefits, qualifications, or the respect of others, often motivate people to enrol on a language course. However, one may also be motivated intrinsically through a love of learning or enjoyment of a particular subject. The more internalised the reason or goal, the more likely the student will be highly motivated and successful in their learning. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008) examines the interactions between these motivations and the external factors that may have an impact, which is particularly relevant to the experiences of adult learners who, as previously mentioned, are more likely to enrol for extrinsic rather than

intrinsic reasons focused on the present or short-term (Learning & Work Institute, 2021).

Three sub-theories of Self-Determination Theory will be examined here in relation to migrant adult language learning, namely organismic integration theory, basic psychological needs theory and goal contents theory. These have been chosen, not solely because they have been utilised together successfully by a large number of other studies (Al-Hoorie et al., 2022) but because they support an approach whereby the level of internalisation of the motivation can be explained by the participants, i.e. the learners are at the centre of the research design. They will also be discussed alongside the goal contents mini-theory, which will link more directly to the initial motivations of adult language learners.

2.2.1 *Organismic Integration Theory*

Organismic integration theory provides a continuum of motivation, ranging from amotivation along to extrinsic and then finally intrinsic motivation (see Figure 2.1). This continuum explains the extent to which a person's motivation has been determined by themselves or others, using three main types of motivation. Extrinsic motivation was further subdivided into external, introjected, identified and integrated regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.72) investigating the reasons why people engage in certain activities. Motivation is not stagnant and people are complex, so it is possible that each learner's motivation may be shaped by various regulatory processes/styles concurrently, with the importance of each changing through time (Ryan & Deci, 2020). In the adult ESOL context, people who did not want to enrol on a course, such as those sent by the Job Centre or their employer, may be classified as amotivated and lack any desire to learn the language or attend classes, unable to see any value for themselves. This category may also include immigrants who neither enrol on an ESOL course nor attempt to learn the language in an informal way. The first two extrinsic forms of motivation on the continuum are also controlled by outside forces, although less so than amotivation. External regulation is regulated by externally set rewards or the avoidance of punishments, but the learner may not gain any

enjoyment from the language course, perhaps feeling resentful that they have to attend classes. Introjected regulation, although external, is slightly internalised as it connects with the learner's feeling of obligation to learn the language, whether real or imagined. The next two types of regulation are more internalised, and learners can see positive outcomes for attending a course. Identified regulations may be motivations that the learner believes will help with their goals, such as learning the language to attend university or progress in their career; it is personally meaningful for them. Integrated regulation, the final extrinsic motivation in the continuum, is connected to a learner's sense of self, similar to the concept of identity, and students are learning the language to aid their self-expression and perhaps the regaining of a past self from their first language. Finally, there is intrinsic motivation, which is completely internal and linked to the joy and satisfaction of learning something in which the student is interested.

Figure 2.1 *The Self-Determination Continuum (Ryan & Deci, 2000)*

The Self-Determination Continuum Showing Types of Motivation With Their Regulatory Styles, Loci of Causality, and Corresponding Processes

Behavior	Nonself-Determined						Self-Determined
Motivation	Amotivation		External Regulation	Introjected Regulation	Identified Regulation	Integrated Regulation	Intrinsic Motivation
			Extrinsic Motivation				
Regulatory Styles	Non-Regulation		External Regulation	Introjected Regulation	Identified Regulation	Integrated Regulation	Intrinsic Regulation
Perceived Locus of Causality	Impersonal		External	Somewhat External	Somewhat Internal	Internal	Internal
Relevant Regulatory Processes	Nonintentional, Nonvaluing, Incompetence, Lack of Control		Compliance, External Rewards and Punishments	Self-control, Ego-Involvement, Internal Rewards and Punishments	Personal Importance, Conscious Valuing	Congruence, Awareness, Synthesis With Self	Interest, Enjoyment, Inherent Satisfaction

It is for the learner to determine how meaningful a motivation may be for them as individuals as only they know the true reason they have chosen to enrol on a course. Studies and reports which have surveyed ESOL students, have collected data on reasons for studying such as Schellekens (2001) and most recently, Higton et al. (2019). This latest government funded research was designed to capture student needs and any barriers to learning faced by adult ESOL students in England to go alongside the much-anticipated ESOL Strategy for England. The strategy has not yet been published but the report delivered useful findings from the 162 ESOL providers who were surveyed, from which 28 were visited, where 40 senior leaders, 136 teachers, and 336 learners participated in interviews (2019, p.8). The main motivating factors for accessing ESOL were not surprising, with students' priorities concentrated on present day needs as well as a desire to improve their employability (p.63). However, the extent to which these motivations were internalised by the respondents or determined by outside forces, was not fully explored. Indeed, the extent to which adult migrants are able to identify and internalise their reasons for learning the language of their new home is something which is largely absent from the language learning motivation literature as the focus has mainly been on the Asian EFL context (Noels et al., 2019, p104). For adults especially, outside factors such as employment, parental responsibility or even civil war and forced relocation, can have an impact on their reason for enrolling on a course and learning a language. However, it may not always be obvious to the teacher whether these factors have been self-determined.

According to organismic integration theory, if a student enrols on a course mostly driven by external regulation, then there is a high chance that they will lose motivation once the reward has been achieved or the punishment avoided. To encourage long term language learning, a student must internalise their goals, moving towards the self-determined phase of the continuum. To better understand how this is possible, the next sub-theory of SDT should be examined, namely the basic psychological needs theory.

2.2.2 *Basic Psychological Needs Theory*

This sub-theory of Self-Determination Theory suggests that for general well-being in life, our need for competence, autonomy and relatedness require supporting. In terms of education, competence is the feeling of being able to accomplish your goals and sufficiently challenged by the course you are studying. Autonomy is being supported to take ownership of your learning by setting your own goals and choosing how and when you learn. Relatedness is a feeling of connection to others during one's learning, such as teachers, peers and in the English context, local people who also speak English. Relatedness is similar to Lambert and Gardner's concept of integrativeness, which could be a connection to the learning environment or other L2 users. According to SDT, if all three basic psychological needs are met, then the learner is more likely to enjoy the learning experience and internalise their reasons for learning (Agawa & Takeuchi, 2016; Oga-Baldwin et al., 2017), which may extend the length of time they persist with their studies and raise levels of achievement (Ryan et al., 2019) as they move towards the self-determined end of the continuum (see Figure 2.1).

This sub-theory has been connected to education in a range of contexts (Ryan & Deci, 2020) often taking individual psychological needs in turn or analysing all three in a certain context. Competence perhaps has an obvious link to language testing, assessment and feedback. It can also be affected by internally regulated views of competence, in relation to self-confidence and self-esteem. The expectations individuals have for their language learning and how well they are achieving these goals are also included here. For adults, they will not usually have the parental influence found in studies on teenagers and young adults such as Csizér and Kormos (2009). However, there may be their own expectations to be good parents, able to help their children through the British education system and even expectations from their children to speak English (Sidaway, 2022). A person's sense of self and how they view competence should be included here, which may link to their past experiences of success and failure in education.

Relatedness is the need to feel connected to others, based on the idea that no one flourishes in isolation, we all need a community or support system to

aid our wellbeing. In a context similar to England, Carson (2008) investigated the importance of relatedness in connection to the motivation of an adult claiming asylum in Ireland whilst attending an English language class. Initially, 'Nicolae' felt no connection to Ireland, its people or the English language as he had wanted to live in France, where he had lived earlier in his life and learned French. He was only attending English classes to fill the time until he could find employment and had no interest in the language, unable to set any goals related to his language learning. Through the course of a year, this changed as he forged friendships in the class and was supported by the teacher to make future plans. Although his need for relatedness was not fulfilled outside the classroom, he became an active group member in the classroom and began to make future plans as his level of English improved. The Irish context is different to England as it has a history of its citizens emigrating overseas rather than receiving foreign nationals (McGinnity et al., 2020), but it is a good example of the importance of peer and teacher support when learners are not in the country of their choosing and believe they can survive with low levels of English. In Nicolae's case, the loss of autonomy resulted in a loss of relatedness and although his teachers and classmates could not help him to move to France, they could support him to start making positive decisions about his life in Ireland.

In contrast, a longitudinal study (Bernhard, 2022) into the language learning trajectories of adult asylum seekers in Germany, shared a narrative of one student who was unable to accept that he had to remain in Germany and could not move to the country of his choice. 'Wael' could not accept the German language or the country as his new home and despite achieving B1 (intermediate level), this was where he plateaued and felt he had failed in his learning of German (2022, p9). Although this study was concerned with investment and future selves, Wael's unfulfilled need for relatedness in Germany was affecting his motivation to learn the language to a high level, in conjunction with his loss of autonomy when choosing where to claim asylum.

Autonomy is the final psychological need, and, as Little (1994) argues, 'All genuinely successful learning is in the end autonomous' (p.431) but the

concept itself has been widely debated in the language learning literature. Taking Benson's definition, it is

> …the capacity to take control of one's own learning… autonomy is a multidimensional capacity that will take different forms for different individuals, and even for the same individual in different contexts or at different times. (Benson, 2013, p58)

Autonomy, like motivation, may therefore be in a state of constant flux, depending on a range of both internal and external factors. It is not restricted to learning outside of the classroom, nor does it mean that teachers let students do whatever they want (Little, 1990). Indeed, the teacher still plays an important role in supporting and encouraging students to make decisions about their learning, providing the opportunities for them to discover a strategy that works best for them as individuals.

Since 2020, there has been an uprise in the interest in the need for autonomy in the online context, both in and away from the language classroom (Mynard & Shelton-Strong, 2022), possibly instigated by the increase in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Learning away from the traditional classroom setting, with restricted access to a teacher and using new technology, may require a certain level of resourcefulness and autonomy from the students to enable them to successfully continue their studies.

The promotion of autonomy has often been criticised as a western concept (Smith, 2003; Salehi & Farajnezhad, 2020) which is unheard of in educational systems where teacher-led instruction is revered. Students accessing ESOL classes come from a variety of education systems and so the idea that they could take control of their learning may be alien to them. However, if the concept of autonomy is taken from a Self-Determination Theory perspective (Ryan & Deci, 2000; 2017), it is linked to feelings of wellness and satisfaction in our daily lives; we all have a 'psychological need to experience personal ownership during one's behaviour' (Reeve, 2022, p.16). Any adult who has made the decision to enrol on an ESOL course is autonomous but for those who attend merely to pass the time or have been

mandated by a government agency or employer, feelings of resentment and frustration may appear.

One's need for autonomy, from this theoretical viewpoint does not thrive in isolation, it requires the needs of relatedness and competency to also be supported. Therefore, learners must also feel connected to others in the language community (relatedness), and feel they are becoming competent in their language use. As Ushioda (2011) argues, promoting autonomy is particularly important when students are searching for ways to express themselves confidently and adaptively in their lives.

2.2.3 Goal Contents Theory

Both of the SDT mini-theories discussed thus far have been concerned with an individual's reasons for having goals or the *why*. These cannot be fully discussed without considering the *what* (Ryan & Deci, 2017). As will be discussed in the next section, the types of goals chosen by language learners do not only vary across individuals but also classrooms or educational settings. As shown through the literature on the basic psychological needs theory, if a learner is able to internalise their goals through need fulfilment, their wellbeing will improve. As Martos and Kopp (2014) found, if participants are able to identify intrinsic goals, their wellbeing will enhance, and the opposite is true for participants who only have extrinsic goals. The types of goals adult ESOL students may have will be discussed in the following section, taking into account all three mini-theories of SDT.

2.3   Motivation in Adult ES(O)L

Language learning motivation research has its origins in the bilingual context of Canada (Gardner & Lambert, 1959) where high school students in a French speaking region were learning French as a second language. In the UK context in 2022, this would be labelled as English as an Additional Language (EAL), a teaching context that has much in common with adult ESOL as the students are learning the local language but also has commonality with EFL research as the students are attending compulsory language classes in school. Canada is a unique context as it is officially a

bilingual country but it is rare for its inhabitants to be fluent in both languages (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Therefore, if a new arrival is learning English in the French speaking region, they may not have any contact with other English-speaking people. In contrast, in countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States, English is the only official language but in places with high levels of immigration, contact with native speakers of English also may be limited.

This section of Chapter 2 will review the language learning motivation literature based in a range of contexts where adult migrants are learning the language of their new country. As previously noted in this chapter, there is a distinct lack of language learning motivation research in the adult ESOL context. However, although there are only a few studies in comparison to the EFL context, the research that has been conducted provides a rich insight into the adult migrant learner experience and will be the focus of the remainder of this chapter. As an additional note, research is included here that is labelled as EAL in Canada and Australia, and ESL in the United States of America and New Zealand. ESOL in those countries is based in compulsory education (primary and secondary schools), which is called EAL in England. These terms are not to be confused with TESOL, a term connected to the training of English language teachers which is used worldwide. EFL is used to describe compulsory language learning in schools and universities in non-English speaking countries as well as non-compulsory English language teaching that takes place in language schools and universities in England. Although sometimes confused with ESOL, EFL in the English context is not in focus here as the students are on temporary student visas, for example attending summer schools, and not settling in the country.

2.3.1 *Initial Motivation and Goals of Adult ES(O)L Learners*

Reasons for enrolment in the English adult ESOL context have been included in large scale studies, previously discussed above in 2.3.1.These results confirmed earlier, much smaller scale studies, conducted by

Asadullah (2014) and Matulionienė and Pundziuvienė (2014) where students at the lower levels were learning to help with their daily lives and higher level students were hoping to progress from the course onto 'a rewarding career' (Matulionienė & Pundziuvienė, 2014, p.195) in the UK. However, language learning motivation was not discussed in these studies from any theoretical standpoint.

One study which attempted to assess the prevalence of integrative motivation was a study of adults attending ESOL classes in Lanarkshire, Scotland (Hudson, 2017). This was a very small-scale quantitative study which, due to a low response rate, showed little difference in participant response. Although it seemed to show that the students were interested in the local society and improving their communication skills with locals, no information was provided about the context. Scotland is far less multicultural than England, particularly in rural areas where this study was based, and it is unclear how much opportunity the participants had to interact with other users of English outside the ESOL classroom or learn about the local culture.

Moving to the North American context for further insights, Lane Igoudin (2008) conducted a mixed methods study with 10 adult ESL students in the United States, aiming to address the research question of why adults enrol on advanced level ESL courses. Combining the results from a survey with interviews and classroom observations, the study highlighted the main motivations for these students to attend classes, namely integration into English speaking society and career advancement. Factors that affected their motivation were their identities in the USA, their immigration history, particularly whether they had migrated under their own volition, outside work commitments and the ESL teacher. Nine of the ten participants were Spanish speakers, which for that part of Los Angeles was not unexpected and they were able to use their L1 with the wider Latin American population living in the area. This perhaps draws the study more in line with Gardner and Lambert's work in Canada, as the participants were essentially living in a bilingual society. However, their desire to be able to confidently speak with local people in English in both social and professional contexts was their main reason for continuing to learn at the advanced level and goes against

the view that adults are often learning to gain employment. It also raises the point about the status of the participant's L1 in their new environment. As Pokorn and Čibej (2018a; 2018b) found in their studies of migrants learning Slovenian in Slovenia, if an adult is able to use their L1 in the new country, or even English as a lingua franca, then they will see no need to learn the language of the new country. This may be particularly prevalent in countries where the language is rarely spoken outside of that context, such as Slovenian, as opposed to English which is spoken by approximately 1.4 billion people worldwide (The most spoken languages 2022, 2021).

However, there are ESOL courses which have the specific aim of supporting students into employment, such as the one in Warriner's study in 2016, in the USA. The course was only open to job seekers and therefore it was perhaps not surprising that they all hoped to improve their employment prospects through learning English. ESOL for Work courses are not as commonplace in the UK but they do exist and sometimes adults are referred to general ESOL courses from the Job Centre. In general ESOL, the challenge of teaching highly motivated learners who have rearranged their lives to attend classes alongside learners who have to attend or they will lose their employment benefits, highlights one of the differences between ESOL and EFL contexts and illustrates the wide range of motivations in an ESOL classroom.

Employment can also act as a barrier to language learning, even for those who are highly motivated to learn. An example of this comes from an investigation into the experiences of Spanish-speaking Latinos in London by Block (2006). As Javier, one of the participants, explained 'you either study or you work' (2006, p.147). He had enrolled on an English course but withdrawn due to the demands of work as he had financial responsibility for his wife and family. As I found when visiting a community based ESOL class (Sidaway, 2022), the male students often leave the course or struggle to regularly attend classes as work takes priority over education at that point in their lives. For male students who are unable to work, such as asylum seekers, ESOL classes may be prioritised as they are often very low level and need to improve their English to complete daily tasks or prepare for

future work and education, once their claim has been processed by the Home Office (Chamorro et al.,2021).

Enrolments, therefore, may be motivated by a range of factors, particularly employment and integration into the wider society. These may, in turn, be impacted by the adult's level of English prior to the course and their socio-economic status in the country. For most adult ESOL learners in England, the intermediate level has become the final level of ESOL as this is where enrolments tend to drop (Table 1.2) and is therefore worthy of investigation as learners may be beginning to form clear progression routes.

2.3.2 *Course Design*

Once an adult has enrolled on an ESOL course, the provision may have an impact on motivation, depending on how it has been designed. During any accredited ESOL course in England, students will experience either examinations, individual learning plans (ILPs) or both, which in some contexts provide the main purpose of the course.

Cooke (2006), in her qualitative study into the motivation and needs of ESOL learners in London, focused on the experiences of four adults learning English and how their needs were being met (or not) by the individual learning plans written by their teacher. ILPs contain the students' long and short-term goals for language learning and should be reviewed at regular intervals during a course. They are designed to be written collaboratively by the student and teacher to ensure the goals are both achievable and sufficiently challenging for the learner. Cooke highlighted the disjunction between what the students were learning in the classroom and the language they needed outside of the classroom to apply for higher education and employment. The participants seemed to be beginner students (this is not clear from the study), and all were claiming asylum in the UK. Despite living in a multicultural city, these learners felt isolated, partly because of the restrictions imposed by the asylum system but also because of their lack of contact with others who spoke English. Cooke also criticised the ILP system in this context which took a deficit approach – goals were based on what the

students could not do rather than what would help them to achieve long term aspirations.

The substantial reduction in funding since that study was conducted has resulted in very little funding available for students on non-accredited courses i.e., claiming funding for students who complete ILP targets rather than exams is less commonplace. Although ILPs are still used in ESOL, they are rarely linked to funding and are not always prioritised. In addition, the Skills for Life agenda, which restricted the teachers in this study, finished in 2015, but ESOL teachers in the 2020s are perhaps even more restricted than ever. The pressure for every student to pass an ESOL exam and the reduction in guided learning hours that came with the decrease in funding, has resulted in even less time for teachers to get to know their students. When this is viewed alongside the fact that the ESOL Skills for Life examinations were downgraded in 2014, meaning they cannot be used for anything except moving from one ESOL level to another, the perspectives of teachers in this context must be included in research. As Simpson (2011) explained

> …ESOL teachers are obliged to comply with an institutional concern with examinations, and have to go to great lengths to teach creatively while still working within the constraints of exam preparation. (2011, p.11)

The effects of this situation on the motivation of ESOL students has not been a focus of research and only two studies, Rice et al (2008) and Sidaway (2018) (discussed later in this section) have investigated any links between the ESOL Skills for Life examinations and adult motivation. However, the main focus of Rice et al (2008) was to investigate the possible connection between course hours and motivation, including the option of passing exams in the choice of possible initial motivations. This Scottish study found that students chose their course based on how well the timetable fit in with their lives, with some students on very part time courses wishing they had the time to attend a full time course, which aligns with the choices made by adults of all nationalities accessing education in the UK (Learning & Work Institute, 2021). The majority of participants in this study expressed a desire for more examinations, particularly those studying on very part-time courses

(2008, p.471) indicating that students on all courses had a need for competence to be fulfilled through testing, which would subsequently aid their need for autonomy as the certificates would open up opportunities in Scotland.

The lower the number of hours, the less time a teacher has to prepare students adequately for a test, which has the possibility of increasing both teacher and student stress. Of course, the perceived importance of an exam may also have an impact. Since the reduction in funding for ESOL courses, the number of teaching hours has been vastly reduced giving students no option but to study on very part-time courses in England.

Exams are often used to motivate learners as they can be linked to positive outcomes (Green, 2013, p.16) but if a student cannot use the test result beyond the course, they may become demotivated. DeMars (cited in Swerdzewski et al. 2011, p.183) suggested raising the consequences of low-stakes tests to ensure the scores matched the students' true abilities but this raises many ethical issues, especially when teachers view the tests as high-stakes but the students do not (Finn, 2015).

Furthermore, there could be additional negative consequences of increasing the importance of tests if students have experienced failure in the past, as Stiggins (2001) explains:

> …there are other students whose personal academic histories lead them to believe that, for them, such standards are unattainable. They regard success as beyond their capacity. They simply cannot face the prospect of even more public evidence of their own failure. Their response is to withdraw from the fight. They give up in hopelessness. (2001, p.12)

Understanding the students' past histories is therefore imperative. Their motivations for joining the course can help to explain how they view their future success and the summative exam they may be expected to complete. Using Weir's socio-cognitive framework (2005), consequential validity of exams, even when they are viewed as low-stakes by outsiders, may have long-term effects for the test takers. This links to the work of Shohamy (2001), who argued for the test takers' voices to be heard and taken into account by the test designers. This is something that is scarce within the

literature regarding adult ESOL Skills for Life exams and was the focus of my earlier study with adults attending Entry Level Three and Level One ESOL classes in 2015/16 in England (Sidaway, 2018). The study in Scotland discussed earlier (Rice et al., 2008) was conducted at a time when the Skills for Life ESOL exams were still high stakes and could be used for further study and British citizenship. In 2010, the study by Baynham and Simpson (2010) examined the vertical and horizontal trajectories of ESOL students enrolled on exam classes in two cities in England. This study was not concerned with motivation but did note the student and teachers' attitudes towards the ESOL exams, which were not valued by employers or Literacy course staff (pp434-436) and seemed to result in the stakeholders viewing the Literacy course (now known as Functional Skills English) as a more valuable course and qualification.

By 2016, in England, the exams had been downgraded by the government and were only accepted by other ESOL providers. In my study (Sidaway, 2018), I found that despite the low-stakes nature of the exams, students became demotivated if they failed the exam and were moved to a multilevel workshop, away from their classmates who had passed, where they took multiple resits until they either passed or withdrew from the course. For those who passed the exam and whose classmates were allowed to remain in the class, the exam had almost no impact on their motivation, positive or negative. The students enjoyed collecting certificates but did not feel challenged by the assessment. For these students for whom the summative assessment was inconsequential, their initial motivation to join the course had the most impact on their capability to persist in their language learning. The majority of students were attending classes to improve their spoken English when communicating with local people or to improve their employment prospects; gaining an ESOL certificate was not a high priority but when it was used as a gatekeeping device, it had the potential to negatively affect their language learning motivation.

2.3.3 *Learner Identity and Status in the New Country*

A student's needs may be discovered, to some extent, from their initial motivation to join the course but this can be explored further if a person-in-

context relational view of motivation (Ushioda, 2009) is taken, particularly when examining how it may fluctuate during a course. The person-in-context relational view has been utilised in a range of English language contexts such as the language learning motivation of international students at a UK university (Harvey, 2015), study abroad programmes (Coleman, 2013) and the willingness to communicate of university students in New Zealand (Cao, 2014), indicating a methodological move towards in-depth qualitative studies within the field of language learning motivation. This approach sees learners as individuals with past histories and lives outside the language classroom which are equal to or perhaps more important than their identity as students. These identities cannot be separated from their context, which also needs to be understood from the learner's point of view. As Ushioda explains, we must investigate 'The unique local particularities of the person as a self-reflective intentional agent, inherently part of and shaping her own context' (Ushioda, 2009, p218), therefore the context is not a background feature but something that is shaped by the individual and may have an important influence on their identity. The context in this thesis may initially seem to be an ESOL classroom or city in England, which is true for the majority of the participants, but how they engage with that context and the people around them will no doubt be different for each individual.

A person's identity or sense of self, is usually constructed through adolescence and early adulthood (Syed, 2001, p.128) and the effect on adults' present and imagined identities when they begin a new life in a different country has been researched to some extent since the 1960s. A person's identity or how one sees oneself, may be complex, comprised of many factors such as age, gender, occupation, social class, level of education etc. The link between motivation, identity and autonomy has become the focus of a growing body of research in the twenty first century (Gao and Lamb, 2011, p.1) and within SDT research, individuals are acknowledged as having multiple identities, examining the extent to which they are autonomous or imposed (Ryan & Deci, 2018, p.382). Unlike the ideal selves in the L2MSS, identity can include both present and future

selves, changing depending on life stage and environment (Ushioda, 2011a, p203). As Noels et al., (2019) describe

> SDT maintains that the self plays an important central organising function… the optimal life comes about when people are true to their authentic self (p.96)

The literature included in this section will take a broad approach to the concept of identity, including research that has not necessarily taken an SDT perspective, but is relevant to the language learning motivation of adults in English speaking countries.

The most cited, and therefore arguably the most influential research into the connections between adult migrant identity and language learning, is that of Bonnie Norton. Norton's studies (2000, 2010) into the experiences of women claiming asylum in Canada highlighted the potential loss of identity when language acts as a barrier to continuing the life one had in one's home country. Norton's participants had low levels of English, described as beginners, which contributed to their lack of confidence when communicating with other L2 speakers. They felt that local people only viewed them as immigrants, judging them on their level of English, rather than adults with individual skills and experience. One participant, Eva, grew in confidence once she had the opportunity to socialise with work colleagues which meant she was able to share with them more about her life and they were impressed by her wide knowledge of languages. Others in the study were not so fortunate with their colleagues and their disconnection from other L2 users grew deeper, depriving the women from regaining old identities or constructing new ones of their choosing. This is similar to some of the experiences of Syrian adults claiming asylum in Germany in a more recent study conducted between 2017 and 2021 (Bernhard, 2022). One participant, Sabah, was mocked by a work colleague in front of customers when she asked for the meaning of an unfamiliar word. In this case, however, she was confident enough in her German proficiency to arrange a meeting with the manager to discuss the incident.

The experiences of new arrivals are not always the same, and sometimes the newcomers may resist interactions with local people for a range of

reasons, such as cultural differences. An example of this can be found in the experience of Yuichi, a participant in Hignett and Barkhuizen's study into forced migration from Japan to New Zealand (2020). Yuichi had achieved a higher level of English than Norton's participants, through attending English language classes and studying business at a local polytechnic, which resulted in him gaining employment in a similar role to the one he held in Japan. However, the difference in working cultures resulted in Yuichi distancing himself from colleagues who wanted to include him in their conversations as he did not want to socialise at work; a behaviour that was not accepted in Japanese working culture.

In both studies, the participants had moved to a new country with low levels of the local language for reasons other than language learning. In addition, they were not attending English language classes during the data collection which is perhaps why the focus of the studies shifted from motivation to learn to investment in the language. However, the concept of multiple identities appearing through their professional lives and links to past cultures, along with desires for some to create new identities in a new language, are a common theme.

There are studies which have focused on the identity of adults attending ESOL classes and taken the sociological concept of investment alongside the psycholinguistic concept of motivation, for example Li and Simpson (2013) who explain,

> For ESOL learners, investment and motivation is part of their self construction and negotiation played out because they are living in a new unfamiliar society in different aspects. (2013, p.3)

As a continuation of this, the motivation to enrol on an ESOL course and study the language can be contrasted with one's motivation to use English outside the classroom or, for those not learning in a formal way, their desire to acquire the language in their daily lives, which may be more closely connected to investment. As Block (2007) explains, this may relate to the reason why someone is in a new country and their level of agency, as confirmed by Igoudin's study with Spanish speaking students in the US

(2008). This was further argued by Ortiz-Cobo et al (2021) in their comparative study of refugees and economic migrants learning Italian in Italy. The forced migrants were found to be learning Italian because they were sent to the classes by the refugee centre where they lived; their status in the country was not stable and they could not make future plans because of this, similar to the findings in Carson (2008). For those who had chosen to migrate to Italy, their motivations were closely related to the family ties they had in the country and the future plans they were making, largely linked to their careers. As Igoudin explained,

> Deficiency of knowledge combined with an evolved self-concept set in a specific sociocultural milieu may then generate a new need – a need to learn (Igoudin, 2008, p28)

This may begin to explain why adults enrol on ESOL courses, perhaps at all levels, and highlights the link between the construction of a new identity and the environment in which they are now living. However, when the social environment is not supportive or stable, a need to learn may not emerge. In addition, linking back to the learner's reason for arriving in the country, an adult may enrol on a language course but their past experiences of trauma could have an impact on their motivation during the academic year. An example of this came from Chamorro et al. (2008) where the ESOL teachers indicated that the main factors that demotivate asylum seeker or refugee learners are their difficult lives in England and past traumatic experiences (2008, p.13). This study did not use any theories of motivation for its analysis but if I look at it through a SDT lens, the students' lack of agency cultivated by their status in the country and a low level of English, resulted in their needs for autonomy and competence not being met. However, when teachers built good rapport with the students and used a variety of teaching techniques, their need for relatedness and competence were supported and students were less likely to withdraw from the course.

2.3.3.1   Imposed/Introjected Identities and Resilience

The term 'migrant' has been used to describe people coming from anywhere in the world to settle in Britain, but this label or identity is

problematic as it does not describe the wide-ranging differences of the people it aims to represent (Court, 2017, p.398). Even the term 'economic migrant' may be misleading as it includes people moving for a range of job roles and time periods, such as those who have moved for high-level corporate roles as well as people picking fruit on farms through the summer months. 'Migrant' has most recently been used by the UK government as a right-wing device to encourage attacks on vulnerable people seeking sanctuary from wars and persecution, who the present government has labelled as illegal immigrants invading the country (Devlin et al., 2022).

The potentially hostile environment that adults may be living in must therefore be acknowledged when investigating language learning motivation. The extent to which they feel welcomed by the local community and able to regain or develop an identity of their choosing in the United Kingdom, may have an impact on their motivation to learn English or even contribute to their initial motivation to join an ESOL course in contrast to study abroad programmes where students return home at the end of a set time period or school children learning in their home country where there may be no interactions with 'native' speakers in other countries.

The resilience one may require to learn the local language in a hostile environment has been researched to some degree in studies that focus on the experiences of people fleeing war and persecution. The concept of resilience is based in mainstream psychology, which defines it as the ability to persist in an activity despite adversity or stress (American Psychological Association, 2014). Within psychology, there is a move towards an interdisciplinary approach to researching this concept, acknowledging how it can fluctuate across both space and time (Southwick et al., 2014), not unlike motivation.

Resilience is becoming a popular concept to research in relation to language learning from two different perspectives; learning a language for resilience and the resilience needed to learn a language. The first viewpoint has emerged from research based in refugee camps where forced migrants are

being taught English, such as Ameen and Cinkara (2018), and the Capstick and Delaney (2016) report on child refugees learning the language of their host country in schools. Teachers in these contexts are encouraged to help students to express themselves in both their L1 and L2 to work through trauma and begin to make future plans (Capstick, 2018).

The second viewpoint has been researched in the context of young people learning English as a foreign language at school and university (see Kim & Kim, 2017; Feng & Papi, 2020; Teimouri et al., 2022) with similarities appearing between the experiences of international students learning a language away from home and adult ESOL students, suggesting that a similar degree of resilience or 'grit', may be required to study in a new environment where learners may experience isolation and culture shock. However, the adults attending ESOL courses are generally older than undergraduate university students and may be living in Britain with their families so their experiences may be different. Tentative connections have been made between the level of 'grit' and long-term achievement in language learning (Feng & Papi, 2020) although this has only been tested in studies with school aged children in their home countries, taking a large-scale, quantitative approach.

There is the possibility of both perspectives being combined when researching the language learning motivation of adults who may require resilience to persist with language learning during difficult circumstances, such as a hostile environment or pandemic, whilst also starting a new life in a new country where the L2 is required for daily life. Such studies do not appear in the literature but it is possible that resilience may emerge as a theme in a study that takes a participant-led approach to exploring the motivation of adult ESOL students, looking at how both factors fluctuate over an extended period of time, which has the potential to both inform theory and pedagogy.

2.4 A Transdisciplinary Approach to Grassroots Multilingualism

The acquisition of a new language in a 'superdiverse' (Vertovec, 2007, 2015) context could arguably be any context where learners have access to technology that links them to language users on a global scale. As the Douglas Fir Group states:

> Affordances for language learning and use arise in multilingual and multimodal encounters with different interlocutors for diverse purposes, across space and time, and in face-to-face and virtual contexts. (Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p.23)

This is perhaps most relevant for language learners living in superdiversity whilst learning the official language of their new country. Context, as a term to describe the places where learners are living, working, learning and conducting daily tasks, could therefore combine technology and in-person encounters with languages, particularly if the local area is multilingual. Therefore, the argument that adult ESOL learners have a different experience to EFL learners should be explored, not solely because they are living in an English-speaking country but also because of the superdiversity of some English cities (where many ESOL learners live) and the increase in the use of virtual contexts, particularly during the pandemic. Thus, there may also be differences across English-speaking countries as the level of multiculturalism, government policies and ESOL provision vary, with no two countries providing the same experience for learners (Simpson, 2012; Norton, 2006). To fully investigate the experiences of learners in this context, a conceptual framework is required which encompasses the impactful aspects of their lives, in relation to their language learning motivation. The ecosystems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1979) stated that everything is connected within and across systems. As people age and their communities change or expand, so do the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem that all exist within an individual's ecosystem. This concept was adapted by the Douglas Fir Group (DFG) in their rethinking of second language acquisition and their proposal of a transdisciplinary framework (2016). This framework reduced the systems

from five to three, namely the microsystem, mesosystem and macrosystem (2016, p.25). At the micro level, individual interactions with others are included, along with the linguistic resources that learners possess. At the meso level, discourse communities and the learners' identities are addressed, along with the power attached to their socio-economic status. At the macro level, societal-wide ideological structures are included, such as political and cultural belief systems. As Ushioda (2020), argues

> We also need to take critical account of the ideological structures affecting and possibly constraining language learning motivation in relation to the settings and populations that we investigate (p11)

As the DFG explains, each level interacts with the others and all are in a state of constant change (2016, p.25), which suggest that a system such as this could frame the factors impacting language learning motivation as this is also in a constant state of flux and cannot exist in a vacuum. Motivation, itself, is included in the DFG transdisciplinary framework at the meso level along with agency and choice, but as argued at the start of this chapter, SLA cannot exist without motivation (Dörnyei, 1998) and therefore each aspect of language acquisition suggested in the framework has the possibility of impacting learners' motivation or existing because of it. As we have seen in this literature review, factors such as decision making, access to L2 speakers and learner identity all have connections to language learning motivation and as Syed (2001) explained:

> An individual's psychosocial and sociocultural history, development, and interaction play an important contributing role in motivation. Further, ethnic minority students present a unique case in that they undergo additional challenges (stemming from their heritage membership) in the process of education and socialization. (2001, p.129)

For ESOL learners, they may be of a different ethnic background to the population they are now living among, which, as highlighted by Syed, could bring additional challenges, as Li and Simpson (2013) and Norton (2000) corroborate.

The DFG, along with the majority of SLA research, has been criticised for ignoring those living in multilingual realities and focusing on the learning of a second language by children (Ortega, 2019, pp25-28). As Ortega highlights,

the experiences of people who learn a language in a safe, supportive environment with the help of family members and the power to choose whether to use the language, is distinct from the experience of adult migrants or 'grassroots multilinguals' (Han, 2013). This is not to say that adults are not able to achieve the same levels of fluency as child learners, but their route to linguistic success may be very different.

An additional element of the DFG's framework which moves it from being interdisciplinary to transdisciplinary is the inclusion of stakeholders in the research. If stakeholders such as learners and teachers are involved in the research process then the work transforms from being researcher-led to focussed on the needs of insiders, who arguably have the best insights into the context. This move 'beyond the academy' (Szostak, 2015, p130) covers research which produces findings that have both practical and academic implications.

2.5   Research Questions

As the DFG (2016) and Bronfenbrenner (1979) both argue, everything is interconnected but also unique for the individual. To properly explore this, a qualitative approach would provide the depth and breadth of information required to explore the different factors affecting motivation in the context of adult ESOL in England, where language learning motivation research is scarce. The context and the participants may be 'superdiverse', so the focus must be narrow to aid the rigour of the research. Therefore, students attending Entry Level Three/Level One ESOL courses in England were approached for participation as they were expected to know enough English to engage with the research in English, they were attending what is for most ESOL providers the final stages of ESOL (see Table 1.2) and this level has not been explored in the literature, with researchers favouring beginners and advanced level learners. For learners in the middle of the CEFR, yet possibly at the end of ESOL provision, it was considered worthwhile to explore their language learning motivation to both inform theory and pedagogy.

This research project therefore sets out to investigate the language learning motivation of adults enrolling on Entry Level Three/Level One ESOL courses in England. To explore this, I intend to investigate the answers to the following four questions:

1.   What motivates adults at Entry Level Three/Level One to join an ESOL course?
2.   What factors motivate learners during their course?
3.   What factors demotivate learners during their course?
4.   What impact has the Covid-19 pandemic had on their language learning motivation?

As will be explained fully in the next chapter, a mixed methods approach will be utilised with the majority of the data collected through qualitative methods with small samples to gain insights into individual experiences.

3 Methodology

As an ESOL teacher for 11 years, I had never intended to do a PhD. This is perhaps an unusual start to a methodology chapter, but it may help to explain my methodological and philosophical standpoints. I had always hoped to do a master's degree as I believed it would offer an intellectual challenge and expand my thinking beyond my individual teaching context. I was a fully qualified teacher, specialising in adult ESOL, but my first degree was a different subject and I felt a master's degree in English Language Teaching would advance my subject knowledge. When the opportunity arose to study for a PhD, I was ready for another challenge and saw it as a chance to conduct research that could impact ESOL teaching, learning and policy, as well as inform theories of language learning motivation. As Ushioda (2020) argues, there has been little research in this area of SLA that has a dual aim of influencing both pedagogy and theory. Filling a research gap for the sake of advancing a researcher's career under the guise of adding to knowledge, has the potential to misrepresent the participants as the researcher may not have the insider knowledge required for a reliable study (Ngo et al., 2014). In addition, well-meaning studies that aim to 'give' marginalised people a voice often ignore the imbalance of power between participant and researcher, thus reproducing power relationships and ignoring individual experiences (Atkins, 2013). As I will explain in this chapter, my research was designed from the teacher-insider perspective alongside my emerging identity as a researcher. The research aimed to extend language learning motivation research into the English adult ESOL context. The focus is the student experience, i.e. what teachers and researchers can learn from students. This chapter will outline how I designed a methodology to collect reliable data with adult ESOL students as participants rather than subjects to be studied from afar (Ushioda, 2020, p.8). As I will explain, the students were included in each stage of the data collection and analysis, by asking for their opinions and checking my and their understanding. A further issue that had to be taken into account was the pandemic, with England moving in and out of lockdowns throughout the data collection year, which also had an influence on how and when I communicated with the participants and was the reason

for RQ4. This will all be explained in this chapter, along with examples of analysis to link the methodology to the subsequent chapters where the results and findings will be displayed. A summary of the data collected can be found in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1 *Summary of the data sets*

Data Set	Number of participants	Time	Purpose	Quantity of data generated
Student survey	71	September – December 2020	Data on initial motivation and demographics of students attending E3/L1 ESOL RQ1	71 surveys
Student interviews	Five	September 2020, January/February 2021 and June 2021	Longitudinal data on language learning motivation across the ESOL course RQ 1,2,3,4	15 interviews
Student text messages	Five	September to December 2020 (12 weeks)	Weekly data on language learning motivation and use of English RQ2,3,4	137 text messages received
Teacher interviews	17	November/December 2020	Teachers' views of student motivation, both initial and during courses. RQ 1,2,3,4	17 interviews

3.1   Philosophical Standpoint

I utilised an explanatory mixed method approach moving from quantitative to qualitative data and analysis (Ivankova et al., 2006) from a social constructionist viewpoint, the individual elements of which will be explained in more detail in this chapter. I chose this approach to gain an understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of reality brought to the study by the participants (Mason, 2016) which would not be achieved through a single stage research design. I wanted the voices of the participants, not my own, to be central in this research. Although I taught this level of ESOL to adults for over a decade, I did not want my views to overshadow those of the students and teachers involved in ESOL at that time. I took a participatory

approach to data collection and analysis, with each stage of the data collection being reflected upon by both the participants and myself to inform the next stage, for example, the student participants were sent summaries of the first and second interviews in preparation for their third.

Prior to the first Covid-19 lockdown in England, piloting of data collection techniques and instruments was conducted in-person in January and March 2020 with ESOL students attending a college of further education in the North East of England. After obtaining ethical approval, I trialled the survey instrument with ESOL students, analysed the results through SPSS and discussed the question items with students in focus groups. Focus group interviews were also utilised as an opportunity to trial elicitation techniques and ways in which to manage small group discussions as I had hoped to include these in the main project. It was essential to trial the instrument on my target audience rather than colleagues or friends because of the language I was trialling in the questions and the wide range of participants (Lampard & Pole, 2015, p.110) expected to attend.

I anticipated a high level of diversity across the participants, not only in relation to their country or culture of origin, but also their educational background, employment status and cultural capital in England (Bourdieu, 2011). In addition, with the introduction of emergency online teaching during the pandemic, there was also diversity between those who had access to reliable broadband and technology and those living in digital poverty. I therefore aimed to recruit student participants who reflected this diversity rather than only recruiting students from one country or language background, as this would not reflect the reality of the ESOL classroom. However, this diversity brought its own challenges, not dissimilar to ones faced by ESOL teachers and learners, and so my research design needed to be flexible enough to ensure inclusivity for anyone who volunteered to participate.

By implementing an interpretivist epistemology, I sought to obtain a crystallised view of the research setting '…with emphasis on investigation, discovery, reflection, interpretation and representation' (Lincoln, Lynham, &

Guba, 2011). Starting with a survey, the quantitative method had a 'development function' (Dörnyei, 2007, p165) as I used it to recruit the student participants and provide an overview of who was accessing ESOL courses at that level at that point in time. This was followed by two subsequent interview studies which were both informed by the results of the survey, with teachers attending cross-sectional individual online interviews and students participating in three interviews spaced across the academic year. It is anticipated that this combination of methods has produced research that has rigour, credibility and coherence, which could be easily replicated in a similar context (Tracy, 2010) and displays a reliable representation of the participants by using their own words, wherever possible.

3.2 Ethics

Ethical approval was obtained over a period of nine months. The project I had intended to do prior to the pandemic had gained ethical approval but once it became clear that I would not be allowed to visit classrooms to observe lessons and only one of the colleges I had approached for access allowed me to contact their students, the study and the ethics forms required revisions. My initial plan of a comparative case study across two ESOL providers, investigating exam washback in the classroom and its impact on student motivation, had to be abandoned and a new project was designed. This had to be Covid-secure for both myself as the researcher and for all the participants involved. In addition, with the ESOL Skills for Life exams being cancelled in the summer of 2020 when all the teaching was moved online, the focus of my research suddenly had to change.

In September 2020, unsure of who or how I would recruit, I sought ethical approval for a longitudinal interview study following a small group of adult ESOL students through a course. Thus, I hoped that by narrowing the lens of my research, I would gain insights into the individual experience, more in line with the person-in-context approach (Ushioda, 2009). All the students were

attending the same college and so their context was already intertwined with their language learning, to some extent.

In the absence of classroom observations, I chose to use text messages as a way of measuring language learning motivation on a weekly basis. Ethical approval was sought to collect the participants' mobile telephone numbers which would be stored anonymously on a phone kept securely at my address. The mobile phone I used was bought at the start of the study so I was able to use it solely for the purpose of this research and the participants would not be given my personal telephone number. At the end of the PhD, their phone numbers were deleted and were not shared with anyone at any point of the research. In addition, during the study, their numbers were saved using an initial pseudonym known only to me.

Due to the other ESOL providers withdrawing from the study because of the pandemic, I could only visit one college. Some of the teachers at this organisation were known to me in a professional capacity as I had taught at the college for nine years, latterly as the ESOL manager recruiting two of the teachers who were involved in the data collection. However, in the years since I resigned from my post, the college had gone through a merger and the majority of the teachers I worked with had either resigned or been made redundant. I gained access through email communication and Teams meetings with the newly appointed ESOL manager during the first lockdown and after enrolment in August 2020, as I was not allowed to visit the college due to the Covid-19 restrictions from March to July 2020.

Informed consent was sought from each of the participants with the option of withdrawing participation at any time during the study. Indeed, participation itself was not compulsory and ESOL students and teachers were given time to read the information leaflet explaining the project as well as the opportunity to ask any questions. Both the consent form and information leaflet were trialled in the piloting stage and revised before the main data collection. To comply with the university's ethical guidelines, I had to create a lengthy information leaflet which took almost 20 minutes for the students to read during the pilot. In the main study, I had intended to orally summarise

the leaflet and then give out paper copies for the participants to read in detail, at their own pace, after completing the survey and consent form, with the option to withdraw remaining open for an extended time. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, however, I had to upload this information to the college Moodle site and attach the consent form to the electronic survey, which the students completed on mobile telephones and college computers. However, this did mean that the students had access to the information leaflet at least a week before I visited their class, which gave them the time to read through the text slowly.

The restrictions also limited the amount of paper I could give to the participants as there was a risk that Covid-19 could be transmitted through paper. Drawing on my experience of teaching ESOL students, I expected a small number of participants to either not possess a mobile device or be unable to use it to complete a survey. For this reason, I prepared a small number of paper consent forms and surveys which were used by four students in the classrooms I visited.

The use of electronic surveys meant that students could not withdraw consent to participate in the survey once they had submitted it as it was anonymous. However, consent to participate in interviews and weekly text messages could be withdrawn at any point as this information was linked to their email address or telephone number.

One important issue I found during piloting was with the consent form itself. Students completing the pilot survey were confused about giving consent to an interview as fewer people were required for the second stage. I decided, therefore, to provide separate consent forms at different stages of the data collection so survey participants who did not wish to be interviewed did not withdraw at the first stage.

3.2.1 *Ethics – risk of harm*

The risk of physical or psychological harm to the participants during the research was increased by the pandemic. As previously mentioned, I was not allowed to visit classes to observe lessons because there was not

enough space in the classrooms for me to do this safely. In September 2020, the college I visited was only offering face to face teaching in socially distanced classrooms. Classes were in bubbles, meaning they were split into two groups in case anyone tested positive for Covid-19 so only one bubble would need to isolate and they would be taught online until they were allowed to return to the classroom. If I had been visiting multiple bubbles for extended periods of time for observations, I would have compromised the college's safety measures, in addition to putting myself at risk. However, I was allowed to visit the classrooms very briefly to recruit participants, during which time I wore a face mask in classrooms with open windows and doors, kept two metres away from all the staff and students and gave my contact details to the college reception when signing in.

As the researcher, I endeavoured to ensure my own safety whilst collecting data as a lone female. Data collection was mainly collected online through Microsoft Teams or text messages, which increased my level of safety as I was not going into participants' homes in the physical sense, only virtually (Kenyon & Hawker,1999).

With regard to psychological harm, the topics discussed in this project were centred around language learning and although participants were given the chance to explore how any prior learning may be impacting their present study, the amount they shared was their decision. I was aware that some of the participants may have had negative experiences learning languages at school and the decision to move to the United Kingdom may not have been their own. These two elements combined to have the potential to cause distress and so I was mindful of this and did not dwell on any topics that made the participants uncomfortable.

3.2.1.1   Vulnerability of Participants

Anyone from a migrant or refugee background may be classified as vulnerable depending on a range of factors based on individual circumstances (Gilodi et al., 2022). Although there has been a tendency for some researchers to classify forced and voluntary migrants as being similar (Lloyd, 2017) the differences in their immigration status in the new country

must be acknowledged before designing a research study. For research participants who are navigating the asylum system, their status may be highly precarious, particularly if they are not on a resettlement scheme. In contrast, adults who have chosen to move to a particular country for work will have access to an income from their employment and stability deriving from their work visa. Spouses and dependents of British nationals may have a different experience as their status is reliant on another person and the decision to move to the country was perhaps not their own, but they are living with family members and therefore may have more support when settling in a new country. For people who cannot return to their home country due to war or persecution, their vulnerability may be heightened (Ortega & Oxford, 2023). During the pandemic, when the participants in this thesis were recruited, borders were closed and very few people were able to travel, or even leave their own homes. This may have increased the vulnerability of all the participants, whether they were claiming asylum or in England voluntarily, and was something I reflected upon when designing this study, making it uncomplicated for anyone to withdraw participation, as discussed above in 3.2. Although a person's immigration status in a country does not define their language learning experience, it may affect their ability to plan for the future and feel a connection with local people, as discussed in Chapter 2, so it is important to include this information in the data.

A further point to consider when recruiting adult language learners in this type of educational context, is the possibility that the participants may have had limited or disrupted formal schooling. This can raise ethical dilemmas regarding their understanding of the research process and their potential vulnerability. As Bigelow and Pettitt (2018) discuss, for those with limited literacy, oral consent must be obtained, preferably in the participant's first language. This was one of the reasons I chose to work with learners at Entry Level 3 and Level 1 as they would have the requisite level of literacy in English to read and understand a consent form and be able to ask questions to check their understanding. I chose to conduct all of the research in English as I could not predict which languages the participants would know and I did

not want to exclude anyone from the study. I decided not to ask the survey participants for information on their past schooling as I had found it difficult to ask this in a way that could be understood by adults from a wide range of school systems. I chose, instead, to ask this during interviews to give the participants the time and space to explain their educational background once I had gained their trust. I hoped this would aid those whose education had been disrupted, to include this in their narrative rather than leaving a survey question on schooling blank.

3.2.2 *Ethics - Researcher Positioning*

My positioning as a researcher must also be considered alongside my own bias and subjectivity. As a white, female, native speaker attempting to collect information from adults of different ethnicities and cultures, my position may be viewed in a variety of ways (Edwards, 1990; Barton, 2015). I did not wish to be seen as an expert, coming into the participants' classroom to assess their English or even the provision they were accessing; neither of which were the aims of my research. During the pilot study, I was approached by three participants eager to attend university, asking for my advice. By introducing myself as a university student, I had inadvertently positioned myself as someone who would have knowledge of university entrance requirements. I spoke with their teachers about their future plans and signposted the students to their college advice service. On my return to Warwick, I also emailed the ESOL manager information about funding that is available for ESOL students to access IELTS preparation courses and tests. My hope is that my research will be of use to ESOL professionals and those teaching new arrivals in other countries but will also directly benefit the organisations who allow me access.

During the main data collection, I was open and honest about my ESOL teaching experience and my connection to the college in the student study. I was happy to share any personal information they asked of me as I hoped they would view me as a real person who understood their context. In the piloting stage, for example, when younger students were discussing which

students wanted to go to university, in order to balance the argument I shared my age as they were dismissing anyone over 35 as not being interested in higher education. I was also asked directly about my own experience of exam anxiety when learning foreign languages. In that instance I shared my experience of getting nervous during oral tests in French and German and preferring the more receptive tests of reading and listening. This generated further discussion about memory loss during productive skills tests and helped to include the quieter members of the group in the conversation.

However, I am aware that I undoubtedly conducted this research with my own bias and viewpoints obtained through 15 years of teaching and researching ESOL. Taking a social constructionist viewpoint, the main aim of my research is to interpret the meanings conveyed by the participants whilst also reflecting on how my position influences the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p.8). Furthermore, as Bigelow and Pettitt (2015) argue

> …there are limitations surrounding what is available for me to know about myself: No matter how much I reflect on my subjectivity, I may never know the ways participants and students know me and position me, and how this is affecting my research and representations of it. (p79)

I cannot, therefore, be separated from the data but by taking a longitudinal approach to data collection, I hoped to build trust and rapport with the students so they felt able and willing to be open and honest in their interviews. Additionally, with the teacher participants who I only interviewed once, I used my knowledge of ESOL, my experience of teaching and the promise of anonymity to encourage honesty and limit the subjectivity in my analysis.

3.2.3 *Ethics – Possible Impact of the Research on Student Motivation*

When researching a topic such as language learning motivation, there is always a risk that the study itself may have an impact on the participants' motivation. One example of this comes from Lamb (2012; 2018) and his research into the language learning motivation of school children in Indonesia. When the researcher returned to the participants of his longitudinal study many years after the study had finished, he found that the

act of being chosen for the study was enough to motivate those with the lowest proficiency, as they (misguidedly) believed they had been selected by the researcher because of their high levels of language ability. This motivation lasted many years beyond the research study, influencing their further study and career choices. For the study in this thesis, the option to participate was open to any student who was studying in an ESOL class at the required level(s). They self-selected rather than being nominated by teachers or managers to lessen any impact this part of the process may have.

Conversely, I did not want to act as a researcher going into a context, taking data, and then never returning; I wanted there to be some benefits for the participants, particularly the students, with the awareness that this may affect their motivation. As Ushioda (2020, pp80-83) discusses, when conducting research in this field, one must always reflect on whose priorities we are serving, the learner or the researcher. Therefore, I framed the longitudinal study as an opportunity for the students to use English outside of the classroom with someone other than their teacher and classmates. For each participant in this phase of the study, I shared their interview audio recordings both for them to listen back to themselves speaking English and also as a way of reflecting on the interview.

As a thank you to the staff and students at the college that allowed me access in September 2020, I organised a webinar and exhibition which celebrated the skills and talents of their students. I organised this for the University of Warwick Resonate Festival with the exhibition being launched at the webinar during Refugee Week 2021. I worked with the ESOL teachers in the 16-19s team and their teenage students produced artwork, cookery videos and cultural presentations for the project. I did not involve the adult students as I did not want to disrupt their learning experience, but they were invited to attend the webinar and view the exhibition. The webinar was a great success with over 100 attendees, providing the students with a new experience and opportunity to showcase their skills.

3.3 Timeline of Data Collection

Data collection began in September 2020 (Figure 3.1) when I visited ESOL classes at an FE college to distribute the survey and recruit students for the longitudinal study. After these initial, brief visits, I was not allowed to return to the college because of Covid-19 restrictions put in place by the University of Warwick, the ESRC and the college itself. I had hoped to observe lessons to learn more about the students' experiences in the classroom and their interactions with their teachers and peers, but at that point in time it was deemed too dangerous for everyone involved. Therefore, everything was moved online and an added element of teacher interviews was added in November 2020 to give a wider view of ESOL student experiences around the country.

Figure 3.1 *Data collection timeline*

Data Collection Timeline

FE College visited to distribute online survey and recruit student participants
SPSS analysis
First text messages sent

Teachers recruited for interviews
Interviews conducted online during second lockdown

Transcripts of teacher interviews emailed for member checking

Third interviews conducted with students, three online and two face to face
• Results of teacher interviews discussed for further reflection

First student participant interviews conducted online

Text message responses converted into charts
Second student interviews conducted online during third lockdown

Summaries of the first two interviews emailed to the students for member checking

Sep. 2020 | Oct. 2020 | Nov. 2020 | Jan. 2021 | Mar. 2021 | May 2021 | June 2021

The student study continued until June 2021, in the last couple of weeks of their course, with member checks being conducted throughout the academic year.

3.4   Participants

There are two participant groups for this study: ESOL teachers and ESOL students.

For the teacher section, interview data was collected from people teaching Entry Level 3 and Level 1 ESOL to adults on accredited courses in England. These participants were recruited through the ESOLResearch jiscmail, social media and word of mouth. They were all interviewed online during the second lockdown in England in November/December 2020 and their interviews lasted, on average, for 60 minutes each. All interviews were conducted in English and were audio recorded.

I chose to interview the teachers rather than use any other form of data collection method because this gave me the opportunity to explore their responses to my questions in more detail, which I would not have been able to do using a questionnaire. I also avoided instruments such as a written reflection as I did not believe the participants would have the time to complete such a task. The interviews were semi-structured, using a guide with topics and potential follow-up questions to ensure I covered the same themes with each of the teachers (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 *Teacher interview prompts*

Teacher Interviews

Question Prompts

Introduction:

Can you tell me about your ESOL teaching experience and qualifications?

Which classes are you teaching this term?

How are you delivering courses at the moment? *F2F, online, blended*

As an ESOL teacher, what have been the challenges this term?

At E3/L1, why do students choose to enrol?

- Do they usually have clear, future plans/goals? Why (not)? *Ask for popular examples.*
- How do you usually find out this information?
- Are these reflected in your planning? Are you allowed to adapt your course to suit the needs of the learners?

What do you think motivates students at these levels to engage in the course?

- Do students ever request to practise certain language points or do particular types of tasks in class?
- How much of an influence is the teacher, in your opinion? Has your motivation to teach been affected by the pandemic? How?
- Do students ever share examples of how/when they have used English outside of the class? How much of the outside world is brought into the classroom and vice versa? *(positive and negative)*
- How much of an influence are the other students in the class? How important is it for them to make friends and chat at break times? Has this continued through the pandemic?

What do you think demotivates students at these levels?

- Do you ever notice students becoming disengaged in classroom tasks? Why does this happen? How can they be re-engaged? Has this become more challenging during the pandemic?
- What do you think stops students from doing homework?
- Why do students leave the course? Has this been different since lockdown?

What are your thoughts on the ESOL Skills for Life exams?

- How easily do they fit in to your course design? Or are your courses designed around the exams?
- Do all of your students take exams? How are these decisions made?
- How do your students react to the exams? Are they aware of the exams when they enrol?
- Do your students take other exams rather than the SfL? Why was this decision made?
- How have exams been delivered during the pandemic?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about teaching ESOL to E3/L1 students?

Nineteen teachers responded to my call for participants and interviews were arranged at times that suited them, often at the end of a working day or, for part-time teachers, during their day off. One teacher withdrew because they became too busy at work and another withdrew because both of their parents were hospitalised with Covid-19 the weekend before our interview,

with their father dying on the Saturday. This is just one example of how the pandemic shaped this research project, the reality of which cannot be ignored.

For the student project, data was collected from September 2020 to June 2021. The students were all attending either an Entry Level Three or Level One course and working towards the ESOL Skills for Life exams in all four skills. The levels chosen are approximately B1/B1+ on the CEFR and are often where students tend to plateau (Richards, 2008), sometimes taking much longer to pass summative exams. Students at this level will have sufficient language knowledge and skills to be able to participate in interviews in English (which is not their L1) and so English was used throughout the study. It would be extremely difficult to provide an accurate and reliable translation for each of the students to access the survey and interview questions in their L1 as there could be a long list of languages requested. For example, in the piloting stage of this project, the 58 participants had 20 different mother tongues from 24 different countries (see Chapter 4 for the full results) so not only would translators be required for standard versions of languages but dialects would also need to be included. Therefore, to allow equal access for participants, all the data was collected in English but there were opportunities for participants to check any new or confusing vocabulary in dictionaries or with the help of peers. It was hoped that they viewed this as a positive opportunity to use English in a real-life situation.

As previously mentioned, participation was entirely voluntary, with students being able to opt in and out of the research throughout the study. Non-probability convenience sampling was required for recruitment as responses were collected from any students who met the selection criteria. The number of students enrolling in any given academic year is difficult to predict and due to the often-unpredictable nature of the lives of the participants, it is always likely that a small percentage may leave the course during the period of data collection for reasons other than motivation. In preparation for this, I planned to conduct follow-up interviews with any participants who withdrew from the

course before completion, but thankfully this did not happen with the students I recruited.

3.5 Student Study

In this section, I will outline in detail the elements of the study where adult ESOL students were the participants. As I was unable to focus on the impact of summative examinations on the language learning motivation of students and I was not allowed to conduct classroom observations, I decided to take more of a bottom-up approach to the research. I required an approach that considers the past histories and indeed present situations of learners, namely the Person-in-Context Relational View (Ushioda, 2009). The idea that language learners are more than just students, but are real people with complex lives, helps us to begin to understand their motivation for learning and how this may alter over a period of time. This is imperative when researching adult learners, especially in the English ESOL context as they are living in a new country, distinct from their place of birth. It would be an unwise decision to categorise all ESOL students as the same or having the same motivation for learning, as it disregards their individual experiences and needs. As Mercer (2011, p.4) advocates, studies that take a person in context approach will provide a better insight into the different realities within a given classroom. This was further argued again by Ushioda (2016, p.567) in her call for a small lens approach to language learning motivation research. There is a growing movement of qualitative and mixed methods research, partly influenced by the interest in Ushioda's Person-in-Context Relational View (2009) and the importance of including self and identity research in studies into language learning motivation (Zhang et al., 2022, p3). This is moving the focus away from the large scale, quantitative, mainly survey based research of the past and towards increasing numbers of studies where individual experiences are explored.

Each stage of data collection was influenced by the last, with participants informing me of the many influences on the motivation to learn and use English. I will outline each stage chronologically.

3.5.1   *The Survey*

As previously explained in section 3.1, I chose to use a survey to recruit students for the interview study and also to collect data on their personal circumstances and their ESOL course. This data will provide a background to the narratives produced in the interview study, contextualising it with regard to the students accessing courses at that time and which courses they were attending.

The questionnaire was based on the only large-scale survey conducted in Britain to capture ESOL student motivation (Rice et al, 2005) and one which I used as inspiration for a questionnaire with my own students in 2016 exploring the impact of exams on students' motivation in this context (Sidaway, 2018). Despite a range of survey instruments being available for the EFL context (Dörnyei, n.d.), these would need major revisions to fit UK ESOL. They are extremely lengthy and as I needed to conduct my research in English, using a high number of questions has the possibility of causing stress and anxiety to my participants.

The questionnaire I used, therefore, is an adaptation of the Rice et al (2005) instrument, slightly shortened for this study (see Appendix 1a & 1b). The purpose of the 2005 research was to identify whether the number of class hours chosen by students had a direct link to their levels of motivation. The report generated was used by the Scottish government to produce the ESOL Strategy for Scotland in 2007. Due to the vast reduction in ESOL funding in England over the past decade, the number of guided learning hours available to ESOL learners in England has also reduced and so comparing the responses of part-time and full-time students is no longer relevant as part-time classes are now the norm for adults. However, the majority of the items in the remainder of the survey were still relevant for the English context in 2020, and therefore included.

The questionnaire begins by capturing demographic information such as nationality, first language, time in the UK and age range. It then covers questions concerning the students' length of time in ESOL, their English level, the exams they have taken and how many class hours they would like

to attend each week. These first two sections provide an overview of the population, i.e. who is accessing ESOL classes at these levels at this point in time. The questions in this section are a combination of multiple choice and open-ended questions with the aim of providing as many response options for the participants as possible.

The third part of the questionnaire is concerned with students' initial motivation to join the course (RQ1), which is collected through multiple choice multiple answer questions using tick boxes. Finally, there is an open-ended question asking for any other comments that the participants would like to share regarding their language learning, to inform the students' interview questions.

3.5.2 *Pilot Studies*

In November 2018, I trialled an online version of the survey to discover whether I would be able to reach a representative sample of ESOL students electronically. I shared the link with 6 ESOL teachers known to me around the country, asking them to share it with any colleagues that may also be able to help. After a month, I had only received 22 responses from student participants; far too few to validate the instrument. The main issue I faced was sharing the survey link with students because the teachers acted as gatekeepers, similar to the experience of Bhopal (2010, pp. 190 & 194). They were too busy to incorporate my survey into their class time and so it was forgotten. Therefore, the method of using paper surveys and the researcher visiting classes and giving them out face to face, as I had done in earlier research (Sidaway, 2018) appeared to be the best option. However, unbeknown to me during the piloting period, I would have to rely on electronic surveys as there was a chance that Covid-19 could be spread on paper. I will return to this issue later in the thesis.

Building on the experience of 2018, I piloted the survey instrument and its method of data collection in January 2020 at a college of further education in the North East of England. By visiting four classes in one day, I was able to collect survey data from 58 participants across the two ESOL levels in focus. I used SPSS for analysis and shared the results as discussion topics during

pilot focus group interviews six weeks later. A more detailed analysis of the 2020 pilot study can be found in Chapter 4.

In addition to sharing the survey with students in the college I visited, I also asked the teacher interview participants to disseminate it with their classes. By December 2020, when I closed the survey, I had received 71 responses; 67 via Qualtrics and four on paper.

3.5.3 *The Longitudinal Study*

The next stage of the student study took a longitudinal approach, spanning from September 2020 to June 2021 (an academic year). The aim of this section was to understand the student experience during an ESOL course with regard to their motivation for learning English and the factors that may have an impact (RQs 2, 3 & 4). This would narrow the lens of enquiry from the wide lens of the survey to a more person-in-context (Ushioda, 2009) approach with five participants.

3.5.3.1   Participants for the Longitudinal Study

As can be seen from Table 3.1, the participants were four women and one man, originally from three different continents but as I found through the interviews, two had also lived in European countries, prior to their arrival in England.

Table 3.2 *Student participants for the longitudinal study*

Participants	Country of birth	Languages spoken	Age Group	Arrived in the UK
Ama Atta (F) Mobile phone	Ghana	Akan	41-50	2017 to join her husband and three sons
Marie (F) Mobile phone	Cote d'Ivoire	French, Italian, German	31-40	2018 moved from Italy to find work.
Amani (M) Laptop	Democratic Republic of Congo	French, Lingala, Danish	31-40	2018 moved from Denmark to join his new wife.
Celita (F) Laptop	Brazil	Portuguese	21-30	2019 with her son to join her husband who had moved for work in 2018
Samina (F) Mobile phone	Iran	Farsi	21-30	2019 after marrying a British citizen

The pseudonyms were all chosen by the participants themselves. Adults accessing ESOL classes are often living on temporary visas, having fled war and persecution, and living in fear of having their status in England revoked. I wanted, therefore, to assure the participants that their names would not be included in my thesis nor shared with outsiders. However, I did not feel it was appropriate for me to refer to them as numbers (they were all allocated student numbers in the survey) as this did not fit well with the person-in-context approach I was taking. Therefore, they needed new names and so after their final interviews, I asked them to suggest a name that I could use for each of them. Giving the participants this choice, helped to further include the participants in the research and aimed to honour their identity (Allen & Wiles, 2016). I asked all five participants for a pseudonym which they either discussed and offered to me during their final interview or thought about afterwards and sent in a text message. There is the risk of identification if there is a mix of real and chosen names (Damianakis & Woodford, 2012) but thankfully, all five were able to provide me with a pseudonym.

3.5.3.2   Interviews

Much has changed in the world of qualitative research since 1886 when Charles Booth conducted the first study that had interviews at its core (Mann, 2016). However, the main aim of interviewing participants which has not changed, as described by Trow, (cited in Seidman, 2013) is to gain an understanding of the experiences and tell the stories of others. The choice of questions and their delivery can influence how the answers are analysed and interpreted. Leading questions are to be avoided as interviewer bias can sway the answers constructed. Semi-structured, open questions can give the interviewees the space to formulate responses whilst reflecting on the subject being discussed. However, there is criticism of interviews as Walford (2007) argues

> …interviewees will only give what they are prepared to reveal about their subjective perceptions of events and opinions. These perceptions and opinions will change over time, and according to circumstance. They may be at some considerable distance from 'reality' as others might see it. (Walford in Roulston, 2010, p.203)

Whether participants ever tell the complete truth is an issue not restricted to interviews. When participating in research, the idea of portraying oneself in the best light or wanting to please the researcher by telling them what they think the researcher wants to hear can also occur in written responses to surveys, for example. The concept of ideas changing over time is both an argument for and against longitudinal studies, as they provide the opportunity for us to understand how key processes unfold over time (Lamb, 2018, p.1). One of the overarching aims of this thesis is to explore how adult students' language learning motivation fluctuates during an academic year and it is for this reason that I chose to interview the participants several times throughout this period.

The focus is on the depth rather than the breadth of knowledge and therefore, unlike during the survey data collection, only a small group of participants were included in this stage. Students self-selected, with their eligibility being assessed through their responses to the questionnaire. I had intended to ensure even greater representativeness by controlling for gender, time in the country and nationality but was unable to do this due to the difficulties I faced contacting the students. As all the interviews had to be conducted online, I was reliant on the students being able to use Teams and also remembering to attend. I used Teams because my university would not allow ethical approval for any other platform but as the college the participants were attending also used Teams, they already had accounts and knew how to receive calls. Of the 13 students who volunteered to be interviewed, only five attended, with a sixth student attending to tell me she was unable to continue with the course due to non-payment of fees. She was subsequently transferred to a Functional Skills English course and withdrew from the study.

All the interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis. This decision was made for a number of reasons; firstly, to ensure security and anonymity as I would be the only person with access to their responses. Secondly, finding a time that all five students could attend an interview would have been impossible due to their outside commitments, work schedules etc. Thirdly, I intended to present the findings as individual narratives so I wanted to treat

each student participant as an individual with their own story to tell. Small group interviews would not have been appropriate for this purpose and so each student was interviewed on their own.

The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed through otter.ai and input into NVivo to aid my analysis. The purpose of the interviews was to explore why the students were learning English, any barriers they faced to their learning and how their motivation fluctuated through a course (RQs 1, 2 and 3). This was all placed in the context of the pandemic, addressing RQ4.

3.5.3.3 Interview Modes, Structures, and Variety

In early 2020, when I was piloting data collection techniques, I had decided to interview students in-person, either in an empty classroom or a public place away from their ESOL course, such as a café. Face to face interviews would help me to build rapport with the participants and we could utilize visual cues which are not available during telephone interviews or email exchanges (Mann, 2016, p103). As a former ESOL teacher, I was also aware of the difficulties language learners have when speaking on the telephone, so I did not offer this as an option. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, opting for online interviews was a choice often made by researchers when separated from participants by large distances (Mann, 2016, p87) although it was not commonplace as video software was limited and internet connections could be unreliable. In September 2020, I had no other option but to interview participants online as I was not allowed to meet with them in-person, due to the Covid-19 restrictions set by the UK government; this was three months before the vaccine was released and six months before any of my participants or I were eligible to receive it. As Howlett (2022) explains, this was the situation for many researchers at this time, especially PhD students like myself with strict deadlines. Although there is not yet a consensus as to whether online interviews can produce the depth and insights gained from in-person interactions (Howlett, 2022, p391), I had the advantage of having met the interviewees in-person, however briefly, and I knew their college and the city where they lived very well, having worked there for eight years.

Interviewing participants online was a new experience for me as a researcher and the participants themselves. Of the five participants who completed the study, only two had laptops and the remaining three were interviewed on their mobile phones. This made the sharing of documents very difficult because of the screen size and also there were issues with seeing the students, particularly Ama Atta who struggled to use her camera and so for one of her interviews she could see me but all I could see was her living room ceiling.

By the third and final interview stage, restrictions had been lifted and I was able to give the students the option of meeting with me in person rather than online. Three students (Amani, Ama Atta and Marie) all requested online interviews but Celita and Samina asked to meet with me face to face. Celita suggested a café and as it was June, we could sit outside to ensure we were still Covid safe. I agreed to this, however, she arrived 20 minutes late and then had to leave after 40 minutes to collect her child from school, with around 10 minutes taken up with buying a coffee. In addition, I had prepared a matching activity to collect her feedback on the main themes of the teacher interviews but it was a particularly windy day so this proved impossible to complete. Thankfully, she suggested we continue the interview online at a later date and so we returned to Teams in the following week.

The face-to-face interview with Samina was much easier to conduct as she suggested we meet at the college after her ESOL class. I was able to book a classroom to use for an hour and apart from being briefly disrupted by a lost student who wandered in looking for a teacher and another looking for an umbrella, it was much easier to interview her in person than via a mobile phone as we did not have any technical issues with which to contend.

As previously stated, I interviewed the students three times over the course of an academic year. The first interviews in October 2020 were semi-structured as I wanted to ask each of the participants about their survey responses and their past language learning. The second interviews in January 2021 were slightly more unstructured as I asked the participants to talk through the text messages they had sent through the previous term,

encouraging them to lead the conversation. As they had moved to online teaching at that point, due to the UK government moving the country into a third lockdown and closing all schools and colleges, I also asked them to tell me about their online classes. As Mann argues, no interview is completely unstructured, otherwise it 'would just be a chat' (2016, p92) and so most interviews are essentially semi-structured unless the interviewer strictly follows a list of questions with no deviations or arrives at the interview unprepared. I planned my interviews using the participants' responses from the previous data collection stages but had a list of points to discuss each time connected to my research questions, such as asking about their initial motivation. The final interviews were also semi-structured, using the summary I had shared as a basis for reflection, along with the findings of the teacher interviews, and asking the participants about their plans once the course finished (see Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 *Student interview prompt*

Final Student Participant Interviews

Question prompts

- o Summary sent via email last month:

  How well did the summary describe your language learning experience?

  Is there anything you would like me to change or add?

- o Looking back at the goals you had when you enrolled in September, to what extent do you think you have achieved them? What have you done to ensure this happened?

- o Can you tell me about your ESOL course experience since January?

- o What factors, if any, have affected your motivation? Positively or negatively

- o What are your goals once the course finishes next month?

  Will you continue learning English if you don't enrol on another ESOL course?

- o How well did the course meet your expectations?

The participant-led nature of the interviews opened up spaces for the students to share stories. This may also have been facilitated by the context in which I conducted the interviews as they chose where and when to be interviewed, which was usually evenings and weekends from their homes. Due to the lockdown restrictions, I was also at home and so the research field moved from the ESOL classroom to the places where we lived. As

Howlett (2022, pp393-4) reflected when a similar shift occurred in her fieldwork with participants living in a different country, this move from a more formal setting to somewhere where the participants felt relaxed, resulted in the sharing of more personal details. All of the online interviews were conducted from our homes and not only did I see and hear family members in the background, but the participants also saw my home office and during one evening interview, heard my son crying whilst my partner tried to put him to bed. Whether this led to a rebalancing of power relations between researcher and participants is a discussion for a later chapter, but the facilitation of narratives is something that emerged from the context.

Oral narratives are an accessible way of sharing experiences and have been used in migrant research for many years in the North American context (for example Bruner, 1986; Pavlenko, 2001; Miller, 2014). Labov's (1967) definition of a story is distinct from a narrative, as it requires a clear beginning, middle and end, but narratives encompass all other forms of stories that may be incomplete or hypothetical (De Fina & Tseng, 2017, p.381). The stories shared with me by the participants in this thesis encompass a range of genres and combine to create individual narratives that illustrate both the students' experiences of learning English at that time, but also their past experiences and hopes for the future. As De Fina and Tseng explain, migrants may be hesitant to express an opinion directly but through storytelling, they are able to indirectly share their viewpoints and position themselves within a context (2017, p.391).

3.5.3.4   Text Messages

In the absence of classroom observations and visits to the college during the pandemic, I needed to construct a way of regularly collecting data on the students' language learning motivation during the course that was safe, low-cost and did not disrupt the participants' busy lives.

The Experience Sampling Method (ESM) (Larson & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; Bryman, 2016) is a method used in psychology to monitor participants' responses over a period of usually seven days on topics such as how people spend their daily lives. Participants are sent text messages (or pager

messages in older studies) at multiple, random times of the day, which they are expected to respond to quickly, often just using numbered responses. These numbers are then collated and analysed quantitively to give an overview of how the participants have responded and compared across samples for generalisability.

My participants were likely to be busy and so I used ESM as my inspiration to collect data on a weekly rather than daily basis to increase the possible response rate. I sent the same three questions every Friday morning, two numerical and one open ended, via text message, for the students to report on their use of English and levels of language learning motivation for that week (see Figure 3.2 for the examples I shared with the participants prior to the start of the study). Often, participants took two or three days to respond but sometimes they responded instantly, depending on what they were doing, justifying my choice of message frequency. I piloted the questions with a former ESOL colleague to check the clarity of the questions and the logistics of copying and pasting the questions into the text chat once each response arrived, as I would have to do this manually.

Figure 3.4 *Text message examples*

Example 1:

Hi, it's Kathryn, please answer 3 questions about learning English.

When you are ready to begin, please reply with 'Start'

Start

1. On average, how often have you used English in the last 7 days? Please reply with a number
(1 = not at all, 2=only in class, 3= sometimes, 4= most days, 5=every day)

4

2. How motivated have you been to learn English in the last 7 days?
Please reply with a number from 1 - 10 (1 = not motivated at all, up to 10 = extremely motivated)

9

3. Please explain why (just a short answer)

I was excited about starting ESOL classes and had lots of time to practise English.

Thank you! I'll text you again next Friday

Example 2:

Hi, it's Kathryn, please answer 3 questions about learning English.

When you are ready to begin, please reply with 'Start'

Start

1. On average, how often have you used English in the last 7 days? Please reply with a number
(1 = not at all, 2=only in class, 3= sometimes, 4= most days, 5=every day)

2

2. How motivated have you been to learn English in the last 7 days?
Please reply with a number from 1 - 10 (1 = not motivated at all, up to 10 = extremely motivated)

3

3. Please explain why (just a short answer)

I was very busy at work

Thank you! I'll text you again next Friday

These messages not only gave me an insight into the weekly fluctuations in motivation but also served as method of keeping in touch with the students between the first two interviews. In contrast to the more traditional data collection technique of diary writing, texts are meant to be read by another person and are therefore written to be shared. Also, often, they are short messages rather than long pieces of writing and therefore not as demanding on language learners, especially adults with busy lives. They can therefore be written quite quickly, providing data *in situ* and sent directly to the researcher. Diaries, on the other hand, are often written by the participants away from the researcher and so if participants are not highly motivated to continue writing over the set period of time, they are likely to withdraw from the study (Bryman, 2016, p240). I knew from my teaching experience, that if I was unable to be in the same room as the participants, providing them the

time, space and support to complete the diaries, that it was highly unlikely they would be completed.

I chose to use text messages rather than a mobile app such as WhatsApp, primarily because it would be free for the students to receive and respond to the messages. I did not know where the participants would be when they received the messages and therefore did not want to risk using their mobile data, and potentially incurring a cost. WhatsApp was also not allowed by the University of Warwick ethics committee.

I collated the text message responses into individual charts to use as stimulated recall devices (Gass & Mackey, 2016) in the second interviews. These charts had similarities to the 'motigraphs' or 'motometers' used in past research where fluctuations in language learning motivation were tracked over a set period. There has been some success with students charting their motivation during class time using a range of scales and grids such as high school students recording motivation every five minutes (e.g. Pawlak, 2012; Waninge et al., 2014; Walker et al., 2019) and my own study with ESOL adults plotting motivation every 20 minutes (Sidaway, 2022). For a more longitudinal approach, 'motigraphs' have been created by language learners retrospectively either during (Henry, 2014; Wang et.al, 2021) or in preparation for (Lamb, 2018) research interviews.   The approach I chose to take in the present study combined the approach of classroom studies that collected *in situ* data, with the longitudinal element of the retrospective approaches. The data collected was therefore created in real time and covered a period of 12 weeks, much longer than a typical classroom lesson. This approach was experimental but with the classrooms closed to visitors it was designed to capture the students' motivation to learn the language on a weekly basis from whichever context they chose to share their responses.

3.5.3.5   Analysis and Member Checking

Inspired by the work of Harvey (2015), I involved the student participants at every stage of the data collection process to go 'beyond member checking' (2015, p34) encouraging member reflections and discussions of the analysis. Each stage informed the next, with either my

interpretations or the participants' responses being used to direct the conversation in the subsequent interview. Member checks are often used to validate or verify the reliability (Doyle, 2007) and rigour (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of qualitative findings which is often achieved by sharing interview transcripts. As the transcripts were each a few thousand words in length, and all in English, I chose instead to share the recordings with the student participants so they could listen to their interviews. This was partly to allow them to reflect on their interview question responses but also, as the recordings were unscripted, I hoped they would find them useful listening materials whilst learning the language.

After the second interviews, I wrote short vignettes of approximately 50 words for each of the participants (see Figure 3.4 for an example). I chose to write them using my words rather than including quotes, to show the participants my interpretations of our conversations, checking my understanding of their views and experiences.

Figure 3.5 *Student vignette example*

<u>Reasons for learning English</u>

Female, age 21-30, born in Iran, first language is Farsi. Moved to the UK in autumn 2019 to join her husband who has British citizenship. This is her first ESOL course as she had to wait a year for a place and she is in a Level 1 class. In Iran, she taught herself English using books.

After completing her MSc in Chemistry, she taught herself English and moved to the UK. She is hoping to improve her level of English to work in science. She would also like to continue studying at university but needs to wait until she has been in the UK for 5 years to access public funds. Her ESOL teacher has been giving her advice and she is going to visit some local universities for more information.

At home in Coventry, she is alone most of the time as her husband leaves the house for work. She is scared of catching Covid-19 so she rarely leaves the house and has very few opportunities to speak English away from the ESOL class. She sends messages to her classmates for English practice but doesn't get many replies. She is applying for jobs so she can practise what she is learning on the ESOL course and improve her self-confidence. Unfortunately, because of the pandemic, it is very difficult to get a job at the moment.

<u>Term 1 motivation</u>

Her motivation to learn the language (see graph below) changed weekly. Her future goals did not change but she was very worried about her family in Iran during the Coronavirus pandemic and this had the biggest effect on her motivation to study. She was in contact with her family every day, checking on their health and safety. She also felt bored and tired because she was staying at home and concentrating on learning English, which she has been doing for three years. She was enjoying the course but found it hard to stay highly motivated all the time. Her husband is very supportive of her learning and reminds her of her future goals when she loses motivation. She is very focussed on her education and future career and works very hard.

<u>Term 2</u>

She didn't enjoy online classes in the second term because it was quite tiring. That term was preparing her for the Speaking and Listening exam but she didn't feel like she had enough opportunities to speak online and the class hours were reduced. She would have preferred more hours and to be back in the classroom for more interaction with the teachers and other students. It was not certain whether the exam would happen this term but she was hoping things would go back to normal in the third term and exams would return. She passed the Reading exam in December and enjoyed the challenge, exams do not scare her, they are a good chance to show what she has learned in the course.

I emailed these files approximately one month before the final interview and discussed either via email and/or during the interview itself. Two examples of email responses I received from student participants can be seen in figure 3.6. This element of member checking aimed to add to the reliability of the analysis and reduce the subjectivity of the interpretation (Harvey, 2015). It also supported the transdisciplinary nature of the study as the students were included as stakeholders, with their views and opinions utilised throughout the research, aiming to redress the power balance between researcher and participant (Chimentao & Reis, 2019).

Figure 3.6 Student responses to the vignettes

Fri 14/05/2021 20:34
To: SIDAWAY, KATHRYN (PGR)

Hi dear Katrina,
I read what you send me ,everything is fine except for that sentence related to the time that I will have to wait for university to get the fund, but it's actually 3 years, which 2 years of that passed.
And related to the next our conversation, every time is ok for me except Mondays , and on Fridays I'm at college between 9:30 -12:30 and after that I'm free.
Regards,

...

Thu 13/05/2021 14:38
To: SIDAWAY, KATHRYN (PGR)

Hello 🤎 Kathryn,

Thank you for the email, is very good summary but if possible I would like to add something for this paragraph here: " One of the reasons he agreed to move here was because he saw a black policeman in the airport, something he had never seen in Denmark."
You can add for exemple; .... he saw a back policeman and others back men with a good job in the airport, something he had never....

Thank you for your collaboration 🙏

...

3.6   Teacher Study

The teacher study was conducted in November and December 2020, which was after the first student participant interviews and whilst I was texting the students on a weekly basis. I chose to interview teachers partly to add to the rigour of the research and also to aid my own reflexivity as the researcher. After having taught adult ESOL for just over a decade, I cannot deny that I have my own views on why students choose to study at Entry Three/Level One and the factors that motivate or demotivate them through an academic year. However, I did not want my bias to dominate this research. I am interested in the students themselves and what teachers and researchers can learn from their experiences. The teacher interviews, therefore, are positioned as background information that will aim to introduce the main data which is taken from the student participants. The results were also used as discussion prompts in the final student interviews to compare and contrast the views of both groups of participants.

For each interview I used an interview guide (see Figure 3.2) to ensure we talked about topics related to the research questions. The interviews were, therefore, semi-structured but the order of questions often varied as did their wording to aid the flow of the conversation.

3.6.1 Teacher participants

The 17 ESOL teachers who participated were working all over England, however, to protect their anonymity I will not include the names of places in this thesis. This was particularly important to these participants as they feared losing their employment if their employer was able to connect their answers to their identity. I asked each participant, via email, for a pseudonym that I could use and these emails were deleted once all the data was analysed. As can be seen from Table 3.3, the participants comprised both new and experienced teachers delivering ESOL online, face to face and blended.

Table 3.3 *Teacher participants*

Pseudonym	Gender	Years of ESOL experience	College/Community	Delivery Mode
Amber	Female	15	Comm	Classroom
Anne	Female	5	Comm	Classroom
Anselm	Male	12	Comm	Online
Barbara	Female	7	Comm	Online
Carrie	Female	3	Comm	Online
Dita	Female	7	College	Classroom
Eliot	Male	5	College	Classroom
Frances	Female	16	College	Classroom
Joanna	Female	3	Comm	Online
Kieron	Male	4	College	Classroom
Lila	Female	15	Comm	Online
Lucie	Female	14	Comm	Online
Marie	Female	2	College	Blended
Monica	Female	13	Comm	Blended Classroom
Nida	Female	6	College	Classroom
Sarah	Female	7	Comm	Blended
Vanessa	Female	17	College	Online

3.6.2 Teacher interviews

Inspired by the work of Glas (2016), I interviewed teachers to gain their views on student motivation, connected to all four research questions. Glas' study was based in Chile, where secondary school English teachers shared their perceptions of student motivation and, more specifically, demotivation. Adult ESOL in England is therefore a very different context but

it is important to gain viewpoints from more than one perspective to aid the triangulation of the research. In addition, it is rare to find research that shares the voices of ESOL teachers (Shepherd, 2021) as they are employed in a sector of education that is often forgotten in the literature (Ravenhall, 2014).

I began the interviews by asking the teachers to introduce themselves and say a little about their ESOL background, and then moved on to ask them about their teaching context at that point in time. These were cross-sectional interviews, but I also asked the teachers to reflect on the motivations of past students as none of them were in their first year of teaching.

All interviews were conducted online due to Covid-19 restrictions and rapport had to be built quite quickly with the teachers I did not know prior to the interview. To prepare the participants for the interviews, I had sent the information leaflet and consent form via email, allowing at least a week for them to send any questions. 15 teachers turned their cameras on during the interviews, which helped to build rapport as we could each see facial expressions. One teacher, who I had worked with previously, chose not to turn her camera on as she was at home. Thankfully, as I had known her for many years, rapport was not an issue but I did feel uncomfortable having my camera on while hers was off. Finally, one teacher was unable to turn a camera on as she was at work and her computer did not have a camera. Again, thankfully, rapport was not a problem as I had met her in person a couple of times before and so we were not strangers meeting for the first time.

3.6.3 *Analysis and member checking*

By the 17th interview, I had reached saturation as I was able to predict many of the teachers' responses based on previous interviews. After each interview, I made handwritten notes in my notebook, highlighting the main themes, which then guided the thematic analysis I conducted once all 17 interviews were complete. I used otter.ai to aid my transcriptions as it had been suggested by a colleague at the university and was authorised by the ethics committee. After transcribing the interviews, I transferred them into NVivo for thematic analysis.

For the analysis, I initially followed Braun and Clarke's (2012) guidelines; I read through all the transcripts several times, highlighting themes and discounting sections that did not answer the research questions (see Appendix 2 for an example). I then used Excel to transfer the nodes and organise them into macro, meso and micro levels to aid the organisation of the chapter (see Tables 3.3 and 3.4 for examples), following the transdisciplinary framework suggested by the Douglas Fir Group (2016).

Table 3.4 *Initial nodes from NVivo*

Motivators	Files	Refs
Course design	10	20
Bridging courses for E3L1	4	5
Class availability	2	2
Class size	2	2
Classroom	5	5
Extra class availability	1	1
Feedback	9	10
Formative Assessment	11	16
Free course	1	1
One level classes	2	2
Covid 19	2	2
Access to technology	1	1
Classroom safety	3	4
Flexible learning	7	13
Online peer support	1	1
T's attitude towards online learning	10	19
ESOL exams	11	20
Completing all the levels	3	5
Help their children	7	7
Childcare available	4	4
Accessing health care	1	1
Confidence	4	4
Prior education	3	4
Prior language learning	3	3
Future plans	1	1
Communication	8	9
Speaking activities	4	5
Further study	14	23
Independence	1	2
Integration into British life	2	4
Work	17	32
Resourcefulness	8	19
Teacher	17	49
Work	4	6
Enjoy learning languages	3	3
Peer support	11	18
Socialising	7	8

Table 3.5 *Examples from the macro level*

Macro

Demotivators

Government funding	Files	Refs
Course cost	2	2
Exam system (funding)	9	13

Covid 19	Files	Refs
Exam cancellation	7	11
Feeling unsafe	7	10
Social distancing in the classroom	3	5
Travel to class	1	2
Childcare loss during lockdowns	9	12

Access to employment and HE	Files	Refs
Progression routes	2	3
Functional Skills English	4	6
Work	8	11

Motivators

Government funding	Files	Refs
Free course	1	1
Class availability	2	2
Class size	2	2
Extra class availability	1	1
Childcare available	4	4
ESOL exams	11	20

Covid 19	Files	Refs
Access to technology	2	2
Classroom safety	1	1
Flexible learning	3	4

Access to employment and HE	Files	Refs
	7	13

I chose to use Excel as I was more familiar with this software than NVivo and I found it useful to move the nodes away from the data, as it was less distracting. I then shared these themes with the five student participants in the longitudinal study in the form of a card matching exercise (see Figure 3.6 for an example), which not only provided different perspectives on the themes but also encouraged reflection of topics that had not all appeared in the student interviews.

Figure 3.7 *Student card matching of teacher interview themes*
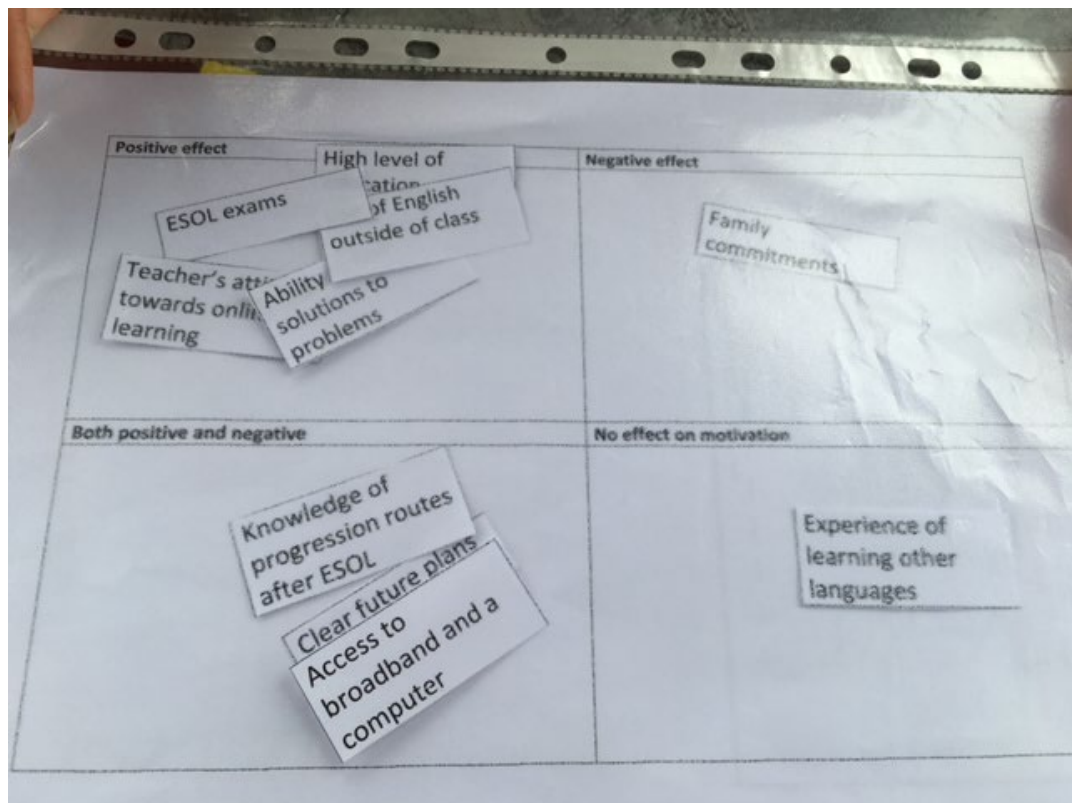
In addition to the member checking with student participants, I also shared the transcripts with each individual teacher participant for them to check for accuracy and any missing information. This was conducted via email and I received a response from every teacher. A year after conducting the interviews, I presented some of the analysis of these interviews at an online seminar, which I invited the participants to attend and shared the video recording with them, encouraging feedback. I received feedback on the transcripts, for example corrections of job titles, updates on their teaching situations and reflections on how they responded to individual questions, but

only received positive responses to my presentation rather than constructive criticism.

3.7   Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has set out the methodological stance of this thesis, explaining how, why, where and when data were collected. The following four chapters will outline the results and findings of the thesis. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the pilot study and explains how it influenced the design of the student survey. Chapter 5 presents the results of the survey, utilising a wide lens approach to give an overview of who was accessing adult ESOL at Entry Level Three and Level One in 2020/21 and their initial motivations (RQ1). The lens then narrows to present the findings of the teacher interviews, utilising the macro, meso and micro levels suggested by the Douglas Fir Group's transdisciplinary framework (2016), linking the themes to Self-Determination Theory, wherever applicable. Finally, the findings return to the students as stakeholders, narrowing the lens once more, where five narratives are presented. Again, they are linked to Self-Determination Theory as a framework to explain language learning motivation, in addition to explaining how these five narratives correspond to the views of the teachers and decisions made at the macro level. All four findings chapters will be discussed together in Chapter 8 in relation to the wider literature of language learning motivation and the teaching of adult ESOL.

4   Pilot Study January – March 2020

'You don't come to enjoy, you have to study because you stay, you live in England'

The overarching aim of the pilot study was to test the reliability of the survey instrument to collect demographic information and to determine the initial motivation of ESOL students to join the course. The only survey that has been used in the UK ESOL context to gather such information was compiled by the Scottish Government in 2005 (Rice et al., 2005). Although that survey will have been rigorously tested in its context, this was 15 years ago and did not collect data from students learning in England.

I gained ethical approval to conduct the pilot study in November 2019, then had the task of gaining entry to an ESOL provider to access ESOL students. This occurred through a chance meeting at an ESOL research book launch in Leeds, where I met two ESOL lecturers looking to discover the motivation of their higher level students. Frustrated by the lack of tutorial time in lessons to get to know their students and trialling a new exam system at Level 1, the teachers were keen for me to visit their students to hopefully give them an insight into the students' goals and views of the course. Access was granted by the ESOL manager, with whom I communicated via email in conjunction with liaising with the teachers.

Usually, students are enrolled onto an ESOL course that finishes with a summative exam, set by an external examination board. This time period can be an academic term (around 12 weeks) or an academic year (around 36 weeks) and students may be given the opportunity to sit the three Skills for Life exams offered at each level: Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing. Unusually for these types of settings, at the college where I piloted my data collection, some students had been enrolled for two academic years, not being allowed to take any exams in the first year, and others were enrolled for just one year.

In this chapter, I will display a selection of the results representing the main themes of both the survey and the focus group interviews obtained during

the pilot study. I will further explain how these results led to a reshaping of the survey instrument and the framing of the interview questions for my main study.

4.1   Data Collection

Over a period of six weeks, I liaised with an ESOL teacher at a college in the north east of England to organise my visit. Permission to access the students was granted from the Head of ESOL and teachers were informed. It was suggested that I visit four classes during their workshop time as this would not disrupt their class time. Each ESOL class at this college has a 45 minute workshop every week for self-study. For one Entry 3 class and three Level 1 classes, this workshop fell on the same day and so for convenience I was invited to visit these four groups.

What became apparent when I visited the classes was that the length of the Information Sheet was off-putting for many of the participants. Some abandoned it and went straight into the survey whilst others asked me and their teachers concept checking questions to ensure they had understood it properly. In light of this, I distributed it differently in the main data collection as I was unable to remove or shorten any of the sections. As mentioned earlier in the Methodology chapter, due to the Covid-19 restrictions that I was working under in September 2020, the Information Sheet was emailed to the class teachers and uploaded to the college Moodle pages prior to my visit. This gave the participants time to read through the information, ask their teacher questions or prepare questions for me to answer.

In addition, confusion arose when completing the consent forms because of the question regarding interview consent. Some students thought this implied they would be interviewed on the same day as completing the survey and stopped completing the form at the point. Therefore, to address this difficulty I created two consent forms for each of the activities and the interview consent form was emailed to those who volunteered after completing the survey.

The survey itself took the slowest participants 20 minutes and the fastest participants 10 minutes to complete. The slower participants generally took their time writing a response to the final, open-ended question whereas faster ones left that blank. I was therefore pleased that the instrument was not too long and, in addition, was at the correct language level for the students as none of the questions caused confusion.

4.2   Survey Results

This section will provide an overview of the results of the piloting stage of the student survey.

4.2.1 *Demographics*

In the pilot study, 58 participants completed the paper-based survey comprising 27 male and 31 female students, representing 24 countries with 20 different first languages (Figure 4.1). They were from four classes, one at Entry Level Three and the others at Level One, two of which were not enrolled on an exam course. This range of nationalities and languages helps to illustrate why the study needed to be conducted in English. It would be impossible to predict how many languages and indeed which languages the survey would need to be translated into if it were not in English. In addition, participants have a high enough level of English to complete the survey and interviews, as proven in this pilot study.

Figure 4.1 *First language*
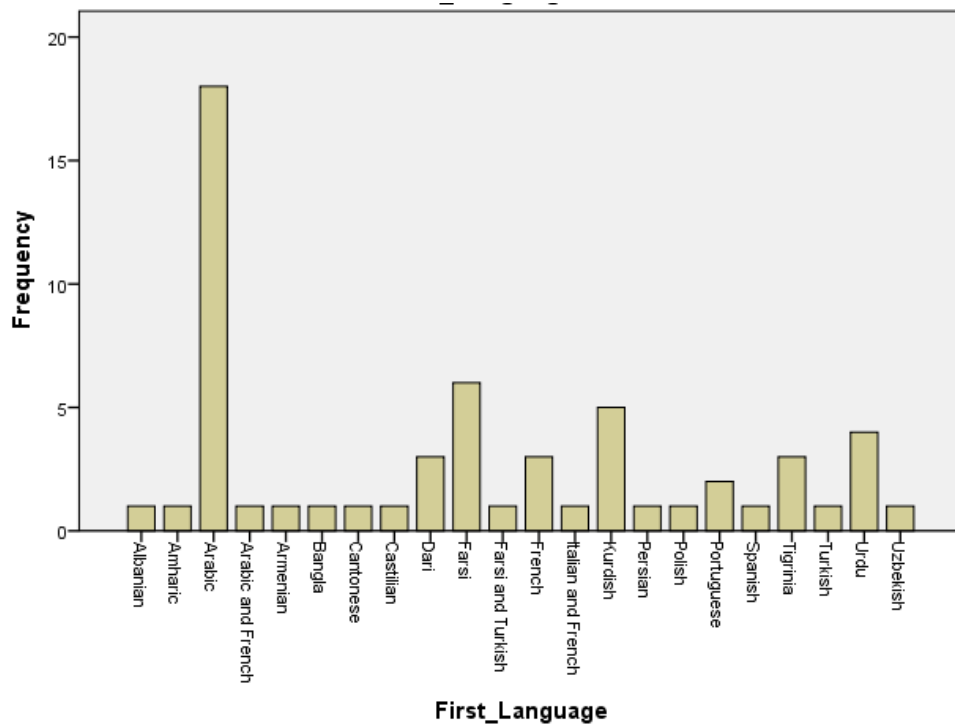
Moreover, a wide range of age groups was also represented from these four classes (Figure 4.2) which is another example of the diversity of ESOL classes. This adds to the argument for treating the participants as individuals rather than members of a group that can be generalised. The largest age group was age 31-40 (46%) with only one student under 21 and two over 50.

Figure 4.2 *Age groups*
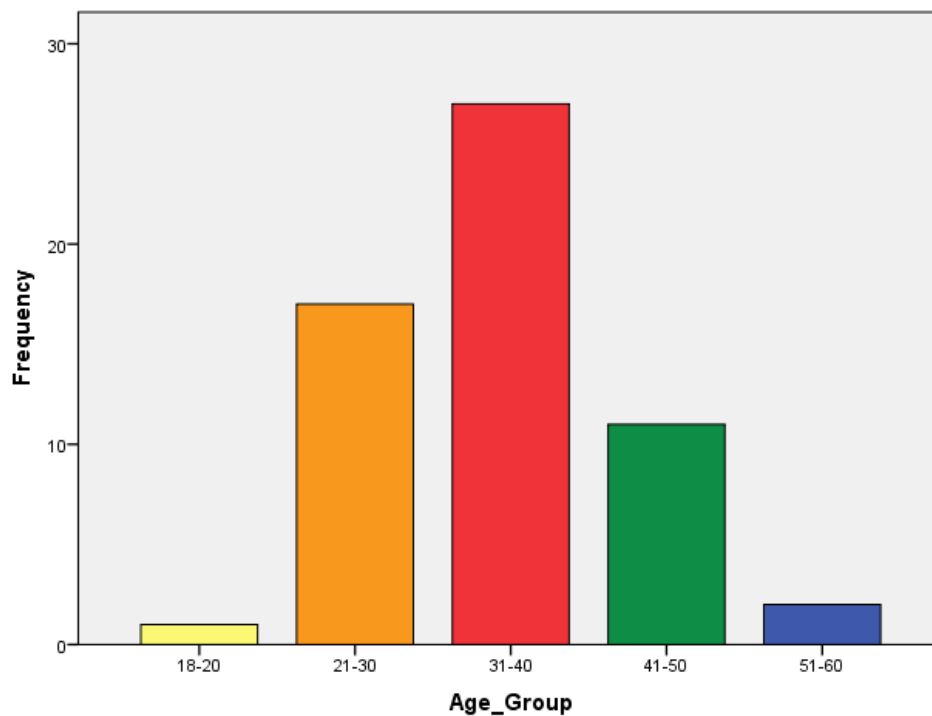
4.2.2 Experience of Learning English

The majority of this section (Questions 7-14) was piloted to check the appropriateness of the survey language used for students at the target levels. As they were all enrolled at the same college, I already knew that they studied for nine hours per week and which classes were doing summative exams at the end of the course. These items did not cause any difficulty for the participants and so remained as they were. The only small amendment was in Question 13, which asks about prior exam achievements. I changed the word 'Name' to 'Exam' as a small number of participants misunderstood this and wrote their own name instead of the exam name.

Question 15 supplied the participants with nine motivations to study ESOL, of which I allowed them to choose no more than five main ones. These options were taken from the Rice et al (2005) questionnaire that had been used with ESOL students in Scotland. The responses were analysed through SPSS for frequency (Table 4.1) and differences between the participants (Tables 4.2 and 4.3). Each of these options was discussed in the focus groups to gain a greater understanding of how the participants understood the options and whether the results gave a true reflection of ESOL students at that college.

Table 4.1 *Question 15 - Initial Motivation*

		Responses	Percent of
		N	Cases
Initial Motivation[a]	Apply for a job	51	87.9%
	Independence	45	77.6%
	Enjoy languages	33	56.9%
	British University	32	55.2%
	Befriend English speakers	31	53.4%
	Help children with homework	28	48.3%
	English exam	27	46.6%
	College course	25	43.1%
	Help with work	10	17.2%
Total		282	486.2%
a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.			

Table 4.2 Initial motivation by age

Age_Group*$Motivation Crosstabulation

			Initial Motivation[a]									Total
			Apply for job	Independence	Enjoy languages	British Uni	Befriend English speakers	Help children with homework	English exam	College course	Help with work	
Age Group	18-20	Count	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
		% within Age Group	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	
	21-30	Count	15	14	6	14	7	7	8	11	4	17
		% within Age Group	88.20%	82.40%	35.30%	82.40%	41.20%	41.20%	47.10%	64.70%	23.50%	
	31-40	Count	25	19	15	14	15	14	13	11	5	27
		% within Age Group	92.60%	70.40%	55.60%	51.90%	55.60%	51.90%	48.10%	40.70%	18.50%	
	41-50	Count	8	9	9	4	7	5	6	3	0	11
		% within Age Group	72.70%	81.80%	81.80%	36.40%	63.60%	45.50%	54.50%	27.30%	0.00%	
	51-60	Count	2	2	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	2
		% within Age Group	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%	50.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
Total		Count	51	45	33	32	31	28	27	25	10	58

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table 4.3 *Initial motivation by gender*

Gender*$Motivation Crosstabulation

		Initial Motivation[a]									Total
		Apply_for_job	Independence	Enjoy languages	BritishUni	BefriendEnglish Speakers	Help children with homework	Englishexam	College course	Help with work	
Gender	Male	Count									27
		25	20	17	17	14	9	12	12	7	
		% within Gender									
		92.60%	74.10%	63.00%	63.00%	51.90%	33.30%	44.40%	44.40%	25.90%	
	Female	Count									31
		26	25	16	15	17	19	15	13	3	
		% within Gender									
		83.90%	80.60%	51.60%	48.40%	54.80%	61.30%	48.40%	41.90%	9.70%	
Total		Count									58
		51	45	33	32	31	28	27	25	10	

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

From the above data we can see across the age groups and genders there was a clear focus on learning English for obtaining employment and

becoming independent adults in this country. These results were explored in the focus groups in detail, which I will discuss in the next section.

4.3   Focus Groups

To include an element of member checking and following the transdisciplinarity of the research design, in the pilot study, focus group interviews were conducted with a small group of students from each of the classes that completed the survey six weeks earlier. This was to ensure that 'the voices of small and or powerless groups are heard and their insights integrated' (Szostak, 2016, p138) when designing the survey items for the main study.

The groups ranged from four to seven participants and totalled 22 participants (nine female and thirteen male). Despite my efforts to pre-arrange the groups via email, convenience sampling was used as I had no choice but to accept anyone who volunteered on the day. The interviews each lasted for around 30 minutes and were audio recorded. The time was limited due to the students' timetabled availability. I did not want to disrupt any of their classes but I was allowed to talk to them during workshop time, in a separate classroom.

The nine motivational options from Question 15 were printed onto cards and given out at the start of the focus groups. Participants were asked to order the cards, predicting the overall results of the survey and were then told the results. The most popular choice 'Learning English to apply for a job or better job' (Table 4.1) was either correctly chosen by the participants as the top choice or it was close to the top. Therefore, this was not a surprise for any of the students and seemed to be an important motivation, even if they were not in a position to look for employment at this point in time.

The reasons suggested for the other work option coming last, were wide ranging. The number of asylum seekers completing the survey, high unemployment in the local area and the cost of childcare were all suggested as reasons for not needing English to help with work, i.e. most students were not in employment. The other suggestion that came from Focus Group 2

was that it depended on your job. In that group, one student worked as a cleaner and explained that she did not need to speak or write in English for her job. Conversely, the student sitting next to her worked as a care worker in a nursing home and was required to speak to both patients and staff in English in addition to writing reports and reading medication instructions. Following this discussion, I decided to include a question about employment in the survey for the main study to further explain responses to this motivational option. I also included a question about their main reason for coming to the UK to capture the number of asylum seekers.

The second most popular motivation 'Independence' was surprising for me as I had assumed that most students at Entry three and Level one are already capable of being independent. Through focus group discussions it emerged that students had chosen this option thinking of when they first started classes at a lower level and now only require an interpreter when speaking to a hospital doctor not their local GP. In addition, the example of learning to drive may have also caused confusion as asylum seekers are not allowed to apply for a driving licence. They may have chosen this option because this is something they want to do in the future but is not directly linked to joining an ESOL class. Therefore, this motivational option was re-worded to make it less confusing for the participants. The discussions around independence also provided another suggestion for initial motivation, which is shown here:

Student 19:	As for me, when I came, I could express myself in English, but the fear that I had is that my accent is different. I thought they wouldn't understand what I'm saying. That's why I asked for interpreter
Interviewer:	Oh, OK, just for confidence?
Student 19:	Yeah but now I can. I saw that the accent has no problem. I can speak clearly and people understand.
Interviewer:	So this is interesting because I found it interesting that this is the second most popular answer. 78% people chose

> this. But those people are your level.
> So I was thinking why do people at your
> level still feel like they need help
> with an independence?

Student 22:   Maybe not with independence er maybe we
> don't have more vocabulary, need more
> things to improve our English to help us
> to jump to more higher level, not just
> in speaking, maybe university that you
> need another level of speaking, normal
> life don't need that.

Interviewer: Just, I was a bit confused by it because

Student 17:   I think lack of confidence also

Interviewer: Yeah?

Student 17:   Some people can express themselves but
> they don't have confidence in them.
> Yeah.

Student 20:   Sometimes I struggle to understand
> people. For example, when I see people
> in the street they speak different
> accent different slang but in
> university, in college, in hospitals,
> they speak fluently, clean.

Interviewer: Yeah. Maybe that's the difference?

Student 20:   Yeah. (Focus Group 4)

Even those with a good level of English lacked confidence when speaking to local people, as these focus group students were discussing, and so this option was added to the question about initial motivation to join the course.

The third most popular answer 'I enjoy learning languages' (Table 4.1), when relayed to the participants, was greeted with surprise and laughter by all four groups. Not one of the 22 participants could explain why the 33 people chose this option. An example of one of the group's responses comes from Focus Group 1:

Student 2:   Nobody enjoy learning languages!

Student 5:   You live in UK, you must know how people
> talking to contact with people. If I

	lived in my country, this answer is true but not here, it's because I have to
Interviewer:	Do you think people gave this answer because they thought I wanted to hear this?
All:	No, no, no
Student 3:	Some people enjoy it
Student 4:	Sometimes I enjoy English, sometimes
Student 3:	You don't come to enjoy, you have to study because you stay, you live in England. If you go anywhere else, any other country, you have to speak English. Where do you come from? England. Everyone think you speak English. You don't speak English, is problem (Focus Group 1)

This instant dismissal of intrinsic motivation in this topic was surprising as a high number of participants had chosen this option. The participants could not envision anyone attending ESOL classes for the love of language learning as other extrinsic factors were seemingly far more important at this point in their lives. There was an acknowledgment of enjoying the classes and for a few, enjoying language learning before moving to the UK, but this was not a reason for them to enrol on ESOL. It is possible that some students chose this option because they enjoyed the ESOL class and so the results may vary if the survey is conducted at the start of the academic year rather than midway through.

The fourth most popular choice (attending a British university) was the only option to split the response across the age groups (Table 4.2). 82.4% of the 21-30 age group chose this option; however, the same number, though smaller percentage, of the 31-40 age group also made this selection. When discussing this option, it became clear that the ESOL exams were a high priority for those who wanted to go to university along with a desire to access shorter, more intensive courses. These themes also appeared in the open-ended question with eight students asking for more opportunities to take exams and move up through the levels in half the time. In Focus Groups 1 and 2 especially, there was an urgency with which they talked about wanting

to access higher education either for the first time (younger students in Group 1) or in order to return to their prior careers (slightly older students in Group 2).

The college where I piloted data collection was trialling a new system at Level 1; however, from my experience of working in the sector, it is usually the class teacher or ESOL manager who decides who will be registered for exams. Students often take the view of wanting to try the exam and if they fail, they will simply try again in the following year. Unfortunately, with benchmarks in the 90%s it is not possible to register a student for an exam if they are likely to fail. Exam results are directly linked to funding and without funding, there would not be any classes.

The students in the exam classes (Groups 1 and 3) briefly mentioned the exams as being part of their courses but were not overly concerned about them. However, Group 2 represented students who were not allowed to take exams this year and had been demotivated by this decision, as one student explained:

```
Student 11:      When you have exam you can study hard.
                 For example now, I take just the lesson,
                 drop it in the car, nothing else because
                 no exam. If I have exam, OK, I will
                 study hard. (Focus Group 2)
```

They were attending classes but waiting until the second year (the exam year) to work hard and do homework. There was also one student who had been offered a place in the exam class midway through the first term but because she was unable to change her work schedule and childcare arrangements, she had to continue in the non-exam class, causing some frustration. In contrast, the students in Focus Group 4 who were in the same position regarding exams, took a more pragmatic approach. They were relieved to be given more time to learn the language before being tested, improving at their own speed, and feeling like their individual needs were being met.

The motivation of integrating into British life was discussed with the option of 'I am learning English to make friends with English-speaking people'.

Participants spoke of their difficulties of finding people to talk with and having the confidence to speak in English. One participant (Student 22, Group 4) also spoke of the desire to watch the news in English and enjoy British films as this was connected to integrating into society, a suggestion that met with agreement in his focus group. These options have therefore been added to the motivational options in Question 15.

Finally, the only option that demonstrated a variation in response on the basis of gender was 'I am learning English to help my children with their school work' with 61% of women and 33% of men choosing this option (Table 4.3). In the focus groups this difference was partly explained because of different cultural expectations of the two genders but also because of the high numbers of male participants living in Britain alone. This was not something I captured in my survey and so Question 8 regarding children was added.

4.4   Additional Amendments

Questions 16 and 17 regarding barriers to attendance and homework had the lowest response rate of all the items, 82% and 67% respectively, not including the optional open-ended question at the end. As these questions did not collect enough responses to be analysed and would be difficult for students at the start of a course to complete, I decided to exclude them from the survey. Barriers to learning could instead be discussed in individual interviews, when appropriate.

4.5   Chapter Conclusion

Overall, the pilot study generated enough results from 58 participants to test the suitability and language level of the survey items. In conjunction with the results of my prior, small-scale studies in 2016 and 2019, a wide range of motivational options were generated for the survey and discussion prompts suggested for the interviews. With additional questions, the survey stayed below 30 minutes to complete without causing any stress or difficulty for the participants.

The final question of the survey remained open-ended to capture any further information that may have not been included in the piloting. This was to help to ensure the research was participant led, with interview questions being informed by survey responses.

5   Student Survey Results

The findings of this research project will be organised according to three separate but connected chapters. This, the first of these three chapters, provides the results of the student survey completed by adults attending Entry Level Three/Level One ESOL courses in England. The survey items aimed to provide an overview of demographic information as well as respondents' motivations for joining the course at that point in time. The second findings chapter focuses on the interviews I conducted with teachers of the survey respondents to gain their perspective on student motivation, both initial and during the course. The final findings chapter will showcase the narratives of five students studying on ESOL courses at one college of further education. Thus, the chapters will start with a wide lens, sharpening the focus as I present the analysis, finishing with a small lens approach with the student case studies.

The survey was completed during the autumn term of the academic year 2020/21 and data were analysed for descriptive statistics, cross-tabulated using demographic and ESOL course information, to give an overview of the ESOL provision the students were attending, why they had enrolled and their socio-economic backgrounds.

As previously explained in Chapter 3, I had intended for this survey to be paper based and completed in classrooms where I had hoped to recruit participants. However, due to the strict Covid-19 restrictions enforced by the UK government, the ESRC, the University of Warwick and the ESOL providers themselves, I had to adjust my data collection methods accordingly. The survey was moved online, using Qualtrics, and shared with students in the three classes I was allowed to visit in September 2020 and then in November 2020 when I asked the teachers I interviewed to share the link with their students. In the classes I visited, I took paper versions of the survey in case any of the students were unable to access it online, either because of a lack of technology or the ability to use the technology available. These surveys were printed a week in advance and students collected them

from a table at the front of the classroom as I was not allowed to approach their desks due to social distancing measures.

5.1   Analysis

The survey closed at the end of the first term (a third of the way through the project) as the main aim of the survey was to capture data about initial motivation. 71 responses were collected, four of which were through paper based questionnaires and the others through Qualtrics. For analysis, the data was transferred to SPSS as this provided the necessary tools for descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation, and is approved by the University of Warwick; the results of which will be displayed in this chapter. This chapter will be organised into three sections (macro, meso and micro levels), a theme which will be replicated across all three findings chapters. Starting at the macro level, I will display the data relating to decisions made at governmental or examination board level. At the meso level, results relating to course design and the social and economic identity of students will be included, together with their imagined future communities or future plans. Finally, at the micro level, the students' educational background and linguistic resources will be analysed in relation to their ESOL course. The 20 responses I collected to the open-ended question at the end of the survey (Q19) will be included as quotes across the levels. These were analysed thematically and organised into three themes: future plans, appreciation for the course and barriers to learning/suggestions for improvements to the ESOL course.

5.2   Participants

To ensure anonymity, all the participants will be referred to by 'Student Number X'. Their number was determined by the order in which they submitted their survey, i.e. the last survey submitted was from Student 71. 76.1% of the respondents were female and 21.1% were male, with two students not wishing to share this information. They came from 31 different countries (see Figure 5.1) and spoke 31 different first languages, with three participants withholding this information (see Figure 5.2). Two participants

identified as having two first languages: 'Kurdish and Arabic' and 'Dari or Persian'.

Figure 5.1 *Countries of origin*
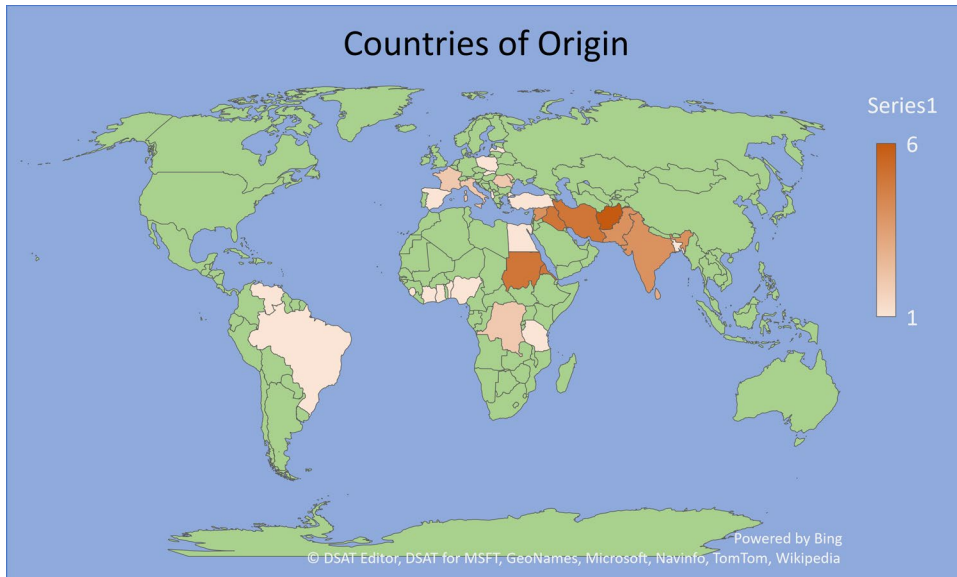
Figure 5.2 *First language*
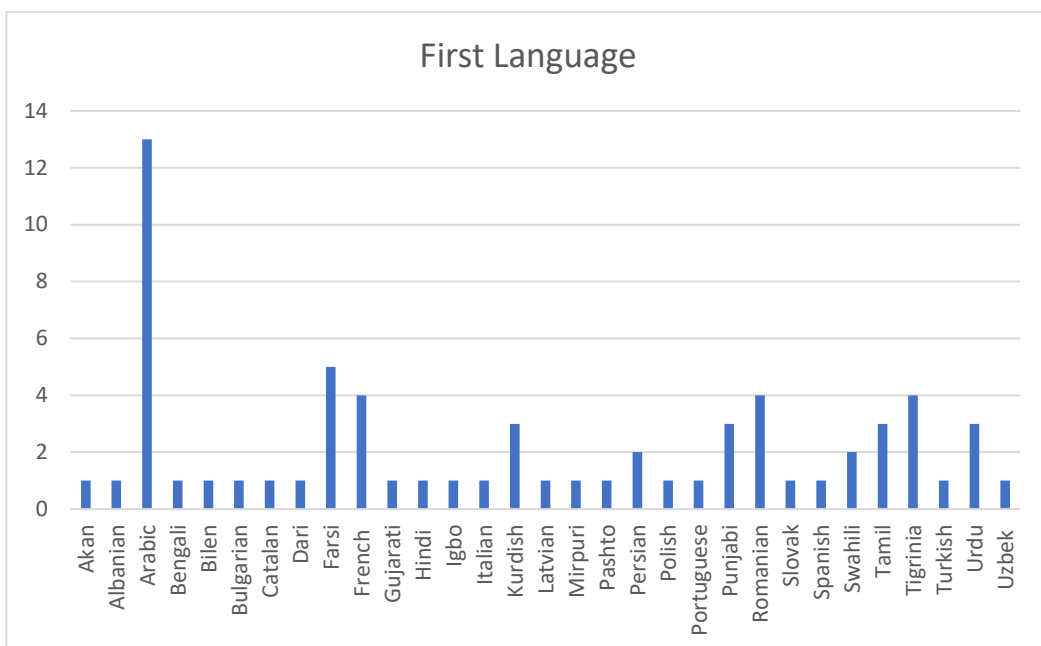
The majority of the participants were in the 31-40 age category, with 46% of participants falling into this age range, followed by 21-30 then 41-50. The

three remaining age ranges were each represented by one participant (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3 *Age groups*
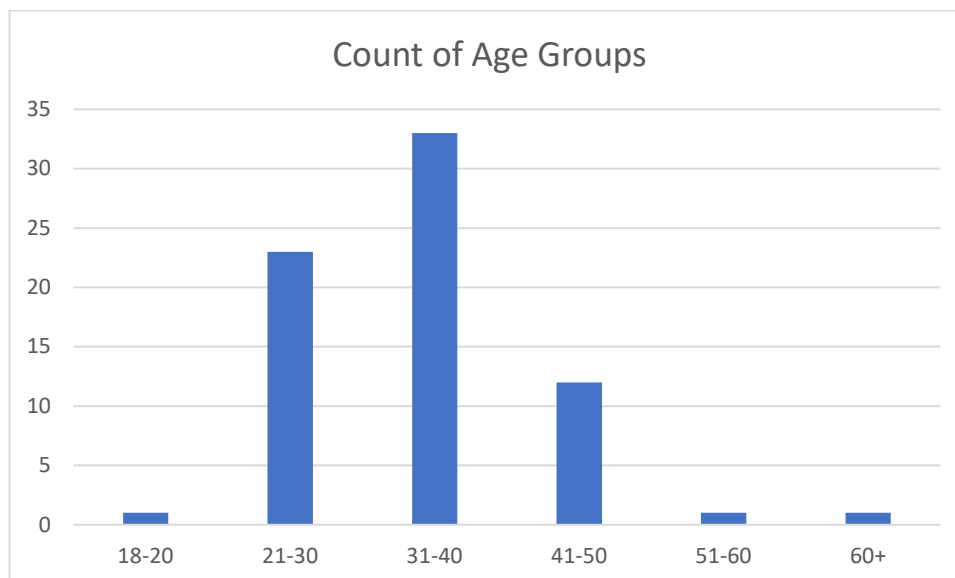
The respondents had, on average, been in the UK for 5.6 years (n47). The majority came to the UK to join family members (n32) with the other four options almost evenly spread across the responses (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 *Main reason for coming to the United Kingdom*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	To work	6	8.5	8.5	8.5
	To be with family/spouse	32	45.1	45.1	53.5
	To claim asylum	9	12.7	12.7	66.2
	To learn English	5	7.0	7.0	73.2
	To study	8	11.3	11.3	84.5
	Other	11	15.5	15.5	100.0
	Total	71	100.0	100.0	

Of the eleven people who answered 'Other', only three people provided reasons, which were:

'A company contacted my partner to work with them, and I came too' Student 10

'To be safely and secure' Student 37

'For my children's education' Student 71

5.3 Macro Level

In this section, I will display the results of survey questions 13 to 17 and 26 regarding ESOL course and examination availability, which are determined by government funding and decisions made by exam boards.

5.3.1 *Course Availability*

69 respondents supplied their weekly class hours, which ranged from 2 hours (n7) to 10 hours (n2) with the average being 6.10. Using the labels supplied by Rice et al. (2008), these responses can be further separated into two categories of 'very part-time (5 hours or less per week)' and 'part-time (more than 6 less than 15 hours per week)' (Rice et al, 2008, p.463). As full-time ESOL courses are not available to adults in England, the third category of 'full-time' is not included here. According to Table 5.2, the majority of the students were studying on part-time courses (59.2%) of between six and ten hours per week.

Table 5.2 *ESOL Class hours by category*

Class_Hours_Category

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very part-time	27	38.0	38.0	38.0
	Part-time	42	59.2	59.2	97.2
	No response	2	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	71	100.0	100.0	

59 respondents supplied the number of hours they would like their weekly class to be, which I have separated into three categories (Table 5.3). Table 5.5 shows that the majority of the students attending very part-time courses would like an increase in class hours whereas those on part-time courses are

almost evenly split across those who are happy with the number of hours and those who would prefer an increase. This is similar to the results of the pilot study where the students were all studying on part time courses and there was an even split between those who desired an increase in hours and those who either wanted the hours to stay the same or decrease (Table 4.1).

Table 5.3 *Preference for class hours*

Class_Hours_Category * Preference_For_Class_Hours Crosstabulation

Count

		Preference_For_Class_Hours			
		Decrease	No change	Increase	Total
Class_Hours_Category	Very part-time	3	7	15	25
	Part-time	5	15	14	34
Total		8	22	29	59

Table 5.4 *Delivery mode and class hours*

Delivery_Mode * Class_Hours_Category Crosstabulation

Count

		Class_Hours_Category			
		Very part-time	Part-time	No response	Total
Delivery_Mode	Classroom	8	39	1	48
	Online	4	0	0	4
	Blended	15	2	0	17
	No response	0	1	1	2
Total		27	42	2	71

The difference in responses from participants across the two categories of class hours may be explained by the delivery mode of these courses. Looking at Table 5.4, almost all the part-time students were studying in classrooms and therefore largely unaffected by the changes imposed by the government during the pandemic. However, all except two students studying online or in a blended mode of delivery were being taught on a very part-time basis. Prior to the pandemic, these delivery modes were not available to ESOL learners with all classes offered in classrooms. As I will show in the following two chapters, online and blended provision was operating on a

much-reduced timetable to the traditional classroom environment so it is likely that these very part-time students did not choose to study so few hours per week – this was their only option during a time when their classroom was closed due to the pandemic. The number of hours each student was timetabled each week can therefore be removed as a variable for measuring the intensity of the students' language learning motivation. It could still be included as a demotivating factor, depending on when students are allowed to move back to the classroom and their teacher's attitude towards the online environment, which will be discussed further in the two qualitative chapters in interviews with teachers and students.

As one student shared in their response to Q19:

I am not attending the ESOL classes this year because I don't like online lessons. I prefer to wait until next year to continue my studies. Student 31

This student was choosing to withdraw from their ESOL class in the hope that it would eventually move back to the classroom and they could continue to study, emphasising the point that students were not able to choose the mode of delivery of their course in the academic year of 2020/21.

Most of the students who responded to the survey were studying at Level 1 (n46), with the remaining 25 responses coming from Entry Level 3 students. At both levels, the majority were studying in classrooms (Figure 5.4) when they completed the survey, perhaps indicating that the teacher needed to be in the same physical space as the students for them to complete it. I had found this myself when piloting the survey and when I visited classes in September 2020. Reaching students in online classes proved particularly difficult, perhaps for the same reason, with only 4 responses collected from students in this context. In January 2021, all the participants moved to online classes during the third lockdown in England. This further added to my rationale for not continuing to collect survey data as there would not have been any students in classrooms for Term 2.

Figure 5.4 *Mode of delivery in Term 1 2019/20*
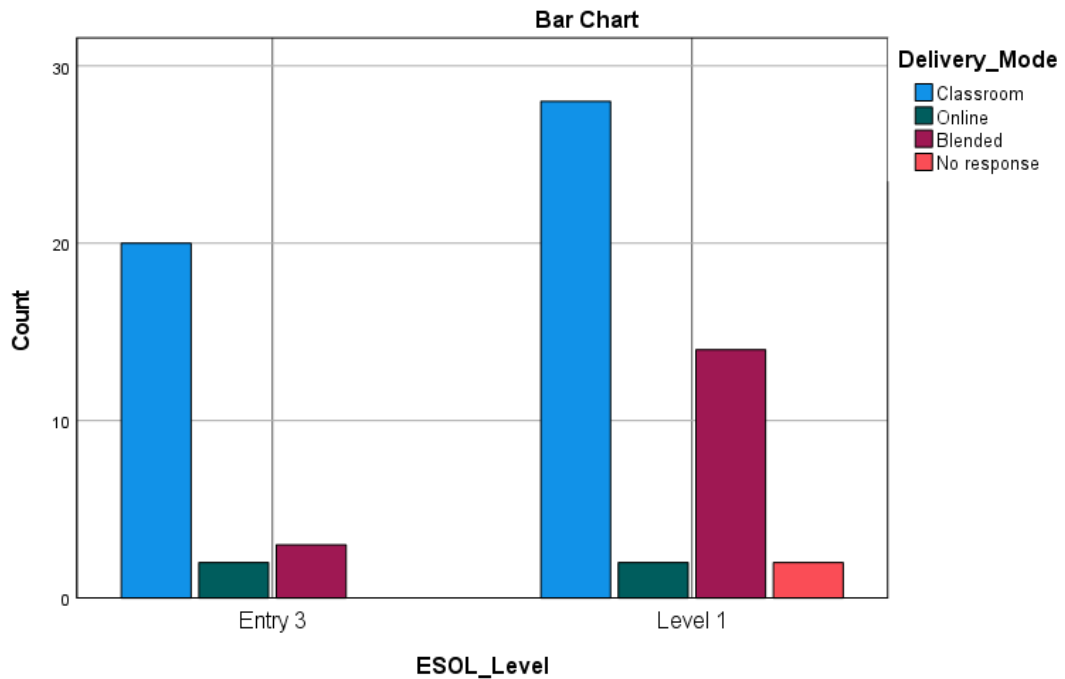
5.3.2 *Summative Assessments*

Summative assessments are set by external exam boards and their results are directly linked to course funding. I was interested to see how prominent the exams were across different ESOL courses around England because of their link to extrinsic motivation. The survey asked the students whether they had passed any ESOL Skills for Life exams and whether they would be taking any exams during their current course. The overall response to the first question can be seen in Table 5.5, showing that the majority of respondents had passed an ESOL exam before enrolling in September 2020 or were awaiting the results of exams taken during the first lockdown in summer 2020.

Table 5.5 *Have you passed any ESOL exams before?*

ESOL_Exams_Passed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	54	76.1	76.1	76.1
	No	11	15.5	15.5	91.5
	Awaiting results	6	8.5	8.5	100.0
	Total	71	100.0	100.0	

Of those who had not yet passed an ESOL exam, six were attending Level 1 and five were attending an Entry Level 3 class. Nine respondents had only started ESOL classes in the term I distributed the survey so had not had the opportunity to take any exams. One respondent did not supply their start date and one person started ESOL in 2014 but this might be an error as it is extremely unusual for a student to attend ESOL for six years and not take any exams, especially as they were attending a Level 1 class.

Taking each level in turn, 17 students attending Entry 3 classes had passed ESOL exams prior to enrolling at that level in September 2020. 11 of those respondents provided the name and level of the most recent exams they had passed – eight had completed Entry Level 2 exams and two had completed Entry Level 3 Reading exams, one in March 2020 and one in 2018. At each level, there are three exams to pass before a level is complete (Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening) but it is not uncommon for students to take exams at different levels in different skills in the same academic year. In the main, the Entry 3 students who responded to this survey seemed to be moving through the ESOL levels each year. However, one student gave a response to Q19 which implied that teachers were able to move students to the next level without exams:

I'm waiting for the exam. So I can move on to next level. Teachers told us that if we are ready we can move. But I want the certificate because in any situation if I couldn't complete the next level I could lose my entry 3 certificate. And in the future I will need to start entry 3 again. Student 67

This student was aware that if they chose to enrol on an ESOL course again in the future, they would need an exam certificate to prove their level otherwise there was a chance they would have to repeat the same level again. Although low-stakes outside the ESOL context, the exams still had the power to exclude students from moving up to higher levels, which could have a demotivating effect on their language learning motivation.

At Level 1 (Table 5.6), of the 37 who had passed exams, their most recent exams had been at Entry 3 (n21) and Level 1 (n9) with seven respondents supplying incomplete or blank responses.

Table 5.6 *Most recent exams taken by those attending Level 1 in 2020/21*

Level	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	No date supplied
Entry 3	2*	3	9	7
Level 1	-	2	5	2

*1 respondent left ESOL in 2019 and returned in 2020

This data would suggest that of the 46 respondents attending Level 1, at least 13 were attending for their second or third year at the same level having been unable to complete all of the Level 1 exams. This is only a small percentage of the respondents at Level 1 (28.2%) but suggests that once students reach this level, the time taken to complete all of the exams starts to increase.

Table 5.7 *Are you taking an exam at the end of the course?*

Exam_End_Course

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	40	56.3	56.3	56.3
	No	18	25.4	25.4	81.7
	Not sure	10	14.1	14.1	95.8
	No response	3	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	71	100.0	100.0	

Figure 5.5 *Summative exams in 2020/21 by level*
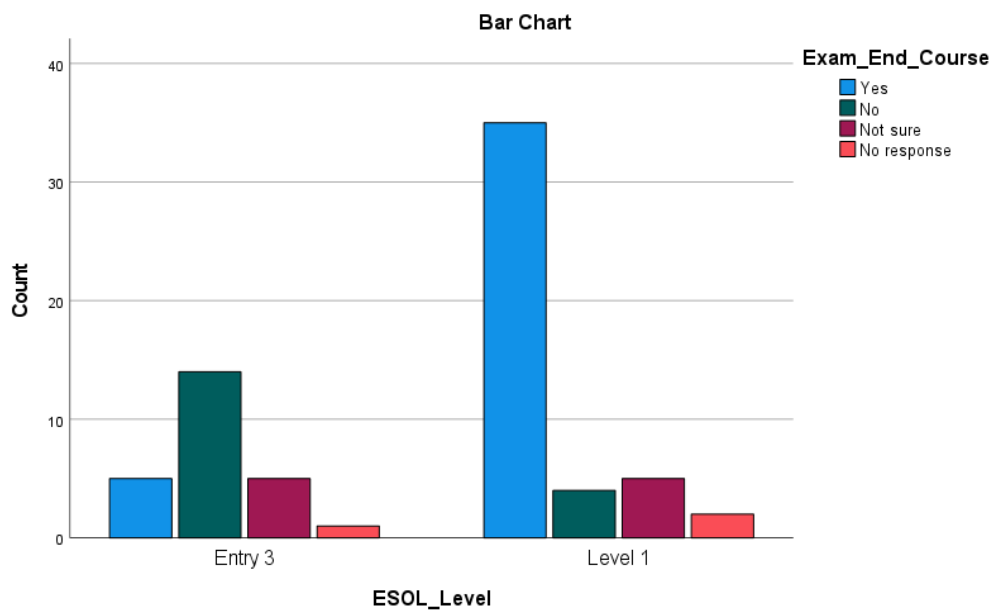
Question 17 asked the respondents if they were taking an exam at the end of their course. As can be seen in Table 5.7, 56.3% responded 'yes' with the remaining students either unsure or not taking exams. Looking at these results by ESOL level (Figure 5.5), the majority of the Entry 3 students were not taking exams in that academic year but the opposite was true for the Level 1 students. However, this question relied on the students having been told by their teachers that they would take an exam or their exam board making a decision due to the pandemic restrictions and the students understanding these decisions. Looking at Table 5.8 which divides the responses across the modes of delivery, it seems that exams were being offered in classrooms and online. This will be discussed further in the next chapter where I spoke to the students' teachers as the responses here do not imply there was a large amount of uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

Table 5.8 *Summative exam by delivery mode*

Count

		Exam_End_Course				
		Yes	No	Not sure	No response	Total
Delivery_Mode	Classroom	22	18	7	1	48
	Online	3	0	0	1	4
	Blended	14	0	3	0	17
	No response	1	0	0	1	2
Total		40	18	10	3	71

5.4 Meso Level

In this second section, I will look at the results of survey questions 7 and 8 (employment status), 9 (domestic situation) and 18 (initial motivation) to analyse the socio-economic identities of the students and their imagined future communities.

5.4.1 Social and Economic Identity

77.5% (n55) of all respondents were unemployed. Those who were in employment (n16), reported being in jobs which required a low level of English and general education, for example: Warehouse/Factory (n7), Cleaner (n4). However, there was also one respondent employed in each of the following roles:

Manager

Database administrator

Beautician

Care assistant

and one respondent wrote *'Staff in Sainsbury's'* but this was an unspecified job role.

Although they only represented 7% of the total respondents, this does illustrate that students at these levels are capable of finding employment that requires a good level of English. However, the economic status of the remaining 93% is likely to be low, with their opportunities to use English outside of the classroom vastly reduced in comparison.

A further question about their lives outside of the ESOL course was Question 9, which aimed to capture the parental status of the respondents (Figure 5.6). This question was added to the survey following the suggestion of the focus groups during the piloting stage. Overall, 63% reported having parental responsibilities for children in this country. 25% (n18) did not have children, two people had children in a different country and one person had adult children. This question was added pre-pandemic to explain some of the responses to Question 18 (see the next section 5.4.2) but now also provides a picture of how many students were looking after children whilst studying during Covid-19 lockdowns. As can be seen from the results of this survey and the findings of the next two chapters, those who were not looking after children were in the minority.

Figure 5.6 *Family*
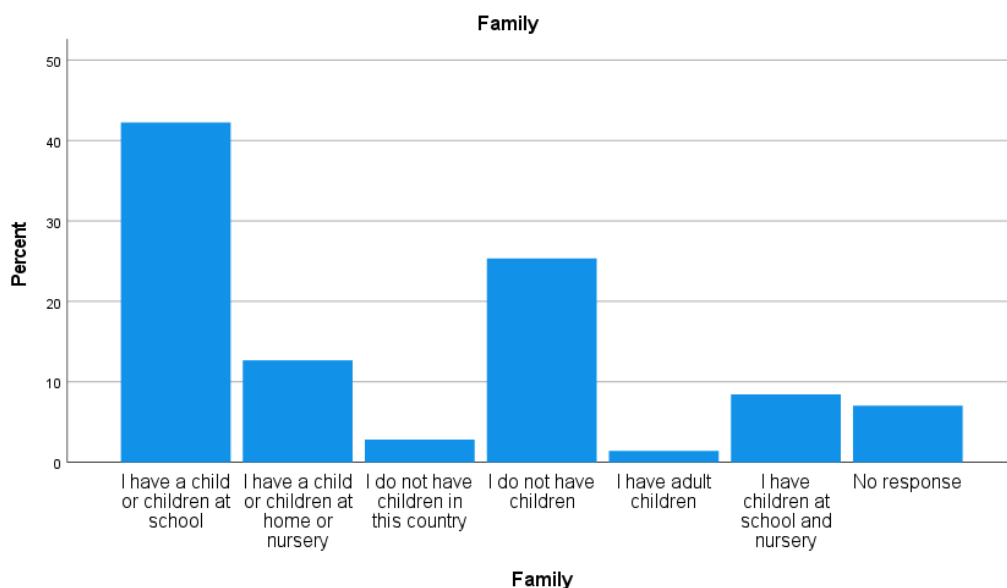
5.4.2 *Imagined Future Communities*

Question 18 asked the participants to choose up to a maximum of five reasons why they had enrolled on an ESOL course at that moment in time. Four participants did not complete this section so the results here are from 67 respondents (Table 5.9). As we can see from Table 5.9, the most popular response was a type of externally regulated motivation and was a suggestion that came from the focus group discussions in the piloting phase of this research. More than half of the respondents chose 'To be more confident

when speaking to local people' as a reason for enrolling on their current ESOL course, distinguishing this from learning about British culture and making friends, responses which appeared much lower down in the results.

The subsequent four responses were in almost the same order as the pilot results (Table 4.2). As I will show in the next chapter, where I provide analysis of the interviews I conducted with the teachers of the survey participants, these students are living in different parts of England and attending classes through FE colleges, adult education and charities. Their locations vary widely but according to these results, their initial motivations do not. According to the results of this research, most students accessing ESOL at Entry Level 3 and Level 1 are learning English to increase their confidence and develop their economic status, fulfilling their needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness as they feel more confident in their ability to use English, make connections with local people and take control of their lives.

Table 5.9 *Initial Motivation at Entry 3/Level 1*

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Initial_Motivation[a]	Confidence_With_Locals	39	15.2%	58.2%
	Apply_For_Job	38	14.8%	56.7%
	Independence	29	11.3%	43.3%
	British_Uni_Future	27	10.5%	40.3%
	Enjoy_Languages	22	8.6%	32.8%
	Understand_Letters	22	8.6%	32.8%
	Children_Homework	18	7.0%	26.9%
	College_Future	18	7.0%	26.9%
	British_Culture	15	5.8%	22.4%
	British_Media	10	3.9%	14.9%
	Make_Friends	8	3.1%	11.9%
	Exam	6	2.3%	9.0%
	Help_With_Job	4	1.6%	6.0%
	Job_Centre_Sent	1	0.4%	1.5%
Total		257	100.0%	383.6%

Of the 38 who chose 'To apply for a job or better job', 30 were unemployed highlighting that even at the higher levels, these participants were unable to

find employment in England. 22 respondents were unemployed and not learning English to aid a job search (three did not respond to this question). For these 22, their top motivational choices were:

'To be more confident when speaking to local people' (n11)

'To become more independent and not rely on an interpreter in my daily life' (n10)

'To study at a British university in the future' (n10)

'I enjoy learning languages' (n10)

The respondents' reason for moving to the UK (Table 5.1) did not influence their motivation to join a class, with the same top responses appearing across the five groups. The only difference appeared in the responses of asylum seekers who chose 'Learn about British Culture' as joint top with 'To be more confident when speaking to local people' and for those who moved to the UK to study, 'I enjoy learning languages' was joint top with 'To be more confident when speaking to local people' and 'To apply for a job or better job'. Unfortunately, as the response numbers were so low in these categories, the results cannot be relied upon for generalisability but it does seem to imply that those seeking asylum may have high levels of integrative motivation and those moving for education may be more likely to be intrinsically motivated to learn English.

Only one participant supplied a response under the option of 'Other', which was 'Study about what I would like to become in the future' (Student 51). All of the participants were attending general English courses, not linked to a vocational subject, so it was unclear whether Student 51's motivational need was being met. In the responses to the open-ended question (Q19), further information was provided on some of the students' future plans for work and study, with all responses displayed here verbatim:

'In Spain I was a interior design but now i don't have a good level inglish for loking my perfec work' – Student 10

'I would like to speak and write a very good English and study law .So I would like to speak frequent English'– Student 16

'I'd like to study English because I want to study medicine and I like to work on medical field.' – Student 41

In the first response (Student 10), there is the desire to return to a previous career and the awareness of the level of English required to do this. The other two responses are from students wanting to attend university in Britain, which was the fourth most popular response in the survey and indicates the intensity of their motivation linked to further study.

Other responses to the open-ended question which relate to Q18 included statements about a general desire to learn the language but there was also *'It is universal language any where I go I need it'* Student 37, which seemed to suggest that this student planned to use English not just in the UK but for future travel. Finally, there was a response from Student 40 which stated *'I want to improve my self.'* This seemed to imply a level of integrated motivation, learning English for themselves rather than any externally imposed reason.

5.5   Micro Level

In this final section, I will look at the results of the survey questions that focused on the students' education and linguistic resources.

The respondents had taken an average of 2.87 years to enrol on an ESOL class (n60) varying from those who enrolled in their year of arrival to 19 years. The average time in an ESOL class, up to the point of completing the survey, was 2.34 years (n62) although seven participants recorded taking a break from classes with reasons being maternity leave, ill health and domestic issues. For those seven participants, their time is taken from the first time they accessed an ESOL class as the length of their breaks was not supplied by all. As can be seen from Table 5.10, the majority of survey

respondents enrolled on an ESOL course in their first two years of living in England but this was much longer than the six month average that was found by the study in Scotland in 2008 (Rice et al, 2008). From the survey, it was not clear why students had not enrolled on ESOL courses immediately after arriving in the country. This could be because the majority of respondents had parental responsibilities (Figure 5.6) and therefore linked to opportunity rather than motivation (or knowledge, perhaps, in terms of knowing what is 'out there' and gaining one's bearings). Alternatively, it could be because only 7% of respondents had moved to the UK to learn English (Table 5.1) and therefore directly linked to their language learning motivation.

Table 5.10 *Time taken to access an ESOL class*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	12	16.9	20.0	20.0
	1	20	28.2	33.3	53.3
	2	9	12.7	15.0	68.3
	3	5	7.0	8.3	76.7
	4	1	1.4	1.7	78.3
	5	2	2.8	3.3	81.7
	6	3	4.2	5.0	86.7
	7	1	1.4	1.7	88.3
	8	1	1.4	1.7	90.0
	9	2	2.8	3.3	93.3
	11	1	1.4	1.7	95.0
	12	2	2.8	3.3	98.3
	19	1	1.4	1.7	100.0
	Total	60	84.5	100.0	
Missing	System	11	15.5		
Total		71	100.0		

Before arriving in England, 63% had studied English and when analysed by ESOL level (Table 5.11) we can see that at the higher level, the spread of people who had and had not studied English before was almost equal.

Table 5.11 *Studied English before coming to the UK*

Count

		ESOL_Level		
		Entry 3	Level 1	Total
Studied_English_Before_UK	Yes	20	25	45
	No	5	17	22
	No response	0	4	4
Total		25	46	71

Overall, those who had studied English before arriving in the UK took an average of 1.87 years in ESOL classes to reach their current level and 4.88 years in the country, living in England for an average of 3.25 years before enrolling on an ESOL course. Those who came with no formal English teaching on average took 2.85 years in ESOL classes to reach their current level and had been in the country for 5.45 years, taking 2.60 years to enrol. These variances are not vastly different, though it does seem to imply that it takes longer for those with experience of English language classes to enrol on ESOL courses but they complete the levels faster than those who arrive having never attended English classes.

One response provided in Q19 which may begin to explain why people do not immediately enrol on ESOL courses was as follows:

'At the first I thought the ESOL classes are not going to help but they help so much. I'm so glad that I started English classes. I wanted to say to people whom think It's wasted of time just try first and then say so things. I will continue my studies.'
Student 42

This appears to suggest that ESOL classes are not widely valued in certain communities or viewed with scepticism. Student 42 was in the minority in that she had come to the UK to study, starting at Entry 1 (beginner level) in the same year she arrived in the country and reaching Level 1 by completing a level per year. Perhaps for those who had already learned English to a good

level, the benefits of attending an ESOL course are not immediately obvious, explaining why it takes them longer to enrol.

5.6   Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the initial motivation of 71 adults attending ESOL classes in England in autumn 2020. The majority were female, unemployed and had moved to England to join family members. The most popular motivation to enrol on an ESOL course at this level was to become more confident when speaking to local people, closely followed by a desire to find employment.

The next chapter will show the analysis of the interviews conducted with the teachers of the survey respondents. The majority of the interviews happened at the same time as the survey and so will be compared retrospectively.

6   ESOL Teacher Perspectives

The previous chapter has shown that the adult ESOL population is varied in both language background and reasons for studying. During the piloting of my data collection in 2018, I found that ESOL teachers often act as gatekeepers in this context, whether intentionally or not. ESOL students themselves are extremely hard to contact since ESOL providers are not allowed to share their contact details due to GDPR and data protection laws and so if the researcher is unable to visit classrooms, it is difficult to discover who is attending the courses. I was, therefore, reliant on teachers sharing the survey link with their students and then the students completing it in their own time. The survey, as previously mentioned, was mainly intended to provide an overview of the students accessing Entry 3/Level 1 adult ESOL at a point in time; related to the first research question of why students choose to enrol at that level. By the end of October 2020, I had received very few survey responses and few teachers had responded to my emails. This was due at least in part to Covid restrictions. Another approach was thus needed to gather the data needed for the research.

To increase the amount of data collected, I drew on studies by Cowie and Sakui (2011) and Glas (2016) who had argued that the perceptions of teachers should be taken into account when investigating language students' motivation. These two studies are, to some extent, distinctive as they focused on situations where unmotivated or demotivated students were attending compulsory courses and the researchers were concerned with how the teachers dealt with this in the classroom. The adult ESOL sector differs from the school-based contexts referred to in these earlier studies, since the courses are effectively optional, and students are free to leave at any point. What is similar, however, is that there is a mix of types and levels of motivation within each class, and it is by no means certain that every student will successfully complete the course. 'Success' as a concept in adult ESOL means, from the perspective of the funders, either passing an exam or showing progress through an individual learning plan. Moreover, there remains an argument for teachers' voices to be heard, as proposed most

recently by Sheppard (2021, p18) particularly with regard to the impact of policy decisions. Unlike the study by Chamorro et al. (2021) who were unable to recruit student participants, the teachers in this chapter were recruited so their views could be analysed and discussed alongside the data collected from students, aiding the triangulation of the research and sharing the voices of two groups who are often marginalised (Cooke and Simpson, 2009, p1).

To build on this angle of research into teachers' perspectives, I contacted a number of ESOL teachers to collect their views on student motivation, which could be used to compare against the responses of their students. It is important to emphasise that this is not an investigation into teacher practice *per se*, nor is it about the motivation of language teachers; rather, the focus remains on ESOL students.

6.1   Participants

Participants were recruited for the teacher interviews in October/November 2020 (see section 3.4 for full discussion). The participants were all in-service teachers with an average of 8.8 years' experience of teaching ESOL ranging from two to 17 years (see Table 3.3). The four teachers who had under five years' experience had all taught English as a Foreign Language before moving to ESOL so were not new to teaching English but were new to this part of the sector. 10 teachers were working for community providers, either local authorities or charities, and the remaining seven were working for colleges of further education.

6.2   Analysis

In line with my research question aims, I initially drew up three themes in NVivo – a) reasons for studying, b) motivating factors and c) demotivating factors. Each research question will be addressed in turn but as there was a great deal of overlap between the factors which motivate and demotivate, these will be presented across levels (macro, meso and micro) as first constructed by Bronfenbrenner (1979). This decision was made during the thematic analysis and is partly inspired by the transdisciplinary framework

advocated by the Douglas Fir Group (2016) where different aspects of second language acquisition are analysed together rather than looking at one factor in isolation. I have also been influenced by Ortega's response (2019) to this proposed transdisciplinary agenda wherein grassroots multilingualism and social justice are brought to the forefront. As Ortega (2019) and Han (2013) observe, language learning at the 'grassroots' level is not always conducted by choice; the choice may have been made for the adult students by the need to survive in a new country. As discussed in Chapter 2, students attending ESOL classes in England are distinct from the 'elite multilinguals' (Ortega, 2019) who can choose which language to learn and the L2 at no time threatens the importance of their L1. Social justice, therefore, is a topic which cannot be ignored in the ESOL context and will be included at each level of my analysis.

Conscious of this social justice focus and the desire for a transdisciplinary approach, I included ESOL students in the checking of my analysis for this part of the study to minimise the risk that the teachers get to specify or have the last word on what is important, so by sounding out the views of the students, the aim was to make the research more democratic and prioritise their voice (and experience) - a re-balancing of the power structure. Across each of the three levels, many themes and sub-themes emerged through my analysis. I discarded some themes, such as when teachers spoke of students at lower levels or gave a general description of a course but was eager to check my understanding of the themes overall. Therefore, I chose to share a list of the main themes with the five students who are the focus of Chapter 7, as a means of checking their relevance and my understanding. Subsequently, the sub-theme of 'health' was removed from the micro level and integrated into the 'slow progression' theme at the meso level, only focusing on trauma and mental health, rather than physical health. Generally, the students agreed with the factors the teachers had identified, either regarding their own learning or the experiences of classmates. The only theme that they discarded that I have retained was that of 'resourcefulness'. The students struggled to recognise their own resourcefulness or resilience, even when I provided examples from earlier in the study, but I chose to keep

the theme as it seems to illustrate the difference between the expectations of teachers from the Global North and students from the Global South.

In addition to the thematic analysis, I also analysed the teacher interview data using two Self-Determination Theory sub-theories, namely basic psychological needs and organismic integration, wherever they matched the explanations provided by the teachers. Identity, in relation to social and economic status, also appeared in the responses and so has been analysed in this chapter. The appropriateness of motivational theories in the adult ESOL context will be discussed further in the Chapter 8 but have been included in this chapter either through direct quotes from the participants or through my analysis.

6.2.1 *Impact of the Pandemic*

Although the main aim of the thesis was to capture a picture of why students enrol on ESOL courses and how their motivation might change throughout a course, I had not been prepared for the impact of the pandemic. The teachers were interviewed during a country-wide lockdown, with some having returned to online course delivery just a few days before I spoke to them. This was a time of constant change and uncertainty, both for the students and the teachers. Certainly, it was not typical of the academic years I had experienced in my teaching career and this meant that the data I collected is characteristic of a specific situation at a particular point in time. The pandemic and its impact on the students and their ESOL courses will therefore be utilised as a main theme in this chapter. At each level of analysis, I will share examples of how decisions were made for and by the students during this time. Additionally, there will also be reference to ongoing factors at each level that are not specific to the pandemic but were continuing to have an influence on students' motivation.

6.3   Factors Affecting Motivation – Teachers' Perspectives

Each of the interviews I conducted was semi-structured and in order to ensure they ran as smoothly as possible, I drew up a series of prompts. These were used as a broad guide to ensure I covered the same topics with each participant. I asked for explanations or examples where necessary and

repeated questions to ensure the teachers were still on topic. An example of this would be when teachers started talking about all their classes and I asked the question again, emphasising that I was only interested in their E3/L1 students. During and immediately after each interview, I made handwritten detailed notes and reflected on the responses I had collected. This helped me to prepare for each subsequent interview and finally to identify the point of saturation when I was no longer collecting different viewpoints.

When analysing the data, it became clear that many of the factors that motivate students in this context can also act as demotivators, such as the Skills for Life exams. For an overview of the findings, Table 6.1 displays the factors that can affect student motivation, as identified by the teacher participants. Numbers in brackets denote the number of teachers who mentioned each factor.

Table 6.1 *Factors affecting motivation*

Factors	Demotivators -	Motivators +
Macro		
6.5.1Government Funding (+/-)	Course fees (2), Exam system (9)	Exams (11), course availability (8)
6.5.2 Access to employment and HE (-)	Finding employment (8), progression routes (6)	
6.5.3 Covid-19 (+/-)	Exam cancellation (7), classroom safety (4)	Flexible learning (7), classroom safety (5)
6.6 Meso		
6.6.1 Course Design (+/-)	Access to online classes (10), mixed level classes (4), slow progression (7)	Bridging courses at E3/L1 (4)
6.6.2 Teacher (+/-)	Teacher's attitude towards online learning (2)	Student focused teaching (17), Teacher's attitude towards online learning (10)
6.6.3 Social identity – present and imagined (+/-)	Family commitments (9)	Initial motivation - Future work and study goals (17), resourcefulness (8), helping their children (7)
6.7 Micro		
6.7.1 Linguistic resources (+/-)	Lack of study skills (6), low IT knowledge (7)	Prior language learning (3), past education (3)
6.7.2 Regular interactions with others (+/-)	Not studying away from class (2)	Peer support and friendships (11), speaking activities in class (4)

As can be seen from Table 6.1, apart from 'Access to employment and HE', all other factors could yield both positive and negative outcomes. In the next stage of the chapter, I will explain each factor in more detail, using excepts from the teacher interviews. Starting at the macro level, I will then move on to the meso level, finishing with the micro level, highlighting any connections that may occur across the levels.

6.4   Macro Level

At the macro level, I will present responses that refer to decision making at the level of government and examination boards. These are decisions that directly affect the students, which the teachers have little power to influence and the students even less so. The three main themes that emerged from the teacher interviews at this level were government funding, access to employment and higher education, and Covid-19 lockdowns (Table 6.1).

6.4.1 Government Funding

6.4.1.1 Course Fees

Adult ESOL is partly funded through the Adult Skills Budget along with English and Maths Functional Skills. Courses are fully funded for adults who are unemployed and in receipt of Universal Credit or who are claiming asylum and have been in the UK for at least six months. When I conducted the interviews, adults from the European Union were eligible for funding and if they were employed, were required to pay a percentage of the fees; this was the same for anyone with British citizenship or the spouse of a British national. For anyone else, i.e. if someone had a visa which stated 'No recourse to public funds' they were required to pay full fees which usually worked out at £10 per hour plus payment for exam registration and certificates.

Dita, a teacher at a further education college, explained how these regulations can have an impact on student retention:

> The only dropouts I had were the students who couldn't
> pay. So they applied for the LSF [Learning Support
> Fund], they didn't get it and they couldn't pay so they
> had to drop out. So what I've been doing also, I found
> the solution for it. I have been sending them to
> Functional Skills, because they are high level so they
> will cope well. And Functional Skills is free. (**Dita
> interview**)

Functional Skills is only free if one is allowed to access public funds, which often excludes learners with ESOL needs, such as new arrivals. It is also not

designed for non-native speakers of English and so students may leave or fail that course because it is not suitable. What this quote from Dita illustrates though is the teacher's awareness of the issues her students face trying to access a course. It is important to note that withdrawal in this context does not automatically mean that a student has become demotivated. However, demotivation could occur if they continue to face barriers to learning or are dissatisfied by the course they are able to access.

6.4.1.2 Course Availability

For adults who are eligible for ESOL courses, the next step is to find a programme which allows them to enrol. The teachers I spoke to were spread around England, all in urban areas. Availability and choice of classes was viewed as a motivating factor by all of the participants, with potential students being provided the opportunity to make their own decisions when choosing a course. Enrolment usually occurs in August and September each year, though those teaching in community settings, such as Carrie, had more flexibility with enrolments:

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Interviewer    I just wonder with your enrolment, do
               you have students starting all the time
               or is there just a set enrolment for the
               year or terms?
Carrie         Set enrolment. We tend to do it, end of
               September October is enrolment time. But
               obviously, if someone does come in
               later, end of October or early November,
               and we've got space we wouldn't say no,
               not necessarily.
```

Those in colleges had stricter guidelines, especially when teaching 'exam classes' because of the timetable for exam registration provided by exam boards. In addition, one teacher working for a charity spoke of `'a waiting list of over 100 people'` **Anne**. Students at that provision had waited for a place and were told if they did not attend, their place would be filled by someone on the list. However, despite this, student numbers were low in her classes, echoing the experience of **Frances** who was working in a city with two FE colleges. The college where Frances worked had very small classes, fewer than 10 students per class, but the neighbouring college had full

classes and a waiting list. Awareness of provision seemed to be an issue in these areas of England, with students perhaps unaware that there was more than one college or another provider in their locality, which reduced their ability to make informed decisions. All 17 of the teachers described a range of ESOL provision in their towns and cities but how the students themselves could discover this was unclear.

6.5.1.3 Skills for Life Exams

ESOL exams were viewed by the participants as an additional factor that could both motivate and demotivate their students, with none of the teachers identifying the exams as a motivation for students to enrol on the course (Figure 6.1). Two of the teachers, Anselm and Eliot, described the concerns they had with the design and reliability of the exams as they did not think they sufficiently challenged the students or aided their learning:

Interviewer	Erm, so, taking you back to the the exams a little bit, are these students working towards exams this term?
Eliot	Yes, they're working towards the reading, Entry Three reading. And I would anticipate that the majority will pass because they pass every year.
Interviewer	[laughs] Okay
Eliot	I don't think, I don't think the exam is actually particularly challenging and I don't think it's particularly worthwhile. It's a means of getting funding. I think, okay, I just, I don't know, if if we could do First Certificate, or PET and that could be funded, then people would actually improve their English. But this is a nonsense
Interviewer	Do you think that the students see that as well?
Eliot	No, I think they think it's a bit of, I just don't know. Unless, I suppose those who are those who come with a, with a better degree of formal education in their own country might look at it and think, well, this doesn't seem particularly demanding or challenging. But it, just fits, what, I don't know

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> purpose does it serve? To me, it's
> ridiculous when you look at it, and a
> lot of the learners finish the exam in
> about a third of the amount of the
> allotted time and a lot of them, if that
> if they're quite bright, will whizz
> through it.

Eliot had spent almost 20 years teaching EFL and was struggling with the move across to ESOL because of the Skills for Life exams. He explained how he wanted to challenge his students and often taught them at a level above the exams for this reason, aware of their need to feel competent in English. All his students achieved their qualifications but he could not see their value. He was concerned that without having a reliable exam which properly assessed the students' English, they could become demotivated as there was not a robust method of measuring their progress. In contrast, Frances, a teacher at a different college, also reflected on this during her interview but shared that her students were able to see some positives from the exams:

Interviewer	And how much do you think the students value the exams?
Frances	Erm, I think, I think they, I think they, I think they do, I think they value them quite highly, actually but only on a personal level. I don't think that they have, you know that they realise that they don't particularly have much use in the real world.
Interviewer	Mmm
Frances	But personally, I think they really they find it really, really motivating and they really want to do the exams and they want to get the certificate. They love, love getting the certificates.

After the lowering of the stakes of these exams in 2015, as Frances explained here, the certificates are not accepted by anyone outside of ESOL. The students at her college enjoy passing the tests and receiving certificates but know that to get a job, go to university or even stay in the country, they will have to enrol on other courses and take further exams. What can be an

initial boost to their self-esteem, could ultimately demotivate them from attending ESOL classes when they are required to produce other certificates 'in the real world.'

ESOL course funding is, in the main, reliant on high pass rates for their exams. Local authority funding, for example, expects benchmarks in the 90th percentile to decide whether to continue providing funding or to close courses. Although some teachers told me about students only being expected to pass one exam per year or being allowed to complete an ILP instead, this was not acceptable for every student in every class. This was explained by Lila in her interview when talking about a female student who left the course because she did not want to take any exams:

Interviewer	Do they get any choice? If someone says I really don't want to do any exams, can they still attend?
Lila	It's a good question. I have, well, the lady that ended up leaving didn't, no, I think ultimately, you can't attend you have to do something within the year or try to, you know, try to do something. If you're not capable then that's something different, we can do ILPs for them. But if they really don't want to do anything, I think you know, it's a case of I'm sorry, this isn't the course for you. You need to do some sort of community, like speaking courses, something like that … but if they want to do one of our courses they need to be doing an exam ultimately.

The student that Lila was describing here had a good enough level of English to pass the exams (according to Lila's assessments) but was attending the class to meet new people and socialise. Passing an exam was not part of her motivation to learn and so she withdrew from the course. Her autonomy to choose her own goals was undermined by the exam system as this was not how she wanted to improve her competence in the language. Lila did not

withdraw the student, she made the decision to leave but with her autonomy and competence undermined, her feeling of relatedness also diminished as she no longer felt welcome in the class.

6.4.2 *Access to Employment and Higher Education*

The students in the pilot project (Chapter 4) had expressed difficulties in both finding employment in the local area and the slow progression from ESOL to HE. Progression routes were also discussed by the teachers and as Kieron explains here, just to be able to enrol on a course that a future employer or university will accept can take a long time:

Interviewer	Okay. Okay. And are they, are they quite aware of kind of the steps they need to take to get to higher education, or what to do after ESOL?
Kieron	I'd say that varies from student to student.
Interviewer	Mmm
Kieron	And, like, a lot of them, when we get to Level One, like a lot of them have already sort of like gone up through several levels previously.
Interviewer	Yeah.
Kieron	And for some of them is just sort of like collecting the badges now, where as far as sort of, like, they're still sort of, like, focused about where they're, where they're aiming towards. But you said like that, like, how clear are they with the steps? I think sometimes they get overwhelmed. If you say, okay, you're in Level One now,
Interviewer	Yeah.
Kieron	Next year, you might look to study at, in our college as well...we've, we've got a rule of thumb, that if you finish ESOL Level One, when you move across to Functional Skills, you won't be ready to study at Level One Functional Skills, but you go down to Entry Three Functional Skills. So your progression route might be Level One ESOL, Entry Three Functional Skills, Level One Functional Skills, then GCSE, then, you know, then whatever. So we might be looking at four years

Interviewer	Yeah
Kieron	before they've even. Yeah? So that's quite a bitter pill to swallow. If you if you break it down like that and that can be quite, erm, demotivating
Interviewer	Yeah, yeah. Definitely. Are you aware of students looking for faster routes?
Kieron	Oh, yeah, absolutely. Everybody's after the quickest route

The 'four years' he is referring to here only includes one year of ESOL, the remaining three would be taught by non-language specialists on courses designed for native speakers. Not only does the length of time have the possibility for demotivation but also, as previously discussed in 6.5.1.1, the reality of no longer attending a language course can have a negative effect on competence and autonomy. Eliot, in his interview, expressed the frustration of both himself and his students at this situation:

Eliot	The other thing is, I don't know you see, like, for, this is something I've been talking to [manager] about, how much value do these ESOL qualifications actually have in the real world? If you are forcing people to pay for them, they need to be recognised by employers.
Interviewer	Yes.
Eliot	My point of view, what I've been trying to say to [manager] is from Entry Three upwards, where we have people from a professional background in their own country, we should be providing IELTS style courses, alongside, so that they have a fast progression pathway onto higher education or so that they can practice their own profession. Because how many people do we meet who are Uber drivers who have PhDs in their own country, but can't earn...
Interviewer	Yeah,
Eliot	They can't necessarily, or they're accountants, they're doctors or whatever, but can't practice. This is, for me, it's the whole ESOL, the way ESOL is organised is misconceived. And it doesn't address the needs of those

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learners. It's it's it's caught in the
past. It's all about assimilation, which
is fine and that is a very valuable
thing. We need to get people into higher
education so that that so that they're
able to move on to to improve the
quality of their standard of living.
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In this extract, Eliot was expressing his students' desires to access employment that matched their training and education, something they were struggling to achieve whilst studying in a system that did not provide adequate qualifications. His suggestion to provide IELTS preparation courses echoed the suggestions of the students in the pilot project who had asked me for advice on accessing higher education, but these courses would require funding for what the local authority would deem to be non-accredited courses, as the exams would be taken by external providers such as the British Council.

6.4.3 **The Covid-19 Pandemic**

The following section will outline how the macro level decisions made during the pandemic impacted the language learning motivation of adult ESOL students, as observed by the teachers in this study. The cancellation of exams will be addressed first, followed by student safety and course flexibility.

6.4.3.1 Exam Cancellation

The ESOL Skills for Life exams are offered by five different exam boards – Trinity College London, City and Guilds, EdExcel, Pearson and Ascentis. Each ESOL provider can choose which exam board to use with their students and the exam papers, question styles, topics and marking vary across the boards. When England went into lockdown in March 2020, the government announced, during the summer term, that all examinations in schools and colleges for students in compulsory education would be cancelled. In adult ESOL, however, the examination boards were able to make their own decisions, as Lila and Monica, who used two different exam boards, explained:

Extract from Lila's interview:

Interviewer	So, City and Guilds were accepting of evidence from teachers in order to give certificates for reading and writing?
Lila	Yeah, they didn't do, so City and Guilds last year, initially, they said you could do speaking and listening online. Then after a month or so they sent out a notification saying no, this doesn't work, because the quality of the recordings wasn't good enough. Then they said no reading and writing. And then they revised that and said, if you think someone's strong enough, or would have passed, if you can produce the evidence, you know, send it into us. And so we did that with the really strong candidates.
Interviewer	Yeah. How did the students respond to that?
Lila	Well, I didn't tell them.

Extract from Monica's interview

Interviewer	I was wondering, what will you do if you can't do exams in February? Will you still move students up?
Monica	I think, um, what happened in the summer was a couple of tutors who were teaching Level Two did internal exams. So they were allowed to assess the learners internally and do exams, and obviously send all of the marking and the criteria to Trinity to be moderated. And they were allowed to then be classed as passing Level Two, so I don't know if that's something that we might be able to do is do our own in-house exams, and have them, send them off to be moderated. And there were, we could, there were some occasions in the summer, where some of the learners who were very capable, where we could move them up to the next level, but we had to provide evidence of their, their reading or their writing or their speaking. So we

	did. So for example, I had a couple of learners I wanted to move up to Level Two because I've taught them for over a year at Level One, speaking. So I did a Zoom, like a Zoom exam with them. And then I recorded it and completed our criteria assessment sheet, and then forwarded it on to my manager so that they could move up. So we could do that. It just does mean a lot more work for the tutors, though.
Interviewer	Yes, yes.
Monica	Which we don't get paid for. [laughs]
Interviewer	Yeah. So where do you find the time for all of that?
Monica	Yeah, exactly. [laughs] That would be the, that would be the problem is finding the time. And I don't I don't know what the other option is, if there is another option, I don't know. Everything's so up in the air, isn't it?
Interviewer	Yeah, it's so hard to plan at the moment. I'm just thinking, like from from the students' point of view, if this is now, for example, if this is now their second year of Entry Three and they've pretty much covered everything of that level and are capable and then they find out oh, actually, we still can't do exams, we've got to stay in Entry Three
Monica	Yeah.
Interviewer	I wonder how they will react?
Monica	Yes, I think some of them will probably be okay, while I think there will be some that will be 'I've had enough now, I really need to move up.' And I think then we would have to consider, shall we move them up without actually having passed an exam because they won't have a certificate then to prove that they've achieved that level, that's the problem if they need that certificate for, I don't know, a visa or further education, and it's a problem if they can't do the exam.

These two interview extracts illustrate the differences in decisions and messages the teachers were receiving. For the students, who have no power to choose their exam board, they were excluded from the decision making, excluded from taking the exam and unable to move to the next level of ESOL because they did not have a certificate at their current level. Any autonomy they might have had prior to the pandemic, was lost. For the few who were chosen by their teacher to be awarded a certificate without the exam, they were allowed to progress to the next level, but not all teachers felt able to provide satisfactory evidence. Lila acknowledged that she struggled to get certificates for certain students `I didn't have enough to justify that she was good enough to pass. You know, I didn't have enough evidence.' **Lila.** There was also the issue of the teacher having enough time to fulfil the exam board requirements, as Monica discussed above. Teachers were expected to conduct exams in their own time, unpaid, but if they refused then it would have resulted in capable students not taking exams and receiving certificates.

In addition to this was the added complication of students who had completed a level or were new to ESOL, enrolled in Entry 3 or Level 1, and the teachers were expected to prepare them for exams at a new level. Contact time was reduced for online classes and for those in classrooms who had separated classes into smaller bubbles, they were only having contact with their teacher every two weeks. This situation was described by Eliot, who felt he did not know his students well because of this. However, another teacher, Dita, had been fortunate enough to be timetabled in a large classroom for her evening class, so 18 students were able to socially distance in the classroom and attend every week, removing the need for blended learning. For those in classrooms, the room allocation by managers dictated how much contact time students were receiving, something neither the teachers nor the students had any control over. For those teaching online, teaching time was reduced and a great deal of time was still being taken up with technical support. Vanessa described the situation where she was teaching:

Interviewer	And the students you are teaching online are they, are they preparing for exams?
Vanessa	That's a very good question, Kathryn. [laughs]
Interviewer	[laughs]
Vanessa	Exams have been mooted, but no, not even mooted. We, no, we were having a meeting last week about possibly doing speaking and listening in January.
Interviewer	OK
Vanessa	Because they're City and Guilds and teachers do them.
Interviewer	Yeah.
Vanessa	And that, you know, they're hard work in a classroom.
Interviewer	Yeah
Vanessa	And, so....So some of us raised the point that a lot of students just haven't had the practice because they're all online. So there are lots of people who've moved up a level just now or who are new. They're not getting the practice and there's no way they'd be, they'd be able to do a speaking exam in January. So how, well we use City and Guilds there's an another issue...but we use City and Guilds and what City and Guilds are doing, I'm not sure, in terms of yeah, how would we do a writing exam…

As expressed in this extract, Vanessa did not feel that she could properly prepare her new students for assessments in their online class. In December 2020 when I interviewed her, she was still waiting for instructions from the exam board as to how the exams themselves would be adapted for online classes. Students' needs for competence and autonomy were not being supported in this situation, despite the best efforts of the teacher, as the decision-making power was firmly with the exam board and the government.

6.4.3.2   Classroom Safety and Flexible Learning

Another impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was the change in where lessons were being taught. The teachers I interviewed were all delivering classes in either socially distanced classrooms, online or both (a blended approach). The decisions to keep the classrooms open were being made by

the government and the building owners, which is why there was not a uniform approach.

For some students, the journey to a face-to-face class was as worrying as sitting in a classroom, so teachers, like Carrie, made the decision to teach online despite the community centre being open `...they [students] felt that it was not safe being on public transport, some of them took two buses, and they just weren't happy' **Carrie** This flexibility supported the students' autonomy and showed a respect for their concerns. Not all teachers were allowed this flexibility though, and teachers such as Lila were moved online by management during the second lockdown. Lila had been moved to a face to face class after her manager changed the timetable but this was only temporary, as she explains here:

> I had my first online, not online, face to face class on Friday, and halfway through the class, we got an email, which I didn't see but then I got a phone call from my manager to say, actually we're going back online again. [laughs] I thought arghh! I don't want to be back at my dining room table! **Lila interview**

Lila went on to explain how she had to telephone all the students to tell them about the change and check they were able to access Zoom. This was all done in her own time but because she was unable to successfully contact all of her low level learners, they misunderstood the messages she left and tried to access her Level 1 class online instead.

Lila	I could see I was getting email pings saying this person has joined your ESOL class and I'm like, no! [laughs] Go away!
Interviewer	Was it the same level?
Lila	No. Pre-entry and Entry One in the morning and Level One in the afternoon [laughs]
Interviewer	So the Pre-entries were trying to get to the Level One class?
Lila	Yeah, they just kept trying because I'd put the link on Google Classroom saying Friday 9.30 for the next lesson

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Interviewer        Yeah
Lila               And I could just, because I'd left
                   Outlook open, stupidly, I kept getting
                   these pings coming up.
Interviewer        Oh no. Ping ping ping all through your
                   lesson?
Lila               Yeah and I was thinking I can't, I've
                   got to ignore it because I'm trying to
                   talk about homophones [laughs]
Interviewer        [laughs] Did your Level Ones notice?
Lila               No, they know I'm mad [laughs]
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The move to teaching online did not demotivate the students here, they were still motivated to attend and learn in whatever mode of delivery was available to them. How the teacher also coped with this, which came across in the humour Lila used to describe the situation, illustrated the crossover at this point of the macro and meso levels. Despite losing their classroom, both groups of learners were motivated to continue learning English. The attitude of the teacher emerged as an additional factor in this situation, which I will return to later in the findings.

6.5   Meso Level

At the meso level, decisions made by ESOL providers and teachers start to influence student motivation. Alongside this, the students' social identity, both real and imagined, also emerged as a factor, which will be presented in this section.

6.5.1 *Course Design*

In this section, factors that were specific to ESOL learning during the pandemic will be presented along with factors that also influence learner motivation in 'normal' times.

6.5.1.1   Access to Online Classes

The move to online learning due to the pandemic had an effect on the students' ability to access the classes, a factor that was mentioned by 10 of the teachers in their interviews. The students' economic and social status resulted in many of them not having access to laptops or broadband at

home, making it difficult for them to have any control over their learning, as Kieron explained:

Interviewer	Yeah. Erm, do you think, I wonder what's kind of... Maybe, maybe it's the teacher, who they had before that's put them off the online learning? Do you think there are other factors that are putting them off?
Kieron	I think there's lots of factors. I don't think our infrastructure is strong enough. So like, that could be that they're, they don't have like broadband. A lot of them are still using data. They don't have laptops, a lot of them, I think 90% of them are still using phones.
Interviewer	Oh
Kieron	Yeah. What I find as a teacher is that you've got this middle class, like ideal, like, you know, we're both sat in quiet areas now.
Interviewer	Yeah. Yeah.
Kieron	Whereas they're sat in busy households, crying children, children playing. Erm, sorry I've got a student ringing, oh he's gone. That's a student who should be in another class, he's, he wasn't there this morning. I've just sent him a message. But he's, he's gone now. That so it could be yeah. So like I said, you know, this this sort of like, middle class ideal. Oh, you'll have a quiet space to
Interviewer	Yeah
Kieron	to learn and you will have a, you know, like, in some of my classes, maybe there's one phone per family.
Interviewer	Mmm
Kieron	So for one person to take that phone for an hour and a half is a big ask. It could be that there's one screen per family if it's a laptop, so like if we're on it here now, that means that the kids aren't watching telly or the yeah, that was a big thing during lockdown. Yeah. And it could be as well that there's just like, there's just not that space. So I've got students that

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                         have their lesson on the stairs.
                         Students have their lessons in their
                         car, you know sort of sit outside
      Interviewer        Oh, gosh. It sounds like they really
                         tried to, to still keep engaged.
      Kieron             Yeah, yeah
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The students mentioned in the above extract were from the first lockdown in March 2020. After that experience, Kieron had decided to move his classes back into the classroom from September 2020 as he was working in a college which allowed him that option. The scenario of students struggling to access online classes was described by nine other teachers in almost exactly the same way. Indeed, the economic status of the students meant that during enforced online teaching, they were facing excessive challenges, were excluded through their lack of data and devices and their autonomy was being undermined as they had no other study options.

6.5.1.2   Mixed Level Classes

Anselm, Vanessa, Amber and Sarah all taught mixed level classes where the E3 and L1 students were studying together, sometimes with E2 students. As well as presenting a logistical challenge for the teacher, the negative effect on the students' motivation was also described, as the classes were often not challenging enough:

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      Interviewer        Erm, can you think of anything at Entry
                         Three Level One, that demotivates
                         students or any reasons why students get
                         disengaged at those levels?
      Sarah              Erm, definitely being in a group with
                         low level learners. So learners, they
                         like to be pushed. And at this level,
                         they do quite like to be stretched and
                         pushed. And if they're in a group, with
                         people who are struggling, they get
                         really frustrated. And because
                         obviously, my job, part of my job is
                         differentiation but the way it's been
                         interpreted in our organisation is a
                         little bit different to how it's in
                         schools and things. So in a school if
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	you've got teenagers, for example, working at GCSE English, they're all doing GCSE English, at the same level, or it's in sets, but that group is working towards the same thing. And you differentiate that every person in every ability can get that same goal. How it's been interpreted here is that you have Entry One, Entry Two, and Entry Three in the same group. And that's kind of how it was...So, in my experience, with the higher levels and working in schools and venues where we've got enough space to have different groups of different levels, it's not a huge problem, you have two in one level, err two levels in one group, excuse me. In the smaller venues where there's only one class for that area, it used to be that anyone from pre-entry where you can't read or write, to Level One was allowed to come to that one group of 14. Erm, you might get a volunteer or a teaching assistant, if you were lucky but not often. Funding was, you know, tight. They've changed it recently, so that you wouldn't have the extremes in one class. So a Level One shouldn't be with a Pre-Entry.
Interviewer	Mmm
Sarah	But, even if you've got a Level One, with an Entry Two, you're going to have to spend some of your lesson teaching that Entry Two and the Level One is going to get less provision in that class naturally, because... or they're going to have to sit on their own and kind of teach themselves. And that is the biggest demotivator, I think, is when they're there, and they're ready to learn, and they're raring to go. But half the lesson either isn't relevant to them, because it's about the different levels, or you've got to kind of bring up the rear, if that makes sense

Mixed level classes are more common in adult education than colleges, partly due to the students wanting to study in their local community and being

less able, or inclined, to travel long distances for their classes. Colleges, due to their size, can offer multiple classes at the same time at the same venue and so those students are more likely to be offered a single level class. This situation has echoes of the classroom lottery described at the macro level, where teacher contact time is determined by the room or building a student has been allocated. The student has very little choice here. In addition, the students' awareness of the availability of single level is again, not clear.

6.5.1.3 Courses that Bridge Entry Three and Level One

Nida, Kieron, Marie and Anne all taught courses where students were able to attend for a year without taking any exams in preparation for either ESOL Level One or Functional Skills English after completing ESOL Entry Level Three, which was the same scenario as the college in the pilot study. The three female teachers all described these courses as alternatives for students who were unable to enrol at Level One because their initial assessment showed they would not be able to complete the level in the allotted time. These courses enabled students to continue learning English in a less stressful and exam focussed environment, as explained in this excerpt from Nida's interview:

Nida	It's more like EFL because it's much more flexible, because they don't have to follow the curriculum as such. It's quite flexible, but we always we have different assessment days, we even have a summative one. We have formative assessment every two weeks, we have revision. We have different assessments. It's more like EFL.
Interviewer	Yeah, do you think, um, do you think the students who are going on that course are actually wanting the ESOL certificates or are some of them there just to learn the language rather than to get a certificate?
Nida	More to learn, learn the language and they really enjoy it. When it's exam based, when it is qualification based, it always focuses on that. It's all

> practice exam and this exam or that exam
> OK, regardless of what you do, you still
> have to have that focus.

This extract seems to contradict the results of the pilot study, where students in this situation were, in the main, unhappy about not having the opportunity to enrol in an 'exam class'. Students had no decision-making power here, and their autonomy was being undermined by the teachers' decisions. Placement decisions were often made at the start of the academic year based on past performance or initial assessments, and as seen in the pilot study, it was extremely difficult to reverse these decisions later in the course. As Marie described, some students wanted to regain some autonomy but this was not allowed:

Interviewer	Yeah. And and do you ever get students in the speaking and listening classes, asking to do the reading and writing? Are they quite happy to stay where they are for the year?
Marie	Some people are pushy, and they want to move up before they're ready. You know, they're kind of saying, you know, they want to do it, even though you know that they're not going to have a chance of passing. So, I think that there are those situations. But it's pointless doing that, really, because it's wasting, well it's not wasting their time, but it's, it's not really going to help that much if they move up too quickly when they're not ready.
Interviewer	No, no, if they don't have the language.
Marie	I haven't had anybody so far this year saying, When can I do the all modes exam? or anything. I'm not sure how much the students really understand of that system as well. Some of them may not totally, I mean it's quite difficult for me to understand. I didn't understand at first when it came. I was like, what this speaking and listening? And the other one's reading and writing? Wait, what?
Interviewer	[laughs] yeah

As explained in this interview extract, students need to prove that they can pass an exam before the teacher will allow them to be registered with the exam board. Teachers, particularly in college settings, are not allowed to place a student in an exam class if they know they will fail because of the effect this will have on the funding. Jeopardising the whole course to allow one student to try and potentially fail an exam is not something that is encouraged. However, the effect this potentially has on the students' feelings of competence and autonomy was not acknowledged by the teachers I interviewed, as illustrated here when students are described as 'pushy'.

The charity where Anne worked, however, used the consolidation class in a slightly different way. They seemed to be using this option for students who were unable to take exams because of psychological conditions:

> So maybe if we, I mean, we have students, who really struggle with the whole concept of an exam, maybe they have post-traumatic stress or something from when they were in their school, erm, there are some students who just struggle with the whole idea of someone's testing me, and kind of the pressure of it. So we, if we know that they're gonna freak out when we're doing an exam, then there's provision so that we don't put them through that stress. **Anne**

In this instance, the ESOL provider was responding to the students' needs rather than the requirements of a funding agency. They supported their need for autonomy by allowing the student to make their own decision about exams, alleviating any stress. However, as previously mentioned, Anne had very low student numbers, unlike Nida and Marie who had classes of 18 or more, and so a more personalised approach was possible.

Furthermore, Kieron described yet another situation, this time one that was born out of private language schools in the local area taking advantage of the Skills for Life exams being internally marked

Kieron	What we see in [city] is that there's private providers who take a more profit driven view of education. And so their standards, what we see is it's much more of a factory, so they're churning through the levels to get the maximum funding in the shortest amount of time. So a new arrival in [city] might be might, they might come to us and be an Entry One student for a year. Or they might go to an alternative provider where they could churn through Entry One, Entry Two, possibly Entry Three funding, like, yeah, then then at the end of that, they'll then the private provider will then dump them on to us having churned through all possible funding, not just for this year, but for probably the next year as well, if we maintain our, our standards,
Interviewer	And are these students coming with certificates then?
Kieron	Yeah, absolutely, yeah.
Interviewer	From recognised awarding bodies?
Kieron	Yeah.
Interviewer	[sighs] What do you do then, as a teacher?
Kieron	I mean, we try to support these students as much as we can. But it's difficult because I understand from the college's point of view, we can't claim for the same, the same level twice.
Interviewer	No
Kieron	What we what we're running, though, is we're running like consolidation programmes, which we're able to secure some funding towards, not as not as much as we would get for a full qualification, we could get some funding towards that. And so we can give the students something

In Kieron's context, students are enrolling at the college with their ESOL certificates but often assessed as the level below. The college had acquired some funding to provide bridging or consolidation courses for these students to give them an extra year to get up to the level of the certificates they have already achieved. However, if a student is still only Entry 2 at the end of the

consolidation programme and has Entry 3 certificates from the private provider, they will not be able to enrol in Level 1 as the college will expect exam passes at the level. The potential for demotivation in such a context is extremely high, which is frustrating for both the college teachers and the students who have been taken advantage of by the private providers.

6.5.1.4 Impact of Trauma on Progression

Trauma, as a factor impacting motivation, was mentioned by four of the teachers, particularly in relation to speed of progression. Amber shared the story of one student who refused to turn her camera on during online classes. This was not a new phenomenon as other teachers had described students turning off cameras for a range of reasons such as looking after children whilst in class or not having enough mobile data. This student, however, was suffering from extremely low self-esteem and did not want to look at herself on screen. Amber further described the impact of trauma for this student and the barriers she was attempting to overcome:

Interviewer	…it's brilliant that she's turning the camera on in the breakout rooms then. That's huge.
Amber	Yeah. Yeah. I mean, she said that, erm, so I spent a lot of time on the phone with her over the summer, just trying to encourage her to continue. And she said so many times "I nearly left".
Interviewer	Oh
Amber	So she the fact that she's still attending, she's still on the course and she's come back.
Interviewer	Yeah,
Amber	It's a massive achievement for her.
Interviewer	Oh, definitely. Definitely. And what what does she want to do with the higher level of English? Does she have a plan for what she wants to do after ESOL?
Amber	She learns quite slowly and the difficulty that she is facing is that she when she arrived in the UK five years ago she, when she started in Entry One, she had two friends. And they've now progressed, and one of them's now

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                           doing a business degree at university,
                           and another one is doing level two. And
                           she sees them in the street and they
                           say, Oh, are you still at Entry Two or
                           Entry Three? And she thinks Oh, why
                           can't I move forward? But she's got some
                           deep rooted traumas that have never
                           really been healed.
         Interviewer       Okay. Okay.
         Amber             And then she's had personal issues with
                           her landlord wanting the flat back. And
                           then an issue, there was a safeguarding
                           concern, and there were a few other
                           little bits and pieces. So you can't
                           learn like that, can you?
         Interviewer       No,no, no, not when there are too many
                           other things going on. Your brain just
                           can't take it. Well, it's, it's great
                           that she's, she's still there and she's
                           coming.
         Amber             Mmm
         Interviewer       Yeah. That's testament to you as well.
         Amber             Mmm, thank you [laughs]
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From this extract, it is clear that the student's self-comparison with peers was affecting her confidence in her own linguistic competence. These imposed goals of passing exams, perhaps set by the student herself, were also affecting her autonomy as she was not in control of her learning. Marie also described a similar situation when talking about the older Sudanese men she was teaching

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    I think, because they're older and because perhaps have
    had some traumatic experiences, it's difficult for them
    to retain learning, and they haven't had an education
    perhaps that's been very good anyway to start with. So I
    think they've got more, they've got more obstacles Marie
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The combination of disrupted education (see 6.6.1 later in this chapter) and the trauma connected to their experience as forced migrants, had the potential to demotivate this group of students when they were being tested alongside students who had had very different experiences.

6.5.2 *The Teacher*

When asking the teachers about their students' motivation, they often reflected on how they discovered and attempted to meet their students' needs, which will be presented in this section.

6.5.2.1   Student Focused Teaching

Despite working under considerable constraints imposed by the funding system, examinations and emergency online teaching, all of the teachers described how they designed their lessons to best suit the needs of their learners. As Carrie explained

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…each batch of students is like, you know, it's like a
whole new lump of clay you get to play with. And then
you can then kind of figure out what your students need,
what the, what does that class need, and then you can
sort of guide them in that particular direction, rather
than trying to put your claim to a mould and feel right,
just one mould every time.. Carrie
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Carrie had found more freedom teaching online and was designing the curriculum to suit individual classes, something she had not been allowed to do in the classroom. Nevertheless, she had always utilised the first few weeks of every course to get to know her students, discovering their long and short term goals. This was something Marie and Monica also mentioned, alongside collecting regular student feedback on their lessons, to ensure they were meeting the students' needs. Monica went on to explain how the opportunity to provide feedback helped to strengthen the student teacher relationship after the students had a negative experience with a learning support assistant (LSA):

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Interviewer     Yeah. Yeah. It's quite difficult, quite
                a difficult question to answer but how
                much influence do you think the teacher
                has on the motivation of their class to
                learn and to keep attending?
Monica          I think huge. I think that's a big a big
                factor. Actually, I think if a learner
                doesn't get on with a tutor, or they
                don't understand how they work or they
                work, they're too fast, they won't come.
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	Erm, and I think it has a big, big difference. Yeah, how they feel about the tutor, definitely. And, you know, I've seen it with some students before where maybe you've had a difficult lesson, or it hasn't been very hasn't gone very well and then they won't come the next week. And I mean, I take it personally anyway, I'm always I've always been like that. [laughs] And I think it, yeah, it's a big part, how they feel in class with the tutor, definitely.
Interviewer	Do they get the opportunity to give feedback? And or do they kind of vote with their feet?
Monica	Erm, no, every year we have, or at the end of every course we have a learner survey. So they have the opportunity to there's lots and lots of different points and they have the opportunity to tick a smiley face, erm, a sad face, a, erm, straight face.
Interviewer	Yeah, something in the middle Yeah. I mean, just thinking back to what you said about the LSA when they came to you.
Monica	Basically, like, what do you feel about your your teacher? What do you feel about your learning? What do you feel about the classroom, there's lots and lots of different points. And then there's this space where they can actually write down how they feel. So they have had the opportunity to write down if they're not happy about something in the course, or with the teacher, or with the classroom. So yeah, I have noticed comments before that people have made. Most of the time they're just saying, I'm really happy with the class, I've learned lots, I feel more confident. I think sometimes they don't really like to say anything negative but they have got the opportunity to say something. Yeah,
Interviewer	They didn't just sit there thinking, 'Oh, we've got to put up with this.'

Monica	No, they felt because they've known me for over a year, they felt that they could say to me, you know, we didn't understand what she said, We don't feel we're learning anything with her. And when I mentioned it to my line manager, she said, Oh, that's good that they came to you. And I thought, well, I can't I have to say something. I've got to say, you know, this is what the learners feel. I can't just sit on that myself because then they probably would have walked away and not come back.

As Monica described, designing courses that met the students' needs and ensuring the students knew their views were important, had a positive impact on the students' motivation. They felt respected as adults and supported to take control of their learning as their teacher was willing to listen and advocate for them, which in turn supported their need for relatedness. How their views were collected was also important, as Monica reflected upon here, as students may not feel able to complain in writing. However, the trust and rapport she had built meant that the students spoke to her directly to resolve a problem rather than leaving the course.

6.5.2.2   Teacher's Attitude Towards Online Teaching

Linking back to 6.4.3.2 where Lila's attitude towards the many changes to her classes were described, this theme reappeared when teachers were talking in general about their attitudes towards teaching online. Some, like Lila, were able to laugh and make the most of the unusual situation, trying out different tools for online teaching and learning and discovering new ways of engaging students online, as Joanna explained:

> I think some of the teachers didn't enjoy teaching online. They really hated it. But for me, I just, it's different. And I miss, I do miss certain things about being in the classroom but I think it's, I think it's working really well. And I'm really pleased with the, there's so many tools available, you know, to give students. I think online, the students really do have to

take more ownership over their studies, which I think is
is good. I think that's important **Joanna**

As Joanna highlights here, when the teacher has a positive attitude and has
high expectations of their students, this can be a good opportunity for
learning. Autonomy can be fostered with learners taking ownership of their
work, if the teachers are there to support them in this new environment.

This does not only relate to online teaching; their attitudes and decisions can
also influence student motivation in non-pandemic situations. Vanessa
explained how she viewed her role particularly in relation to the exams

Interviewer	And do the students that want the exams, are they wanting a certificate for a particular reason? Or are they just wanting to move up the levels?
Vanessa	It's mostly to move up a level because if they're doing their citizenship speaking and listening, they have to do that externally at an approved centre anyway.
Interviewer	Yeah.
Vanessa	So I'd say yeah, mostly to move up a level. And that's the other thing about balancing. Yes, yeah, we have to balance, deal with students' expectations and whatever pressures they're under to move up, and their motivation. So you know, I've got I've got a student who, I believe has got dyslexia, she won't be formally assessed, because it's not that sort of assessment isn't available. But she's keen, you know, she's pretty fluent because she's been here quite a while and has worked here also, but there was no point keeping her in Entry Three for third year, just because she hadn't passed writing. That would have been utterly pointless and unkind. So, I moved her up, and that was fine you know, I moved her up without that exam erm, because she wasn't gonna she wasn't gonna pass writing. And so, yeah, a lot

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                          of it is keeping people motivated and
                          encouraging them to be realistic.
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The link between teacher confidence and autonomy here seemed to be a factor in students' motivation, which also appeared in Monica's interview (6.5.3.1). The teachers I spoke to had a heightened awareness of this but not always the agency to make the desired changes.

6.5.3 *Economic and Social Identity – Present and Imagined*

6.5.3.1   Initial Motivation

Figure 6.1 *Reasons for enrolling on ESOL courses at Entry Level 3/Level 1*
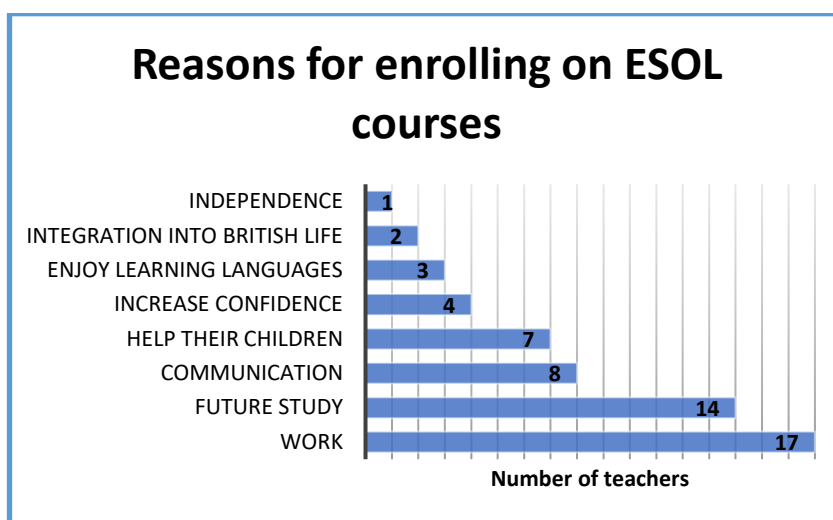
When I asked the teachers why their students had enrolled in their classes, there was a range of responses across eight categories, which can be seen in Figure 6.1. Work and future study were the most popular responses, with teachers explaining the majority of their students have plans to improve their economic status and social identity in the country. At the lower end of the response scale, 'independence' was only mentioned by one teacher but this could be linked to increasing confidence, which was mentioned by four others. This was related to improving their spoken English to communicate with local people and organisations more successfully, as Nida explained when talking about students accessing advice and guidance support in the college:

Interviewer	Do you think, erm, perhaps one of the reasons they continue to study is because of not being able to express themselves with other people or they're looking for more independence?
Nida	100% that that's the first aim for them for coming to college. That's something that motivates them, they want to be able to talk to doctors, teachers at schools, be able to work.
Interviewer	Even at Entry Three?
Nida	I think they can articulate themselves, very few students can't articulate. So communication is not the first motive there, definitely improve communication is. So they think that yes, I can speak in English, but I want to speak better English. I want to be able to speak, for instance, to an English man or woman and be understood so if I speak better English, or if I'm able to write, like, kind of in a better way, I have a better chance of getting to uni. 90% of Entry Three students are looking for jobs or they want to go on some kind of course. It's very rare there's a student who comes up to Entry Three and says, "Oh, I just want to learn the language".

Nida's response here sums up many of the responses I collected from the teachers across all 17 interviews. To provide answers to why students enrolled, teachers drew on knowledge collected during tutorials and in conversations during class time. They told me about the students they were teaching at that point in time and learners in general at those levels, as the majority of the teachers had been teaching ESOL at that level for more than five years.

Looking back at the results of the student survey (Table 5.9) there are some similarities between the reasons the students identified and those shared by the teachers. 58.2% of the students chose 'To be more confident when speaking to local people' as a reason for enrolling on the course. Eight of the teachers acknowledged the opportunities to practise speaking in class, connecting this to socialising with classmates and the difficulties students

experienced when finding people outside of class to speak with in English. Increasing confidence, however, was only mentioned by four of the teachers, indicating that they thought this was not of huge concern to students at this level. Also, for the students, 'To become more independent and not rely on an interpreter in my daily life' was a much more popular response with 43.3% choosing this initial motivation, in contrast to only one teacher who mentioned this. Future employment and higher education were important for the students but confidence and independence, as Nida explained and as indicated through the student survey results, were required before their career goals could be achieved.

6.5.3.2 Family Commitments and Speed of Progression

As adults with busy lives and commitments outside of the ESOL class, many may not be able to find the time for extra study. Linking to their social identity, Lucie mentioned how the mothers of young children may be unable to progress as quickly as expected, despite having linguistic resources to utilise:

```
Lucie         The the other L1 [Level One student],
              has lived in two, three different
              countries. And I think she's, I'm gonna
              say held back, if you like, by having a
              three-year-old, but I think she will fly
              when I mean, you know, be very good. And
              she wants you to get a job as soon as
              her three-year-old is in school.
Interviewer   Yeah, yeah. So she's got just kind of
              got the past experience and she's got a
              clear focus.
Lucie         I have somebody who she did E2 reading,
              was fine with it. And I've already put
              her at E2 writing, and maybe even E3
              speaking. She studied languages. So
              she's speaks Arabic, French, and
              Italian, as well as English. I think she
              did them at university. She's gonna move
              quite quickly too but she has a two year
              old at home. So yeah, she won't be able
              to do much with it at the moment.
Interviewer   But once once the two year old is in
              school?
```

```
Lucie            Yes, definitely. Yeah, yeah, she'll
                 start doing stuff. She's young. She's
                 about 23 I think.
```

Seven of the teachers (Figure 6.1) mentioned the desire to help their children with their schoolwork or be able to talk to their schoolteachers as an initial motivation for joining the course. However, nine of the teachers also described how family commitments, particularly during the pandemic, were acting as barriers to learning. As Vanessa described when talking about a past student who had wanted to progress faster

```
…one I'm thinking of from a couple of years ago, and I'm
only guessing at situations, this is not gospel. I just
felt she felt a bit trapped domestically. And she wanted
to... but her attendance was very low because she had
two small children, she was caring I think it was her
mother or mother-in-law who was living with her who
needed care. So of course, it's all falling on her, so
she almost never attended. She was a low level for that
class anyway. And she was just absolutely in tears
saying, and just constantly saying, why don't you let me
take it, I can do it, I can do it and not listening to
what I was saying. And I'm, I'm pretty sure there were
the other things in her life outside college that made
her feel so desperate to, to move on. Vanessa
```

In this extract, we can see a culmination of the impact of funding regulations, teacher decisions and the student's family commitments. Despite a high level of motivation to learn English and progress to the next stage in her life, this student was unable to regularly attend the course and was not at the level expected by the teacher to be registered for an exam. A range of domestic situations were described, both pre and peri pandemic, such as single parents looking after children (Monica), older students looking after grandchildren while their parents worked (Lucie) and parents looking after disabled children (Amber). The introduction of online courses opened up opportunities for students in these situations to improve their attendance but the degree to which this also improved their speed of progression was unclear. As Kieron postulated when talking about a student who attended class whilst caring for a baby '…if it's a speaking and listening class, and all you're able to do is just sort of like, watch

```
the screen and listen, I wonder if the baby got more out of it
than she did.'
```
Kieron

6.5.3.3   Resourcefulness and Resilience

Six of the teachers interviewed spoke of their admiration for the resourcefulness of their students, both pre and peri-pandemic. These teachers were all teaching online, which meant the outside factors that had the potential to act as barriers to learning, were more obvious than before. As Kieron mentioned in 6.5.1.1, many students were living in poverty and doing everything they could to continue attending their ESOL courses, even if this meant accessing their class via mobile phones whilst sitting in stairways.

The reopening of schools in September 2020 provided some relief for parents who had been home schooling their children but the online environment, although it increased inclusivity for new mothers, made it difficult for everyone to concentrate solely on their ESOL class:

```
        I've still got students who've got preschool children at
        home and one's got a baby she brings to class sometimes,
        all of a sudden she just disappears because the baby's
        feeding. Yeah, so they're handling, they're dealing with
        a lot and but and I really admire those particularly
        those who've got children around them who are making a
        lot of noise or want attention, because they stick with
        it, rather than just saying, "Oh, sod this!" [laughs]
```
Vanessa

Kieron and Joanna also had new mothers nursing their children during the class; people who would not have been able to enrol on a classroom-based course. As Vanessa explained, these barriers did not demotivate the students, but they were required to be resilient and resourceful to continue learning. The students' economic status in the country was having a direct impact on their capacity to learn English in the online environment, which was only counterbalanced by the inclusivity and flexibility of the ESOL courses, alongside their own resilience.

6.6   Micro Level

Finally, at the micro level, the student begins to hold more power over the decisions that affect their language learning motivation. At this level, I will look at the linguistic resources the students bring to the ESOL class and the everyday interactions they have in English, as described by the teachers.

6.6.1 Linguistic Resources

The resources students utilise at Entry Three and Level 1, according to the teacher participants, often stemmed from the level of formal education achieved as well as the number of languages already learned. A lack of study skills and/or literacy skills was highlighted by six teachers (Barbara, Frances, Eliot, Amber, Marie and Anne) as a factor that had the potential to demotivate students if it stopped them from achieving at the higher levels and progressing to courses outside of ESOL. Barbara explained her observations here, when asked about the students' future plans:

Interviewer	So what would you say the reasons for studying are at this level, these Level One students?
Barbara	A variety of reasons. Some of them definitely because they need a better job and they need the Level One qualification on their CV. Some of them have a dream of going to university. You know, they need to get an IELTS score. And, you know, for a couple of them, I think that's really within their reach.
Interviewer	Yeah.
Barbara	Another one who wants to do that I think so often, unfortunately, they, they have this dream, but they're not really connected to the reality of how much work it will be.
Interviewer	Are these people that went to university in their home country and are wanting to
Barbara	Yes, yes, I think they all have I mean, I normally find that by the time people reach Level One, in order to get to that level, they've definitely finished school at 18 and many of them have done some sort of higher education in their own country. I think, it's hard to get to Level One, if you, you know, I've got

> I've had learners who finished school,
> you know, age 12, you know, age 14, but
> it's quite hard for them to get on to
> Level One.

Interviewer Yeah. Do you see them getting to Entry 3
and plateauing? Or do they drop out
before that?

Barbara They get they get to it, we've had, they
get to Entry 3 definitely. And then they
do really well with the speaking they
can do the reading, but it's the writing
they find really hard. And if they
haven't got the study skills from being
at school till they're 18 it's a big
time commitment.

As we can see in this extract, for students whose education had been disrupted in their home countries, studying to a higher level in a foreign language can be extremely difficult and students are not always aware of the amount of work expected. As Marie commented, they might also not see the usefulness of improving literacy skills in English and so lack motivation to improve:

> Writing is a very, it's nearly always the most difficult
> skill for most people. And for a lot of our students,
> it's doubly difficult because of their lack of
> education, or their lack of, or the difference in their
> written script. You know, you know, that Arabic or
> Chinese or Farsi, well Farsi is usually alright, but
> it's a massive, massive challenge, I think. If I had to
> write in Arabic, it would take me quite a few years to
> get any good at it. And I'd probably be thinking, why am
> I doing this? I don't, if I lived in this, you know,
> country where they spoke Arabic, I'd want to speak and
> listen and read. But would I want to write only for fun?
> I wouldn't want to do it. I wouldn't be writing letters
> to anybody or, or stories or anything like that. That's
> what I'm thinking lately that it's just not really what
> they need to do. **Marie**

Marie was commenting here about the ESOL course not meeting the needs of the students but with exams to pass, the students did not have the agency to redesign the curriculum to better suit their goals. Those who had had a

high level of education, however, were able to succeed at the higher levels of ESOL. With a mix of educational backgrounds in each class, it was difficult for the teachers to differentiate their teaching appropriately; as Eliot told me 'I find it a bit frustrating'.

6.6.2 *Regular Interactions with Others*

How and where students use English outside of class was mentioned in relation to the students' opportunities to interact with classmates and local people. Eleven of the participants spoke of the importance of peer support through friendships, supporting the students' need for relatedness. As examples of this, five teachers (Joanna, Kieron, Lila, Sarah and Lucie) described student WhatsApp groups that had been created during the first lockdown in March 2020. Before this time, some students had sent texts directly to one student at a time or met up after class to socialise, but with everything closing in the first lockdown, the students found new ways of keeping in touch and practising English, as Lucie explains here:

Interviewer	Do you see friendships or friendship groups forming?
Lucie	Definitely. We have a WhatsApp group for the whole, for all of them. So when I have a Zoom, I put it on the emails, but it also put it in WhatsApp group.
Interviewer	Yeah
Lucie	And there are things you know, how are you today? And saw you in the park and how's, how's your child? Yeah, there are the messages coming out in in the WhatsApp, which is nice.
Interviewer	Yeah.
Lucie	I have, not actually in this class, but in another WhatsApp I mean WhatsApp group for a class, they're sending recipes to each other. And you know, this shop is open and that one is selling toilet paper and some are just communicating. Which is good, well it's brilliant.
Interviewer	Yeah, that's great. Yeah. Yeah. Do you see, as well as that do you see them helping each other with their English?

Lucie	Yes, yes. I've had someone call me and say, "I'm sitting with another student at the moment and we have a question." So they are obviously working together. And when it was someone's birthday, another person made a cake and brought it. Erm, they, yeah, they are getting together and they, for example, I can say, "Oh, [name]'s not here today, do you know where she is?" And they say, "Yeah, she's gone to Tunisia. She'll be back next week" or something like that.

Lucie had created the WhatsApp group mentioned in this abstract so was able to see the interactions and peer support it was facilitating. For safeguarding reasons, other teachers were not allowed to do this and so the teachers were aware of WhatsApp groups but unable to join – teachers would not be allowed to share their personal mobile number with students in this context. In addition, in classes that were newly formed in September 2020, who hadn't continued from the previous academic year, it was less obvious as to whether there was any peer support away from the class, as Anselm explained:

Interviewer	Are the students building friendships with each other, are they able to chat with each other?
Anselm	Yeah, well, what an interesting question because I don't know whether... I suppose so, I mean, the thing is, when you're in a classroom, it's sort of obvious isn't it really. Erm, I suppose the question there is are they making friends with new people? Erm, I don't know really, I mean, it's, that is a really interesting question about whether they would make friends with somebody who they didn't know from the face to face class. It's possible I suppose, yeah
Interviewer	I wonder how easy it is for new people to fit in when they're not able to be in the same room as each other.
Anselm	I think, as far as I can tell, it's okay. Yeah. And I mean, I think, I'm guessing that for many of them, this is

really a, they can take them away from,
I mean, it's funny because for me the
lockdown, basically has been, okay. In
some some ways, I really miss my
students a lot. To be honest, I mean,
maybe one day we'll get back to face to
face, God knows when that's gonna be,
and I've got to be careful as well. I
mean, my impression is that they, yeah,
it's a really positive thing. The
sadness for me is that some people are
excluded. I mean, essentially, the very
low levels are excluded, even if they've
got technology.

In this extract, Anselm was highlighting the difficulties he felt as a teacher
new to the online environment, unable to ensure that everyone who wanted
to enrol was included and unsure about how much peer support was
happening. Similar concerns were expressed by Sarah, whose students
were struggling to find opportunities to speak English outside of class during
the pandemic:

Interviewer	Yeah, yeah. Do the students support each other at all? Outside of class time?
Sarah	They have a WhatsApp group, and they used to meet up and go for coffee together and stuff before the lockdown. Erm, we had like a little cafe, a little kitchen in the school where they could go and have a break and, you know, chat and sit together. But now, I don't know if any of them are actually in touch properly outside of the class. I'm not sure. But I know that if I needed someone to pass the message on, I could send an email to the one I know is going to check their emails and they can send a text in the WhatsApp group, for example. But yeah, I'm not sure how close they are. I've had groups where they've become really close friends and others where they just kind of potter along as colleagues.
Interviewer	Yeah. I wonder how much, how much opportunity they're having to use

	English outside the class when we're in the lockdown situation
Sarah	Not much. Some of them work and they speak English all day, every day, which is great.
Interviewer	OK
Sarah	Others maybe would have spoken to teachers, their children's teachers and things. But yeah, some of them over the lockdown didn't speak a word of English, you know, they just didn't go out, didn't have any reason to speak English. And in shops now you don't speak to humans anymore, you just kind of like tap your card, don't you? So
Interviewer	Yeah,
Sarah	You're not getting that kind of conversation on a checkout anymore. So yeah, some of them didn't speak any English from March to September really. Other than, you know, maybe saying hi, to a neighbour. It's crazy.

From Sarah's experience, it seemed that the students' employment status had a direct impact on their connection with local people and use of English. Those who were not in work, had very few opportunities to speak English or interact with anyone outside of their home. They continued to attend ESOL classes so their motivation to learn was seemingly unaffected but the effect this may have had on their need for relatedness, was not yet clear.

6.7   Chapter Conclusion

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the majority of the data collected through the interviews with teachers was connected to the meso level, where the teachers had some decision-making power. The teachers shared a range of experiences here, and their responses had much in common as their students navigated their ESOL courses and life in England during the pandemic. Understanding the students' lives outside of the classroom, such as domestic and employment situations, was an important factor in appreciating their motivation, as well as ways in which they could be

supported to learn the language. Importantly, the teacher's views also helped to shed light on some of the likely areas that were to emerge in the later interviews with the students themselves. They enabled this understanding to be as broad as possible, especially in circumstances such as these where it was impossible to observe live classes.

The teachers expressed frustration, however, when describing the Skills for Life exams and the limited progression routes on offer, in addition to the difficulties many students encountered when accessing online courses due to their low economic status. The need for resilience here, and an ability to navigate between face to face and on-line modes of course delivery, are aspects that will be further revealed in Chapter 7. Nonetheless, while the power to resolve these issues lay at the macro level, teachers were still able to take some control over the planning of their lessons and ways to support learners to practise English away from the class, fostering autonomy in different ways. The teachers showed a sense of admiration for the students' resilience during difficult times in their English learning, particularly when family commitments distracted them from their course.

In the following chapter, the lens of enquiry will be further narrowed, to focus on the experiences of five adult ESOL students. These students' experiences will be presented as individual narratives, which will be compared with the teacher views found in this chapter.

7   Student narratives from across the academic year, narrowing the lens of enquiry

'The language is so important, but self-confidence is more important than everything'

The previous two chapters have utilised quite a wide lens to investigate adult ESOL students' motivation for studying at Entry Level Three and Level One. This chapter, in contrast, will employ a 'small lens' (Ushioda, 2009) approach, with the objective of learning more about the individual experiences of students on ESOL courses.

In September 2020, I used a student survey to recruit students for a longitudinal interview study (see Chapter 5 for the survey results). I was only able to visit three classes at one college (one Level One and two Entry Level Three) before this was deemed too dangerous by the ESRC and the university due to the high numbers of Covid-19 infections in the country. The data collection included three interviews, spaced throughout the academic year, and a series of weekly text messages through the autumn term (see Chapter 3 for more details on this). Initially, 13 students indicated that they would like to be contacted; however, only five attended the first interview. An additional sixth student attended the interview but only to inform me that she had had to withdraw from the ESOL course because she could not afford the fees. I spoke with her about alternative courses and worked with her ESOL teacher to enrol her on a Functional Skills English course at the college.

The five students who attended the first interview responded to my weekly texts and attended interviews in January 2021 and June 2021. Except for the initial meeting in September 2020 and two interviews in June 2021, all contact was via electronic devices to ensure the safety of both the participants and myself. This was an especially turbulent year for people in England, with two further nationwide lockdowns, and changes to restrictions happening frequently.

I have chosen to display the findings of this project as five, separate yet connected, narratives. This is with the aim of showing each person's

experience individually, whilst highlighting the common themes appearing throughout with reference to Self-Determination Theory (Ryan and Deci, 2018). Narratives formed across the three interviews as I built rapport with the participants and they were able to share greater insights into the factors that influence their motivation. In addition, the English level of all five students had improved, which also aided my questioning and I have ordered them in this chapter in relation to their level of English, starting with the weakest student. Each of the students chose their own pseudonym and all interviews were transcribed verbatim; see Table 3.1 for an overview of the participants.

7.1   Ama Atta   'Everything is English so I have to go and learn'

Ama Atta was attending an Entry Level Three ESOL class when I met her in September 2020. Her college had returned to classroom teaching after providing online classes from March to July 2020, during the first Covid-19 lockdown in England. That summer, Ama Atta had been attending an Entry Level Two class and she successfully completed that level, passing all three exams. She had started at the college in September 2018 in an Entry Level One class, so was the most experienced of all five students included in this chapter, in terms of attendance on ESOL courses. It had taken her just over a year to find and enrol in an ESOL class after arriving from Ghana to re-join her husband and three children who had travelled to England before her.

> ```
> They [family] came here, they were from Ghana. They were
> here about four years ago. They school here, and they
> are now in university. (Interview 1, October 2020)
> ```

All three of her interviews were conducted online, via her mobile phone, at times convenient to her.

7.1.1 *Initial Motivation to Learn English*

Born and raised in Ghana, Ama Atta's first language was Akan, the language she spoke at home. She had attended English medium schools but felt her level was still quite low, as she explained here:

Interviewer	And Ama Atta, when did you learn…when did you start learning English?
Ama Atta	As for me [laughs] when I was, I started learning English when I was in Class One but it wasn't too good for me at that time. You know? I was not serious.
Interviewer	Well, you were very young.
Ama Atta	Yes, but when I get to err Britain no, I have made a lot of mistake. I should have been, I should have learned English seriously in Ghana before I came here. That's why I was so serious to learn English. (Interview 1, October 2020)

Reunited with her husband and children, they were supporting her ESOL learning in England:

With my husband I speak English, he is good in English and even my children too, they know how to speak English. So if I don't understand anything, I just ask them, they explain it to me.(Interview 3, June 2021)

In response to the student survey, she chose the following options for her reasons for learning English at this level:

To apply for a job or better job

To be more confident when talking to local people

To become more independent and not rely on an interpreter in my daily life

To study at a British university in the future

To help me to understand official letters (for example, from the hospital, solicitor or school)

During our first interview in October 2020, I asked about the options she had chosen with the aim of getting to know Ama Atta better and understanding more about why she wanted to achieve these goals. I started by asking

whether her reasons for learning English were connected to her reasons for moving to England:

Ama Atta	I came here to get my family…and I decided to go to school and learn English. More.
Interviewer	Yeah.
Ama Atta	Not that I learned English in my country before and that's why I came to England. No, I join my family, they were here before I came
Interviewer	Right.
Ama Atta	So, I decided to sit down, I decide I have to go and learn because when you go to, when you want to apply for a job, you have to you have to show the form or you speak English. If you want to see, if you want to talk to other people is English. If you want to buy anything it's English. Everything is English so I have to go and learn.
Interviewer	Yeah, yeah.
Ama Atta	To improve more, so that I can express myself more. (Interview 1, October 2020)

As the above extract shows, the themes of communication and career, were major motivating factors for Ama Atta. She was working as a cleaner for two hours every morning before attending her ESOL class and she was fortunate that this role provided the opportunity to speak English 'Yes, you speak English, all throughout because nobody speaks my language over there [at work]' (Interview 1, October 2020). In Ghana, she had worked in a pharmacy, dispensing medication, and her hope for the future was to train as a nurse in England. These were topics that we returned to in the subsequent two interviews as her English level improved and she was able to express herself more, in addition to the rapport between us growing.

7.1.2 *Term 1 Motivation*

For a period of nine weeks after the first interview, I sent Ama Atta weekly text messages asking three questions about her use of English and language learning motivation (see section 3.5.3.4). She did not respond to the texts in the first three weeks but agreed to attend the interview, after which she responded every week. After collecting the final response in the last week of Term 1, I collated them into a chart which I then emailed to Ama Atta to read and reflect on before our second interview in January 2021.

Despite England going into a second lockdown in November 2020, Ama Atta's class had remained 'in-person' with the college staying open. Her motivation to learn English remained high throughout the nine weeks and apart from during the half term holiday (30th October), she used English every day (Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1 *Ama Atta, Term 1 text messages*

Language Learning Motivation

I was able to answering questions when I went for job interview.

I was able to express my opinion on a certain matter that happened in my work place.

I was able to book an appointment with my GP I explained my health condition to my GP. I was extremely motivated.

I went to the GP this week and I was able to express myself. I was able to answer all the questions he asked me.

I was able to express myself at my work place.

I was able to read and write and I explained things in English

Because I wanted to speak English properly, I wanted to talk to my GP very well and I can express myself in English. I forgot, I wanted to study English to find a job too. To know how to read and write, thus another motivation.

Every day

Most days

Every day

02-Oct 09-Oct 16-Oct 23-Oct 30-Oct 06-Nov 13-Nov 20-Nov 27-Nov 04-Dec 11-Dec 18-Dec

Maximum value for Use of English

Motivation   Use of English

As can be seen from Figure 7.1, the two main themes of communication with local people and employment appeared throughout Ama Atta's text message responses. In the second interview, we discussed the responses chronologically but I have grouped them together thematically in this section. Starting with the theme of employment, when I asked about her response on 13th November (Figure 7.1), she was able to tell me the importance of using English at work:

Ama Atta	…a lot of people in the workplace they are English people so you cannot speak... our, my normal, every day is is English everywhere at the workplace.
Interviewer	Yeah. And I know it might be maybe hard to remember. You said 'I was able to express myself at my workplace.' Can you remember what happened that week?
Ama Atta	Okay. I was late that day and they asked me why am I late? And I was able to explain why I was late.
Interviewer	Okay. Did they did they respond in a good way when you explained why you were late?
Ama Atta	Oh, yeah.
Interviewer	How did this make things easier for you?
Ama Atta	Um, yeah, I told them because of bus, I didn't wait to the station, err before it was like this, when I left from the first bus I have to go for second bus to the workplace but the first bus was late.
Interviewer	Oh no
Ama Atta	It was late. So after I came out from the first bus the second bus just left. Yes, just a few seconds. I shouted, but they didn't, nobody saw me, they just went.
Interviewer	Oh
Ama Atta	Yeah. I arrived at the bus stop early but the bus was late
Interviewer	Yeah, there's nothing you can do about that.
Ama Atta	Yeah, so as you can see it's not my fault, it's the bus.
Interviewer	So every day when you go to work, you have to take two buses?
Ama Atta	Yes. One from my place and then from [name of bus station] take another one to the work place
Interviewer	Yeah, yeah. It's good that you could express yourself.

Ama Atta	Thank you. (Interview 2, January 2021)

In the story shared here, it can be seen that Ama Atta's confidence in her use of English was growing. Her social and economic identity as someone on a low income, reliant on public transport to reach her workplace, coupled with a low level of English could result in a precarious employment position. However, as her level of English improved, she was able to explain her situation to her employer and the risk of losing her employment began to reduce. She returned to this point on 11th December when she was given responsibility for contacting absent colleagues and then with a health professional, as described here:

Ama Atta	No, no problem it, it goes like this. Erm, I was having an appointment with them [doctor], but because of work, I couldn't go. So they called me on the phone and asked me why I didn't come to the appointment. And I explained myself to them. In fact, I was I was, I forgot it, it is my intention to go to the GP, but I forgot it. [laughs] So he booked another appointment for me on the phone. So we speak on the phone.
Interviewer	Mmm?
Ama Atta	And yes, and he asked me about my health. And I explained what is going on. They gave me some medicine, which is my… whenever I do I take the medicine I feel weak, so I called them and told them that the medicine they gave me to me was anytime I take it, I feel dizzy?
Interviewer	Oh no, dizzy
Ama Atta	Dizzy, yeah. So there's, so they try to change it for me.
Interviewer	That's, good. And you did all that on the telephone?
Ama Atta	Yes, I did it on the telephone. I didn't go there. (Interview 2, January 2021)

As can be seen in the above extract, during this time in the pandemic, GPs were offering very few face to face appointments, with telephone consultations increasingly common, so Ama Atta had no choice but to explain her health concerns in this way. Her linguistic resources enabled her to book an appointment, explain her

health condition and then describe the side-effects she was suffering as a result of the medication prescribed.

For both situations described here, Ama Atta told me she was able to communicate in these contexts thanks to the language she had learned in her ESOL class, which helped to fulfil her needs for autonomy and competence. She was pleased with her progression and the support she received from the teachers: 'So anytime I go to this class and I don't understand anything, I just raise up my hands and ask. And they also patiently explain everything for me to get to get to understand.' In addition, she actively sought out ways of using English outside of class; telephoning classmates who did not speak her language, contributing to the class WhatsApp group and then in Term 2, in the Teams chat. She was a highly motivated student so when she told me she had attended a job interview in December 2020, I was interested to understand how this new job might fit in with her studies:

Interviewer	If you if you got a job with more hours do you think you would you would stop your ESOL class? Or look for a different class? Or...
Ama Atta	No, I don't want to work too much because if I work too much, I should stop going to ESOL class because, erm, sometimes the class starts afternoon and finishes maybe, afternoon from one o'clock from 1.30 to 4.30pm.
Interviewer	Yeah.
Ama Atta	Yeah. From 4.30pm I have to come home and prepare for the children, my husband and the children, prepare something for them and I have to study too. So I think I have to attend until I'm finished. I get to some point, then I'll go for a more hours. (Interview 2, January 2021)

The point she hoped to reach was a level of English that enabled her to enrol on a nursing degree. Her domestic commitments meant that she could not increase her hours at work and she valued her education and imagined future community over increased economic mobility in the short-term. This was a point she repeated when I

asked why her motivation never fluctuated over the nine weeks, which she explained here:

```
Interviewer      Why, why was your motivation so high every
                 week? It never went down, always high
Ama Atta         Yeah. You see, always I should, I should...
                 That is because I want to be a nurse. I have
                 to study hard... And I read a lot of books in
                 my free time. Erm, for me to get a good
                 understand in English, you know?
Interviewer      Yes.
Ama Atta         Sometimes some others talk...and I can
                 visualise, before I come back to my senses and
                 understand the person. So it's not easy of
                 learning English. It's not easy. You have to
                 be more motivated. That's why. (Interview 2,
                 January 2021)
```

As we can observe here, Ama Atta had clear goals for the future; her imagined future identity as a nurse was the driving force in her language learning motivation. The daily interactions were motivating at the micro level but her imagined economic and social mobility helped to keep her moving up through the ESOL levels and finding different ways of learning, contributing to her need for both autonomy and competence.

7.1.3 *Term 2 Motivation*

England went into its third lockdown in January 2021 and this time, Ama Atta's college was instructed by the government to close. This resulted in her classes being moved online and she was now learning from home, along with her teenage son and one of her older sons, who was home from university. Her other son remained at his university and her husband was able to continue to leave the house for work.

In the interview in January 2021, Ama Atta expressed her dislike of online classes as it meant she lost the opportunity to chat with other students:

```
Ama Atta         As for me, I don't like learning from home, I
                 like learning from learning at school because
```

<pre>
                     learning from home, you don't speak English
                     always. You speak your home language with your
                     children and when we go to class we see
                     everybody is speaking English so you will pick
                     it early. I like that one better than learning
                     from home because after teacher finished
                     teaching that's all
    Interviewer   You stop speaking English
    Ama Atta   Yes. In at school, you see a friend "How are
                     you? How is this? How do you understand this?"
                     That one will improve your English better
    Interviewer   Yeah.
    Ama Atta   I like that one better than learning from home
                     (Interview 2, January 2021)
</pre>

Ama Atta continued to telephone her classmate from Nigeria to practise speaking English and provide homework support but she missed the interaction that in-person teaching provided. However, with the introduction of breakout rooms in Teams (something that was unavailable in summer 2020), she was having some opportunities to talk to her classmates, which she described here:

<pre>
    Yesterday, in a group, me and other students in a group, we
    could talk and the other group don't hear us. Another group
    talked and the teacher go to this group. And at the same time,
    he did go to another group. That was my first time seeing
    this. I don't know. You look at people and speak. (Interview
    2, January 2021)
</pre>

Ama Atta still felt a connection to her classmates at this point in the term but wanted to return to the classroom. We revisited this line of discussion in the third interview in June 2021, using the summary I had emailed her as a prompt. I started the interview by checking that I had correctly understood her negative feelings towards online learning:

<pre>
    Interviewer   Back in January we were in the third lockdown,
                     you were learning online
    Ama Atta   Mmm, yes
    Interviewer   And from what you were telling me, you really
                     didn't like it
    Ama Atta   Yes. I wasn't like it but now I'm okay, I'm
                     good. I'm happy that we are now study, err,
                     learning at school, seeing friends, speaking
</pre>

	English with my friends and teacher asking us questions and allowing us to explain things. I think it's okay because it's helped us to or it helped me to improve my English
Interviewer	Do you think you improved... Did you improve at all when you were learning online?
Ama Atta	Yeah, that one is when we finish on on online that's all. If we are in school, after learning you can still have your friends and talk to them. When we are going to take a bus even, you can chat outside the school and that one is good.
Interviewer	Yeah.
Ama Atta	But online when we're finished we are still at home, I go back to speaking my language, my language. (Interview 3, June 2021)

In this extract, Ama Atta was expressing the importance of incidental English learning and opportunities to practise in her daily life, which she actively sought out. Online learning, coupled with a national lockdown, restricted her access to local people, in addition to regular interactions with her peers. In the first term, she had been telephoning and messaging other students, which she was still doing in January 2021 at the start of the third lockdown, but it seemed this was also affected by the college closure:

Interviewer	…You told me you were you were messaging students, you were telephoning other students, did that help?
Ama Atta	A lot, but we don't spend much time on phone.
Interviewer	Oh
Ama Atta	Yeah, maybe she's doing something else when you call so you say, "Oh, wait I will call in 10 minutes time" but she will not...
Interviewer	Oh, everybody was too busy.
Ama Atta	We were too busy at that time, I was giving food to my children, I'm preparing, I'm at the kitchen and other things. But while we are in school, I think we finished everything at home before we come to school so we have time to chat a little before we separated.
Interviewer	Oh that's interesting. So you, you're able to make the time when you go to the college but
Ama Atta	Yeah

```
Interviewer      when you're learning at home, it's difficult
                 to stop doing all the other jobs.
Ama Atta         Yes, because when studying at home, on the way
                 you stop, come to the kitchen, doing food for
                 the children, preparing something for the
                 husband and other things as well, but when you
                 are at school, you will see your concentration
                 will go straight on everything.
Interviewer      Yeah. Yeah, no, I guess nobody can ask you to
                 do other things
Ama Atta         Yes. (Interview 3, June 2021)
```

Ama Atta was still attending her ESOL classes during the online period but as she explained, she was not able to give the course her full attention as her domestic responsibilities acted as a distraction. There were also classmates with young children 'online, we hear a lot of noise. Some children are at the back and other things. It's not good.' (Interview 3) Her motivation to learn the language did not diminish (she had good attendance, did her homework and passed her exams) but she was not able to engage with the class and her peers in the way she desired.

In addition, she also had to learn to use the technology required for an online class. I discovered she owned a computer but it was not suitable for all of the course activities:

```
Interviewer      Okay, okay. And when you when you had your
                 online class, did you use your mobile phone or
                 did you use a computer?
Ama Atta         I used both. I was using, because of erm, we
                 go to? Oh, forgot it. They didn't give us work
                 on computer so you definitely go go to... did
                 the pair work on the computer so we had to go
                 to the Teams and find your work to do. So, I
                 did it alone, nobody teaches me. No
Interviewer      No? It's great that you've you've learned so
                 many so many new skills. You've managed to do
                 it all, you're doing this on your own and
                 using the mobile and the computer.
Ama Atta         Yes I was using both, using my laptop, I was
                 using laptop, small laptop.
Interviewer      Okay. Is that because you couldn't do some
                 things on your mobile?
```

```
Ama Atta            No, the laptop sound I wasn't hearing it
                    clearly.
Interviewer         Oh
Ama Atta            So I decided to do my work on the Moodle on my
                    tablet [small laptop]. Find the work at the
                    Moodle then do it. So when the teacher is
                    speaking on there, I use the mobile phone to
                    listen to what she said. (Interview 3, June
                    2021)
```

Ama Atta's high levels of motivation came through here in her resourcefulness and determination to attend the online classes to improve her English level. She did not ask for support, she used the technology available and found a way to fully engage with her class.

7.1.4 *Term 3 Motivation and Future Plans*

Ama Atta was happy to be back in the classroom for the final term of the academic year. She was wearing a mask and was now allowed to do paired speaking activities and could communicate with her classmates in break times and after class. The third interview was conducted the day before her writing exam; 'I'm not afraid, I can go and I will write, I will pass. I know I will pass [laughs].' (Interview 3, June 2021). Having passed every ESOL exam she had taken up to that point, she was confident in her language ability and showed no sign of exam anxiety. Her need for competence was seemingly being fulfilled by the classroom assessments.

I asked Ama Atta about her plans after the Entry Level Three course ended:

```
Ama Atta            I'll continue, I'll continue for level one and
                    finish at least level two. I want to get some
                    a, what do you call it? A degree to further?
Interviewer         Oh you want to do you want to do a nursing
                    degree?
Ama Atta            Yes. I want to do a nursing degree. If not,
                    I'll also try apprenticeship (Interview 3,
                    June 2021)
```

Ama Atta's future plans did not change through the time that I was interviewing her; she remained focused on training to become a nurse and understood the level of English required to do this. Despite the fluctuations in her motivation caused by the changes in her learning environment, her clear vision of her imagined future self ensured that she continued studying, working towards her goal by any means. In September 2021, having completed Entry Level 3, Ama Atta was accepted onto an ESOL Level 1 course so she could continue working towards her long term goals, fulfilling her need for autonomy and competence, and with no further lockdowns planned, her need for relatedness could continue to be fulfilled via contact with classmates and teachers in the college setting.

7.2   Marie   'Now I am alone here, if I don't take courage, I don't take confidence in myself, I can't learn.'

Like Ama Atta, Marie was also attending an Entry Level Three ESOL course when I met her in September 2020. She had moved from her home in Italy in December 2018 to find work in the UK and had enrolled on an ESOL Entry Level Two class in the following September. Marie successfully completed the exams at that level, despite England going into lockdown in March 2020, so this was her first year in Entry Level Three but second year in ESOL at the college.

During the year I interviewed her, she was working shifts in a factory, which often meant she finished late in the evening. All our interviews were conducted online, with Marie using her mobile phone, on Saturday evenings (times chosen by Marie). She was living alone in England, having moved for work in the hope that her fiancé would be able to join her once he could obtain a Visa.

7.2.1   Initial Motivation to Learn English

Marie was born in the Ivory Coast but moved to Italy at age 17, where she lived with an Italian family and completed her schooling. Marie viewed the usefulness of English not just for living in the UK, but also connected it to a broader, world view:

Interviewer	Um, so you can you can you tell me a little bit about why you are learning English?
Marie	Because, I learn English because when you live in the country, is important when you know the language, because you can you can speak to someone. Erm, everywhere you go, you need to speak English, at work, at school, in the life.
Interviewer	Yeah, yeah.
Marie	And the English is more important for the world. When you go to travel, if you know English is easy for you to...social with another person (Interview 1, October 2020)

England was the third country Marie had lived in, so she had the experience of settling into a new place with a different language. At school in Italy, she had learned English and German whilst also learning Italian, taking the number of languages she could speak to four (French being her first language). She enjoyed learning languages because it gave her the freedom to travel and meet new people, aiding her need for autonomy and relatedness. This theme of socialising was important to Marie as she was alone in the UK. When she arrived, she had a friend who lived nearby but they soon moved to London, leaving Marie on her own. Her fiancé had an Ivorian passport and was unable to leave Italy so her contact with others came from her work, her ESOL class and telephone calls to Italy.

In response to the student survey, she chose the following options as her reasons for learning English at this level:

To apply for a job or better job,

To be more confident when talking to local people

To study at a British university in the future,

I enjoy learning languages

We talked about these responses in her first interview in October 2020. Starting with the themes of work and communication, I asked about speaking English at work. Marie had a job in the office of a factory, which provided her with the opportunity to speak English, although this was quite limited, as she explains here:

Marie	But now, I speak with the phone at work, yes, I speak with the phone. I ask something, he give me answer err I ask something, I give out the order, maybe I said "Put away errr Give me the location"
Interviewer	At work?
Marie	Yeah. Every day the same words [laughs]
Interviewer	It's the same questions every day?
Marie	[laughs] Every day, put away, give me the location, the number [laughs] they are the same (Interview 1, October 2020)

She also practised her reading skills by reading the information signs at work, so the job was useful but not something she hoped to develop as a career:

Interviewer	Do you have a plan for the future? Maybe after a couple of years of ESOL, is there something you hope to do?
Marie	I want to go to no I... I want to go to university.
Interviewer	Yeah. What would you like to study?
Marie	Err, nursing
Interviewer	Okay. Okay. Did you do nursing before?
Marie	Yes, but I do healthcare, I go to school, when I finish, I I wanted to to start university. I come here. If I know English, I speak very well, I write very well, I listen very well, when I go to university, I finish my study. (Interview 1, October 2020)

As can be seen in this abstract, similar to Ama Atta, Marie planned to train as a nurse. She had worked in healthcare for more than a decade after finishing secondary school and hoped to complete a nursing degree in England, once her English was at the required level.

7.2.2 *Term 1 Motivation*

Marie responded to the weekly texts for 11 weeks and I emailed her the compilation of her responses in January 2021. I did not receive a response to that email, nor to my text message asking if she was available for an interview that month so I was pleasantly surprised when she contacted me in the February half term

holiday, asking to be interviewed. The text came on a Friday, asking to be interviewed at 8pm the following evening. In the text, she explained that she had been unwell for a month, meaning she had been unable to go to work. As the college had closed due to the third lockdown, she was still able to attend her ESOL classes because they were now online. Unfortunately, staying at home for a month combined with the two weeks holiday at the end of Term 1, resulted in Marie's level of English declining, making our second interview very difficult for both of us.

According to the weekly text messages Marie had sent me during Term 1, her motivation to learn English was extremely high (Figure 7.2) and remained at this level throughout the 12 weeks, just like Ama Atta (Figure 7.1). There were fluctuations in her use of English but these did not seem to have a direct impact on her motivation to learn the language. I sent Marie a copy of Figure 7.2 in January 2021, a month before our interview, and we discussed her responses together.

Figure 7.2 *Marie, Term 1 Text Messages*

Language Learning Motivation

I will want to learn more about the course functional skills next year

I would like to apply for the new job

Because is nice, improve my language

I was so motivated because I wanted to change zone at work

I have been so motivated because I started to apply in myself

Because I would want to improve my studies

Because I will be dependent

Because I fail one homework for the school

I have motivated to learn English in extremely because I went to apply different forms

Because I did training

Because speaking, learning English is important for me

Every day

Every day

Most days

Every day

Most days

Sometimes

Maximum value for Use of English

02-Oct 09-Oct 16-Oct 23-Oct 30-Oct 06-Nov 13-Nov 20-Nov 27-Nov 04-Dec 11-Dec 18-Dec

Motivation   Use of English

The main themes that emerged from Marie's text messages were independence, employment and communication with local people, which I will display here in turn. Starting with independence, in the third week (16 October 2020) her motivation was high because she had been able to complete a form on her own. She explained why this was important for her:

```
Marie           I couldn't [laughs] I couldn't but now,
                I apply everything alone. My blood test
                I apply alone, council tax I did alone.
                Now, I am OK. I called maybe I called, I
                book appointments alone
Interviewer     Wow, that's brilliant. So before that,
                did you have an interpreter to help you
                or a friend or
Marie           Before, when I called, maybe when I go
                to there I asked interpret but now, no I
                don't need. I speak myself.
Interviewer     Yeah.
Marie           Very, very good. (Interview 2, February
                2021)
```

Marie's confidence when using English was increasing as her need for competence and autonomy was being fulfilled. According to her texts, her motivation remained high but during the second interview, she admitted that she had actually thought about withdrawing in Week 4 (Figure 7.2) after not doing well in a homework task; 'When I failed I said no, no, no, I leave school'. Thanks to the support she received from the teacher she changed her mind and decided to continue; 'After the teacher explained me, I understand.' (Interview 2, February 2021) and so her motivation restabilised.

On week 5 (30ᵗʰ October) Marie had intended to write 'independent' rather than 'dependent' 'I want to say, I want to do to do it myself' (Interview 2, February 2021) and I was interested to what extent her ESOL course was helping her to achieve this:

```
Interviewer     Do you think that... erm, do you think your
                ESOL course has helped you to be
                independent?
```

Marie	Yes. My ESOL course help me more, more, more.
Interviewer	Yeah? How does it help you?
Marie	Because I, I speak, I understand my neighbour, my classmates, I understand…I talk with him. I do exercise and worksheet in the same together. I study new lessons, new lesson every week. (Interview 2, February 2021)

Peer support in the classroom was important for Marie's feelings of competence and relatedness, just as Ama Atta had expressed. She was pleased with the range of topics they covered in class and the opportunities to talk with others as away from the classroom, she lived alone and only used set phrases at work.

Almost all of the other texts related to her use of English at work; completing training at work, applying for a new job and changing zones in the factory. With her confidence rising when completing forms and talking to people in English, Marie attempted to change jobs but as she described here, this had an unexpected outcome:

Interviewer	Erm, you said, 'I've been so motivated because I started to apply in myself.'
Marie	Yeah,
Interviewer	Can you can you tell me a little bit about that?
Marie	This moment, I go to apply for another job. My my manager said me "No, no, don't go out." I stay. He gives me a good place. A good sector. I applied for this moment I apply for a lot a lot of jobs
Interviewer	But your manager asked you to stay
Marie	Because he trust in me this moment. He trust me. I said no, erm I can to apply for some job, for many job. I had confidence this moment.
Interviewer	Yeah, that's great. That's great. I mean, the next week is similar because you said I was so motivated because I wanted to change zone at work

Marie	Yeah. After this she said me "No [name] stay in work, I change your your, your zone in the sector."
Interviewer	So did she did she give you a better job?
Marie	Yes, she gave me a better job. (Interview 2, February 2021)

As can be seen from this abstract, Marie was valued at work as a reliable employee and this new role provided her with more opportunities to speak English and have contact with others; '…before I didn't speak I don't I didn't speak I am alone in my office' (Interview 2, February 2021). Now, she saw colleagues whom she could speak to, not solely speaking on the telephone, and this was helping to both improve her English and alleviate her loneliness. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, this did not continue after work; 'When I finish work every every time go to go to at home. Before the Covid maybe I go in the same in the McDonald's or in the café [with colleagues], but now it is not possible.' (Interview 2, February 2021)

The final text message she sent was on 18th December 2020 in which she mentioned her plans for the next academic year to study Functional Skills English, which seemed to be motivating her through this ESOL course.

Interviewer	So can you tell me what why you are thinking about functional skills and not another year of ESOL?
Marie	Because my my teacher advised me, it's better for me when I go to functional skill.
Interviewer	Okay, better how?
Marie	Because for for the certificates I had before because she said, after the first year for functional skills, I go to a university.
Interviewer	Okay. (Interview 2, February 2021)

Marie had either been misinformed by her teacher or had misunderstood the advice being provided here. After completing Entry 3 ESOL, students are

usually required to complete Level 1 before being accepted on Entry 3 Functional Skills (see 6.5.1.3 Skills for Life Exams) and this would then lead to three years of Functional Skills and one or two years of GCSE English before applying to either an Access course or an undergraduate degree. Similar to the students in the pilot study, Marie's motivation to attend classes was led by her desire to achieve her future plans quickly as possible. She was unaware that it could take her at least another six years, under the current system, to achieve this. In my dual identity as a researcher and former ESOL teacher, I did not think it was appropriate for me to question her choice of progression route at this point of the academic year, particularly as her level of English had declined due to ill health. Marie had five months remaining in her ESOL course to improve her level of English and I did not want to demotivate her by questioning her autonomy.

7.2.3 *Term 2 Motivation*

I spoke to Marie a month later than the other participants so she was able to tell me more about her Term 2 motivation in the second interview than the others. At this point, the pandemic was making Marie increasingly isolated, and she was reliant on her colleagues and classmates for interactions in English. This was in stark contrast to when she learned Italian as a teenager;

```
It's not the same experience because there, my family
is, err, I stay together with, in my family. My family
speak Italian, I was not alone…in Italy I learn fast but
here, I learn slowly (Interview 2, February 2021).
```

She was feeling demotivated by the lack of progression but remained focused on building a life in the UK. Her fiancé was still in Italy and she had started teaching him English on the telephone

```
In the night when he call me, I teach him English. I
teach him the words, I say this is this is an apple.
This is apple. This is a pea, this is oranges. [laughs]
(Interview 2, February 2021)
```

Unlike Ama Atta who had been reunited with her family in England, Marie was experiencing the opposite situation. However, she continued to search for ways of practising English on her own and with others:

Marie	I speak in my phone. I listen. I repeat. I repeat the words, the sentence
Interviewer	Yeah. Do you do you see other other people that you can talk to?
Marie	At the moment no, no for the Covid. No. No,
Interviewer	No, no. Gosh. But you're practising on your phone.
Marie	Yeah, yeah, in my phone. Before, before the volunteering group, volunteer for the elder person. I go to there one, once a week but now with the COVID it is all closed. I didn't go because it's closed. Nobody go there now it's closed (Interview 2, February 2021)

Decisions made at a macro level during the pandemic were having a direct impact on Marie's opportunities to interact with others. She displayed high levels of autonomy when seeking out ways of practising English, and despite losing her voluntary work which was directly linked to her professional identity, she remained motivated to learn English and practised on her own. She was hoping to return to voluntary health care work once the lockdown ended, possibly visiting elderly people in their homes. I wondered if she had any contact with her classmates, as Ama Atta had described, so we talked about this next:

Marie	Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Today, my classmate [laughs] my neighbour called me today.
Interviewer	Ah,
Marie	Yeah, when I don't understand homework, I call Sara, maybe Sara, maybe Brigitte, I ask, I don't understand can you explain me, explain me this? She she explain me
Interviewer	Ah, good, so you talk to each other on the phone?
Marie	In the phone, yes, in the phone

Interviewer	Yeah. Is that is that speaking or is that messaging?
Marie	It depends, messaging, err message messaging me first. Second, I called err she, maybe I don't know the exercise, she send me for WhatsApp.
Interviewer	Okay, okay.
Marie	Or I take my my paper she says do this, this. I write, it depends. (Interview 2, February 2021)

As Marie could no longer meet with her classmates face to face, she utilised technology to help her to learn outside of the online class. This communication among peers was all conducted in English as the other students did not speak French or Italian. The one student who did speak French was actually hindering her language learning as he translated for Marie whenever they were together in class; 'I learn, when he is there, nothing, I learn nothing [laughs]'. She told me she had asked the teacher not to place them together in class for this reason; she was determined to be independent 'Now I am alone here, if I don't take courage, I don't take confidence in myself, I can't learn.' She was also helping her classmates to stay motivated, building on her own experience of failing a class test in Term 1, to help others to stay focussed.

Marie	One day I have one friend, she called me, "I go to school, I failed the failed exam, I don't go again"
Interviewer	Yeah
Marie	I said, "If you don't go you you you don't join your dream, if you fail, you go ahead you go ahead, one day nobody remember you failed"
Interviewer	Yeah yeah.
Marie	If you stop now you fail all (Interview 3, June 2021)

As can be seen here, Marie was supporting her peers to see beyond individual exam results and work towards more long-term goals, just as she was doing. From Marie's descriptions, it was unclear whether she and her

classmate had failed Skills for Life exams, mock exams or class tests set by the teacher. However, from the stories that Marie shared, it was clear that these tests were important to the students and had an effect on their need for both competence and autonomy. The support she had received from the teacher in Term 1 may have also had an influence as she was now helping peers in a similar fashion.

7.2.4 *Term 3 Motivation and Future Plans*

By the third interview in June 2021, Marie had been attending face to face classes since March, her health had improved and so had her level of English. In this interview, we able to talk in more detail about her daily use of English and future plans.

Her experience of the online classes had been quite different to Ama Atta's; she was grateful the classes had continued as this enabled her to attend even when she was in poor health; '…`it's good for me because err this moment I go ahead because the class is not stop, I continue to go to learn online`'(Interview 3, June 2021). However, like Ama Atta, she was pleased to return to the classroom at the end of the third lockdown to study with her peers in a classroom.

Marie was still hoping to attend English Functional Skills in the next academic year to enable her to apply for university, although her career plans had changed slightly; '`Oh is the same [future plan] but maybe I continue err after for a doctor`'(Interview 3, June 2021). Her confidence had grown since the interview in February 2021 and her long term goal of going to university was motivating her studies; '`I want to achieve my objective`'.

By Term 3, she had found a new voluntary job as a health care assistant helping elderly people in their homes, just as she had been planning a few months earlier when I interviewed her for the second time. By June 2021, England was no longer in lockdown and many of the Covid-19 restrictions

had been lifted, enabling Marie to do this type of work. She acknowledged how this work was aiding her English language learning

> I write, when I see, when I want to discuss for the
> client [with colleagues]. Now I improve lots. When I go
> [to the voluntary job] I assist him to eat, I assess
> him, "Well, he's not good today." I write in my notes'
> (Interview 3, June 2021)

Marie had done a similar job in Italy and she was learning English to achieve her career goals in England. She was working extra shifts at the factory to earn enough money for her fiancé to apply for a visa but once she could afford to leave, she had no intention of remaining in her current employment:

> I don't like the factory work, I want the contact with
> the patients… When I go to there [interview] I said
> health care, for me, is not for the money. It is for
> something I have in my heart (Interview 3, June 2021)

Throughout the ESOL course, despite the isolation she experienced, the extra hours she had to work and her ill-health, her motivation to learn English remained high. She was focused on achieving her future goals to live in England with her fiancé and train as a doctor, and supported by her teacher and peers to achieve this. In September 2021, her level of English was not high enough to enrol on Functional Skills and so she chose to join an Entry 3/Level 1 ESOL bridging course (see 6.5.1.3 for further explanation) to continue improving her language.

7.3   Amani   'I hope I've finished my journey'

Amani was also in an Entry Level 3 class when I met him in September 2020. He was the only male student to participate in the research; other male students volunteered initially but then withdrew before the first interview. Amani had moved to England in June 2018 from Denmark to join his wife who was already settled in the UK and they now had a baby together. This was his first year in an ESOL class.

Amani was working nights in a DHL warehouse and running a cleaning business during the day, in addition to attending the ESOL course in the

afternoons. Amani had a laptop and was able to use it for our online interviews, which we conducted on his days off work.

7.3.1 *Initial Motivation to Learn English*

Amani had learned some English in school in the DRC but, like Ama Atta, had never planned to move to Britain.

> ```
> Sometimes I say if I know that I can one day live in UK,
> I can do my best to be good in English in school. We
> used to have English course in school, but we are not so
> willing to listen to language, study English because we
> are French country and we never think live outside
> Congo.' (Interview 3, June 2021)
> ```

Amani had not lived in his 'home country' for many years, having fled the war in Congo as a young man, eventually claiming asylum in Denmark. This was where he had been living when he visited the UK and met his future wife.

In response to the student survey, he chose the following options as his reasons for learning English at this level:

To be more confident when talking to local people,

To become more independent and not rely on an interpreter in my daily life

These two themes were prominent throughout all three interviews I conducted with Amani. In his first interview in October 2020, he connected the two motivations as he explains here:

```
Interviewer    What is most important for you?
Amani          Yeah, because I'm not planning to
               continue to apply for jobs. The most
               important for me that to be confident
               when I talk to people, especially
               British people and to understand the way
               they talk.
Interviewer    Yeah.
Amani          And you know, when you must call some
               offices, they talk about the problem,
               you must be able to communicate.
```
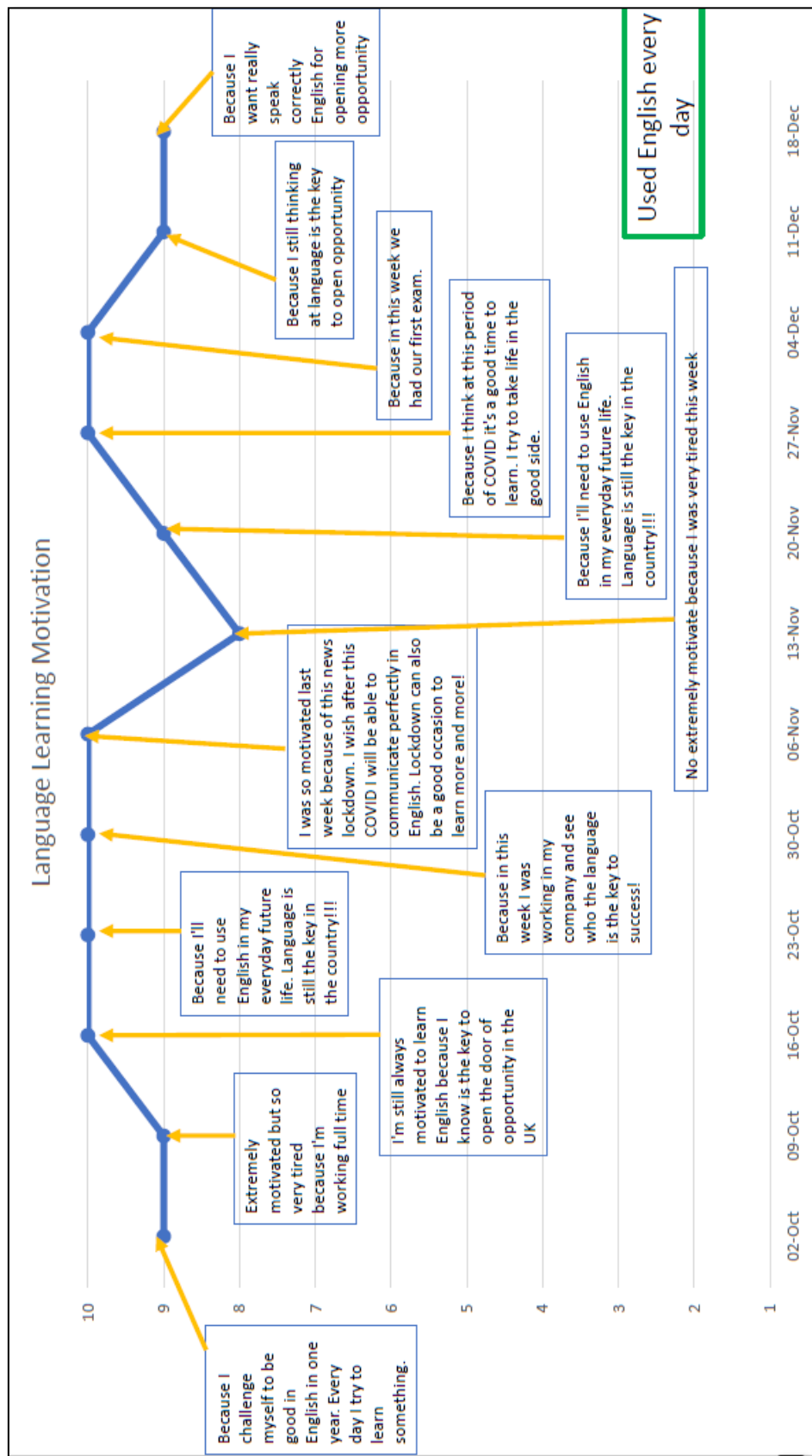
Interviewer	So, is it
Amani	Yeah, I'm, I'm planning to be entrepreneur, an entrepreneur. I have an English company, a cleaning company. Erm, all the time to contact people for contracts, to contact offices, only my wife who must do it…and I plan to open another business so I must be able to, be to talk all for myself. (Interview 1, October 2020)

As can be seen in this abstract, Amani's need for independence was connected to his reliance on his wife to speak on the telephone for him. She had been in the country for 10 years and attended ESOL classes, so her level of English and confidence talking to local people, were much higher than those of her husband. Amani's main reason for enrolling on the course was to improve his English to a level where he was confident talking to customers on the phone so he could take control of his business. His described himself as a future entrepreneur and although he already owned one company, his ability to fully identify as an entrepreneur seemed to be clearly linked to his confidence in his own competence when using English.

7.3.2 *Term 1 Motivation*

Our second interview was in January but the date had to be rearranged when Amani's wife was taken into hospital. Thankfully, her health improved and Amani was able to attend an online interview later that month. Amani was the only participant to respond to my texts every week and in contrast to Ama Atta and Marie, he indicated fluctuations in his motivation across the term (Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3 *Amani, Term 1 Text Messages*

Language Learning Motivation

Because I challenge myself to be good in English in one year. Every day I try to learn something.

Extremely motivated but so very tired because I'm working full time

I'm still always motivated to learn English because I know is the key to open the door of opportunity in the UK

Because I'll need to use English in my everyday future life. Language is still the key in the country!!!

Because in this week I was working in my company and see who the language is the key to success!

I was so motivated last week because of this news lockdown. I wish after this COVID I will be able to communicate perfectly in English. Lockdown can also be a good occasion to learn more and more!

Because I'll need to use English in my everyday future life. Language is still the key in the country!!!

No extremely motivate because I was very tired this week

Because I think at this period of COVID it's a good time to learn. I try to take life in the good side.

Because in this week we had our first exam.

Because I still thinking at language is the key to open opportunity

Because I want really speak correctly English for opening more opportunity

Used English every day

02-Oct 09-Oct 16-Oct 23-Oct 30-Oct 06-Nov 13-Nov 20-Nov 27-Nov 04-Dec 11-Dec 18-Dec

From the text messages, the main factors that affected Amani's motivation both positively and negatively were work and the pandemic. As he said in his first text message, his aim was to attend ESOL classes for a year and improve his level of English during that time.

```
Interviewer      Do you still have your goal for one year
                 to improve your English?
Amani            Yeah. But you see, for example, now when
                 everything is closed up, it's not very
                 easy to attain. And we don't meet a lot
                 of people at the moment. And for
                 example, so for my business, I don't
                 meet more people. It's very hard at the
                 moment, very hard
Interviewer      Yeah. Yeah. So do you think that maybe
                 you're thinking it will take longer than
                 a year now? Or are you still focused on
                 one year of study?
Amani            I think it can take little more long,
                 longer, but I still do the best I can.
                 And I always practise every day.
                 (Interview 2, January 2021)
```

As can be seen from this abstract, Amani's need for autonomy was being hindered by the lockdown restrictions as it was difficult for him to have contact with local people. His initial level of motivation in October 2020 was high but at that time, he was studying in a classroom and the country was not in lockdown. His text response on 6th November during the second lockdown was positive (Figure 7.3) but again, when he reflected on that time, his motivation and positivity had been reduced

```
When it's lockdown again, November we still go to school
but I think was okay. Now they're not they are not so
more activity you can be in a company can be everything.
So let me take this time to continue to learn more and I
was going to school too but also sometimes we're so
confused, we don't know how they will be for next month.
(Interview 2, January 2021)
```

The inability to make future plans caused uncertainty for Amani and his peers, watching the news every day for updates. Decisions made by the

government at a macro level were having a direct impact on his language learning, as he explained here:

```
Interviewer    Are you able to continue learning while
               thinking about all this?
Amani          No, when life changes straight away, I'm
               in lockdown, in the TV they talk about
               lockdown, the future, we don't know, we
               are confused. They make you confused,
               you can't plan something like one year
               ago (Interview 2, January 2021)
```

In the following week (13th November, Figure 7.3), Amani's motivation went down to its lowest point; 'Sometimes we are confused. You are so motivated. You want this, but slow down' (Interview 2, January 2021). Tiredness from work coupled with the confusion caused by an unexpected lockdown, had a direct impact on Amani's motivation. Although he was still focused on his goals, he was unable to maintain the pace he had had back in October 2020 at the start of the course. By 27th November (Figure 7.3) his motivation had returned to a 10 and I asked him to explain how this changed had occurred:

```
I pull myself up. I say 'I must' forever, lockdown or
whatever, everything is closed at the moment, I must, to
myself, I must push myself. (Interview 2, January 2021)
```

Similar to Marie and Ama Atta, Amani displayed high levels of resilience during difficult periods and did not rely on others to regain his motivation. Instead, there was self-reliance, linked to his desire to be independent. In six of the 12 text messages, Amani described English as being the key to opportunity or success in England and this was what motivated him to continue learning:

```
I must be positive, all the time positive. All the time
positive…Especially when I start to do something, I stay
positive, you know. I will say I must do it until I will
succeed. I know for everything, if I push myself to do
the maximum, I make it (Interview 2, January 2021)
```

I was interested in whether Amani had always been so positive and focused when it came to language learning and it was at this point in the second interview that he shared his experiences of learning Danish. Unlike Marie, who had learned Italian as a teenager, living with an Italian family, Amani had moved to Denmark alone as a young adult and so his experiences were quite different:

Amani	The first year, Danish is a very, very difficult language, but the first year I was doing my best and get the driving lessons in Danish. It was very difficult especially when I go to erm the system there is you must go to school, to driving school.
Interviewer	Right
Amani	Yeah for three months and then it will be like, I learned two language
Interviewer	Two languages? So you learned Danish and
Amani	No, no, I said it was like I said it was *like* I learned two languages.
Interviewer	Ahh, right. Sorry!
Amani	That's very easy one and driving school is very difficult because all the people was Danish. They suppose that I know and all the time the teacher, he will see that because he's sending us first to the places and I'm still watching to him. When he taught I tried to listen and write in French. When I'm come home, I start to read again, what I'm writing 'What is this?' And I ask someone what is mean? There was one colleague in the classroom, in the driving lesson, I asked him, I come to him and I can hear the teacher talk about this. What is mean? Try to explain me. I said okay, I know how to drive but the problem is this process. Step by step, I push myself, it was every weekend every Saturday I go, I said do it, do it, do it, I pushed myself until I get the feel of it. When I push I know when I push myself to maximum, I try to do the same here. (Interview 2, January 2021)

Amani drew on this experience of learning Danish to maintain his motivation to learn English in England. In addition to attending the driving school, Amani had also attended Danish language lessons for three years. He had been moved there by the United Nations as a refugee so had not chosen to live in Denmark or learn Danish, meaning he was learning for survival in a new country.

Interviewer	Did you learn Danish before you moved?
Amani	No, no. When I moved in Denmark I see this small kid in the hall he asked me 'What's your name?' In Danish, he asked me 'Hvad hedder du?' that is mean what's your name?
Interviewer	Yeah
Amani	But, when you say 'd'où ' in French is mean 'where' so I think okay, maybe European language can match, maybe asking where are you come from? So I say 'Congo DRC' but the father of that child is confused. He tried to explain me, he asked you what is your name? So, for me it's like I hear, where, where are you come from? So I respond okay, Congo. So they say Ok, his name is Congo, Congo!
Interviewer	Oh no!
Amani	[laughs] It's not like English, everyone can know 'My name is' but not Denmark, Danish. This was the first time I hear this and other things (Interview 2, January 2021)

As Amani explained here, when he moved to England he had already learned some English at school in Congo so did not experience the same confusion and difficulties he faced in Denmark. Learning Danish did not help him with English in respect that they are two very different languages, but the study skills and motivation he displayed may have been influenced by his attendance in Danish classes. The ability to draw on these experiences helped to fulfil Amani's need for autonomy and competence, aiding his motivation.

By the second term, like Ama Atta and Marie, Amani's motivation to learn English was being affected by the Covid-19 lockdowns imposed by the government and the closure of the college building for two months. As seen in Figure 7.3, Amani had always tried to stay motivated and positive during lockdowns but during Term 1, his college had remained open. In Term 2 (January 2021), England was in its third lockdown and Amani was now learning online.

Online learning was challenging for Amani for two reasons: his work shifts and the attitude of his teacher and classmates:

```
On Wednesday, we started morning class and afternoon
class. And the morning class I've just, I'm working in
the night, when I'm back I sleep two hours and when I'm
staying in the house, I feel like I want to sleep more…
But before when I go out and I drive, so I will get
fresh again. (Interview 2, January 2021)
```

As Amani explained in this abstract, he was struggling to stay awake whilst studying from home. When he travelled to class in Term 1, the act of leaving the house after a few hours' sleep helped to wake him up and the classroom environment focused his mind. The home environment had the opposite effect, which was not improved by the teaching of the online classes. Like Marie, Amani wanted to see his teacher and classmates and interact with them but `The teacher, she will say to put the camera off.` Amani was in the minority in that he was accessing the class through a laptop and was adept at using the relevant technology, as discussed by the teachers in the previous chapter (see 6.5.1.1). He was demotivated by what he perceived as a lack of commitment by his classmates to attend the online class:

```
Amani          Sometimes they [classmates] go out and
               when we study the lesson, they are out
               outside.
Interviewer    Oh, right, they're just walking around?
```

Amani	'Oh, I'm on the bus!' 'No, I'm in the workplace, working.' When they want to say something they unmute, talk and then mute again.
Interviewer	If the students are on the bus and you have to go and do group work together
Amani	[laughs]
Interviewer	Can they can they still talk with you? Or do you hear everybody on the bus?
Amani	Sometimes they just, unmute themself and are waiting. When they want to say something they unmute and talk and...Better when we were in classroom, we all concentrate in the classroom.
Interviewer	Yeah, yeah. No, no distractions.
Amani	No distractions. Sometimes we call someone, we see they are online, 'Are you there?' They don't respond. Maybe late and go out, maybe (Interview 2, January 2021)

Similar to the experience of Ama Atta, where she described household chores distracting her from studying, Amani did not think his classmates were prioritising their studies enough to stay at home for the class. He had sympathy for people with children to look after but could not understand why other students were not fully participating:

> When they want to study, they are at home with the kids and at school at the same time and that for people is very hard. But for other people like the single young men, he taking like a free time… they do because they asked them to do it…For example, the people who are receiving Universal Credit. (Interview 2, January 2021)

As can be seen in this abstract, Amani viewed himself differently from the other male students. He was self-employed and working a second job at night, he had a university education and a family to support. He was frustrated that the other students did not take the ESOL course as seriously as him and felt he was losing time during the online course, diminishing his feeling of autonomy as he had no control over this situation. The third lockdown that had moved his ESOL class online, appeared to be a critical incident in Amani's learning, also expressed by Ama Atta and Marie (though

in different ways), which illustrated how much influence teachers and peers can have on motivation.

The other theme, which appeared during our discussion of his English practice during Covid-19 restrictions and lockdowns, was integrating into the local community or the need for relatedness. Alongside the feelings of separation from his teacher and classmates, he was also feeling isolated from the people living in his local area due to the increased lockdown restrictions. Amani told me about using an app called 'Nextdoor' which he had started using in the second lockdown in November 2020and was helping to keep him in touch with local people.

Amani	Every day they send message every day there are some people they don't only to me to everyone. When something happens in your area, so you just write 'Who knows this?' 'I see this' 'Who knows more information?' every day. I think very very good one
Interviewer	Yeah, yeah. Is it all in English?
Amani	Of course [laughs] it's for English people, more of them is British or English. They want to keep the area good. They want to keep the area safe.
Interviewer	Yeah. Do you feel like you're part of a community?
Amani	Community? Yes. And I feel it because we can see for example, when everything can happen I remember before the before New Year, something like explosion, big booms. Everyone writing, 'What is this?', 'Who can see?' 'Who have more information?' you feel you are part of a community. Everything will happen for the community. You know it
Interviewer	Yeah, yeah.
Amani	That's very important for me. (Interview 2, January 2021)

This feeling of relatedness to the local people who spoke the language he was learning linked back to his experience of learning Danish in Denmark.

When his fiancé visited him in Denmark, she did not feel welcome and suggested he moved to England instead, as Amani explained here:

Amani	She says [his wife] here is very, only Danish people. Maybe can be 0.05 people I mean, African people or foreign people and she says a lot of, more opportunities in UK. She say please come to UK, when I come to visit the UK, I'm at the airport, I see the black people, some police officer I thought 'Ahh! That means in this country everything is possible.' In Denmark you can be nothing, to be a police officer you must be Danish.
Interviewer	Ohh
Amani	So I thought 'Ahh! maybe this can open my mind to opportunity' And when I visit UK two or three times I see too many things can do here. It can be business, it can be school, it can be everything. So I say, Okay, let's move there.
Interviewer	That's interesting as you said your journey is a language journey, as well as everything
Amani	I was also learning Portuguese, as I told you, and sometimes it's too much. [baby cries in the background] Now I can be only concentrated in English because now I think I can't move any more, I have my family here, I have a baby so that is my country. Let me learn English, that's why I be motivated to learn and learn.
Interviewer	Yeah, yeah.
Amani	I hope I've finished my journey (Interview 2, January 2021)

Amani felt, as a Black African man, he was able to have future plans in the UK and make decisions about his life and career. He viewed England as his home, he was living with his new family and building a business. In Denmark he had felt excluded from the local community and language; '…the way they [Danes] push you or the way they show you this language,

you know, they are very proud of their country and their
language, they don't want to have us [foreigners]there' but in
England, through his use of the Nextdoor app and representation of Black
people in different jobs, he was having a different experience 'they're more
open people'. Amani's neighbours would greet him in the street and his
local area was multicultural, unlike in Denmark where he was in the minority.
This helped to fulfil his need for relatedness as he felt part of a community
and therefore able to set goals for the future.

7.3.4 *Term 3 Motivation and Future Plans*

In the third interview in June 2021, we reflected on the initial
motivation that Amani had expressed in the survey and his first interview in
October 2020, related to increasing his confidence when speaking English. I
asked him whether he still relied on his wife to answer the phone for his
cleaning business:

Amani:	No, I can say now, I answer the phone. I can book. Yes. I can book the appointment. Or arrangements. Yeah, I do it alone.
Interviewer:	Oh, brilliant.
Amani:	Yeah. I remember, was in March, I should renew my permits. My card, BRP. Yeah, so I am alone called immigration. I was alone called because they told me I should also take the English test again. They give four possibilities. So I'm alone call the three places where I should do this exam. So I make it alone. I think the big thing was maybe confidence
Interviewer:	Mmm
Amani:	Because UK, let me say, the UK, they don't really care about your accent. They don't care about that. Maybe you miss some verb, but they just try to understand what you say. I make it I do it. (Interview 3, June 2021)

Similar to Marie, his confidence had increased dramatically during the academic year with all three, basic psychological needs being fulfilled. I asked whether this was due to his ESOL class or other factors:

```
You know, when we are in class, and if you talk to my
teacher, all the time if someone must talk I'm the first
me talk, let me go…I don't care. My thing is just talk,
be able to talk it gives me confidence. And I can make
this year (Interview 3, June 2021)
```

With his goal of learning English for one year in ESOL classes, Amani took every opportunity to speak both in and out of class. He had worried his progress might be delayed because of the Covid-19 lockdowns but by June 2021, he was confident enough to speak in English on the telephone for work and communicate with his neighbours socially, using the Nextdoor app. Having returned to the classroom in March 2021, he was speaking in class again and taking every opportunity to interact with both his teachers and classmates.

Having found his confidence in speaking for work, Amani had a new goal of learning to write reports to give him more employment options

```
I will go back in September again. I'll get another plan
for this year really be write good the report for
everything. I must improve for that because when I'm
able to do with the with reports and I think I may
change the job. (Interview 3, June 2021)
```

Amani was planning to become a landlord, earning money from buying, letting and selling houses to order to be in a financial position to leave his job in the warehouse; economic mobility was a clear future goal. His plan to become someone who is a member of the local community and a successful entrepreneur were being achieved. It was therefore not a surprise when I learned that he had not re-enrolled on an English course in September 2021 but was instead concentrating on developing his businesses and his new identity.

7.4 Celita 'I'm trying to do my best. But for me… I'm never doing enough'

Celita is the last of the Entry Level Three students who participated in this research project. She had arrived in the UK in October 2019 with her seven year old son to join her husband who had moved to find work one year earlier, similar to the experience of Ama Atta. They had moved from the East to West Midlands in March 2020, just a few days before England went into lockdown. Celita had attended an unaccredited ESOL course but this was her first accredited ESOL course in a college.

Celita attended the first two interviews online, via her laptop from home. The first interview was delayed until November 2020 due to a miscommunication during college enrolment which meant she was not allowed to attend classes for three weeks. The final interview was initially conducted in-person at a café thanks to restrictions being lifted by June 2021 but completed online a few days later.

7.4.1 *Initial Motivation to learn English*

Celita had been born and raised in Brazil and despite having German grandparents, had only ever spoken Portuguese. At school, she had learnt some English, but did not feel this had prepared her for a move to England:

Interviewer	Could you tell me a little bit about why you want, why you wanted an ESOL course?
Celita	Yeah, actually, maybe I can tell to you my story. Short. I come from Brazil and in Brazil, the classes English not is so encouragement in the public school because we learned just the verb to be and just just ...
Interviewer	One verb?
Celita	Yeah, yeah. It's so hard. And when you were younger, not anyone encouraged you to study other language, is difficult, you, for yourself, great difficult to study language. And my husband decided to come in this country, and I and my boy just follow him. And I've never

```
                    studied English before. So I'm arrived
                    here without, I can't to understand
                    anything, and I can't to speak anything.
                    And, wow, I'm really, really frustrated
                    and sad. (Interview 1, November 2020)
```

In this abstract, Celita expressed a common theme across all of the
participants; despite attaining a good level of English, they had not learnt the
language at school with the intention to ever live and work in an English
speaking country. This extract seemed to imply that the relocation to England
had not been Celita's decision, which perhaps added to her feeling of
frustration. When questioned further, it emerged that as well as her
husband's desire to work in England, they both dreamed of a better life for
their son:

```
Celita          But we think about our son, [name], and
                which future we want to him. And in
                Brazil, it's very dangerous, some places
                is very dangerous, and don't have much
                opportunity, for example, [name] love
                dinosaurs and always he talked I want to
                be palaeontologist?
Interviewer     Yes.
Celita          There are archaeologists in Brazil never
                he can to do that, because not so common
                this profession in Brazil. So it's
                dangerous, his education, future, so we
                decided to look for other country and we
                choose England for a start. My husband
                came one year before us. So yeah, we are
                separate for one year.
Interviewer     That must have been hard
Celita          For my boy, so it's very hard. But after
                one year, we came to we came to here and
                now study and work and start a new a new
                life and then your place in the future.
                I think is the in British future is is
                so rich is so so good to learn. So, we
                really love it to be to be here.
                (Interview 1, November 2020)
```

Now the family was reunited, Celita was focused on building a new life in
England and I was interested in what that meant for her. In the survey she

completed in September 2020, she had indicated four reasons for attending the ESOL course, which were:

To apply for a job or better job
To be more confident when talking to local people,

To study at a British university in the future

To help my children with their school work

Having left a successful career as a law lecturer and mediator, specialising in Family Law, Celita was keen to improve her spoken English to retrain in a similar career and; `because I love to talk. I love to speak a lot. I think I'm a talkative`' (Interview 1, November 2020). As a lecturer and a lawyer, she talked for a living and this seemed to be one of her main reasons for attending the ESOL course. This was also connected to wanting to help her son with his education:

> …when my child, my son started in the school is a
> difficult time for me help err he's? Him? …Him. And the
> talk with the teacher because in Brazil, I'm talk with
> teacher every day. And yeah, I can't. And I'm very, very
> crazy mom about that, because I need to help him and I
> can't do that. (Interview 1, November 2020)

Celita had not only lost her identity as a professional but also as a protective mother, no longer able to advocate for her clients or her son. She had applied to do voluntary work at her son's school to practise English but because of the pandemic restrictions, she was waiting for a response many months later. She had been offered a job with Amazon in a warehouse, which fit around her ESOL course and her son's school hours but the physicality of the work was disconcerting

> It's very different for me because I never do anything
> similar. But I can do it. I can do it. So. Okay. Now is
> good. Now is good. Yeah. Until I improve my English and
> I looking for other job, a better job. (Interview 1,
> November 2020)

Similar to Ama Atta and Marie, Celita was motivated to learn English in order to return to the career she once had, where she could help others, aiming to reach a point where she had confidence in her level of English, akin to Amani's goal of taking full responsibility for his business.
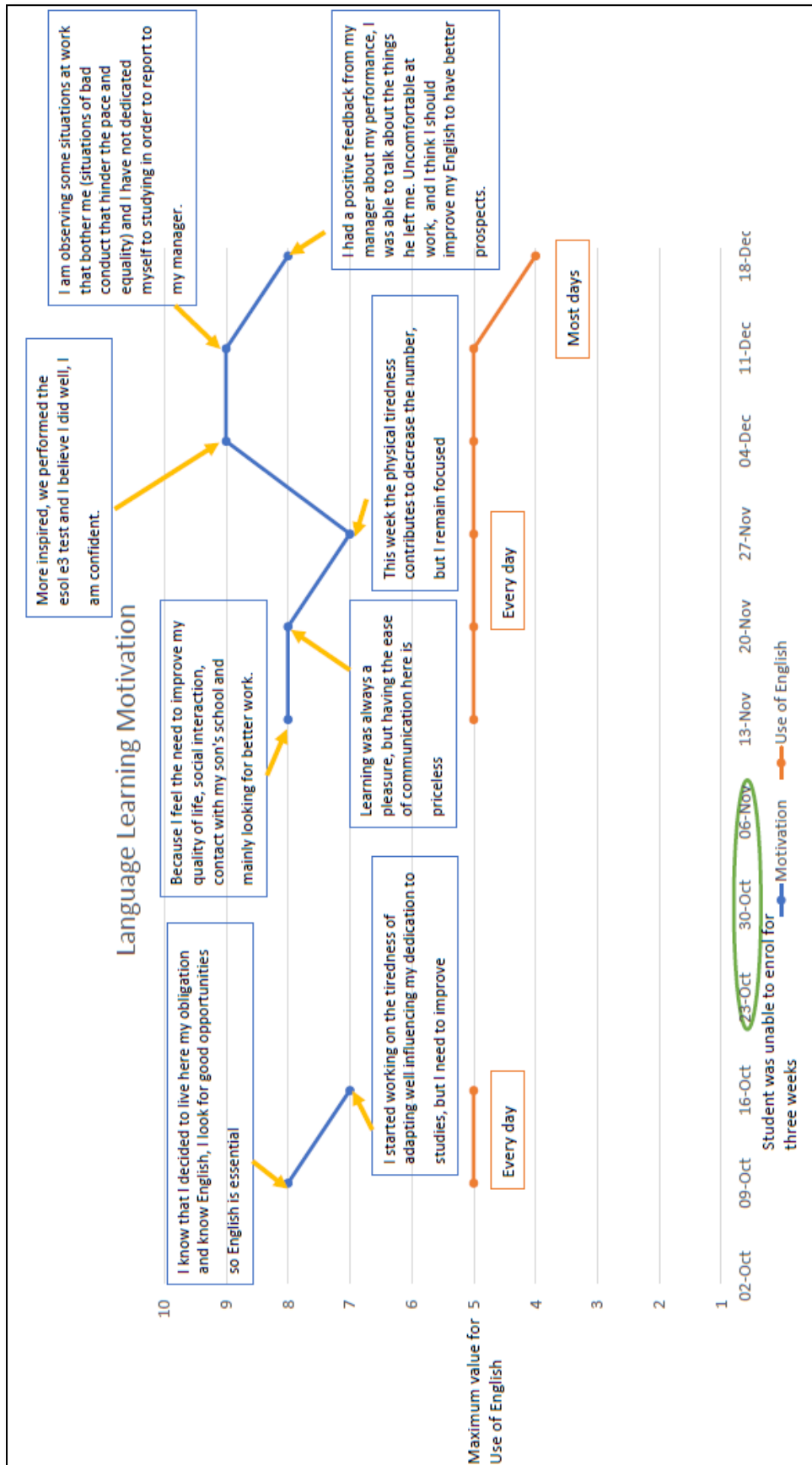
7.4.2 *Term 1 Motivation*

When I interviewed Celita for the second time, she and her son had both tested positive for Covid-19 and were isolating in their home. She informed me of this at the start of the interview but stated she was well enough to be interviewed

```
…we are all okay, a few symptoms. Just my husband like a
cough and headache. But my boy is perfect and I just
little headache as well. So everything OK (Interview 2,
January 2021)
```

Celita had responded to my text messages in every week of the first term, except for the three weeks when she was not allowed to attend classes (Figure 7.4). Her levels of motivation fluctuated far more frequently than the first three participants, ranging from 7 to 9, and never reaching 10. These scores, along with the text responses she shared each week, were the main topics of our second interview with confidence when communicating, and employment reappearing as important themes, along with a new theme of home sickness. Each theme will be presented in turn, in this section.

Figure 7.4 *Celita, Term 1 Text Messages*

Language Learning Motivation

I know that I decided to live here my obligation and know English, I look for good opportunities so English is essential

Because I feel the need to improve my quality of life, social interaction, contact with my son's school and mainly looking for better work.

More inspired, we performed the esol e3 test and I believe I did well, I am confident.

I am observing some situations at work that bother me (situations of bad conduct that hinder the pace and equality) and I have not dedicated myself to studying in order to report to my manager.

I had a positive feedback from my manager about my performance, I was able to talk about the things he left me. Uncomfortable at work, and I think I should improve my English to have better prospects.

I started working on the tiredness of adapting well influencing my dedication to studies, but I need to improve

Learning was always a pleasure, but having the ease of communication here is priceless

This week the physical tiredness contributes to decrease the number, but I remain focused

Maximum value for Use of English

Every day

Every day

Every day

Most days

Student was unable to enrol for three weeks

02-Oct 09-Oct 16-Oct 23-Oct 30-Oct 06-Nov 13-Nov 20-Nov 27-Nov 04-Dec 11-Dec 18-Dec

Motivation Use of English

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Confidence when communicating in English, both in class and away from the classroom, was the focus of Celita's first text message on 9th October 2020 (Figure 7.4). She regretted not studying English before leaving Brazil and this was having an effect on her confidence:

> I confess to you, I had a busy life in Brazil as well.
> And I don't know why but I didn't study English before I
> came, just I did a one month. One the one time in a
> week, so is a few classes. And we decided to came one
> year before I arrived here. And I showed I study before
> I can, but I can't do I can't do that before. And here,
> if you don't have English, you don't have opportunities
> and I know I have capacity to learn and to do
> everything. So I think I need to improve a lot. You see,
> my English is terrible. (Interview 2, January 2021)

Celita had been the first in her family to attend university so she knew she was able to study, but she did not feel prepared to learn English at this point in her life. Her year as a single parent, working in a professional career, meant that she had not dedicated as much time as she had wanted to study English. Communication continued as a theme in her text messages on 13th and 20th November (Figure 7.4), where her motivation stayed as an 8 and she found opportunities to speak English every day:

Celita	Sometimes people say the British people is so cold, but in my experience, it is not true. Because I find some people very kind and, and [typing]
Interviewer	If you want to say words in Portuguese, I can translate them later if that's easier.
Celita	[laughs] I find some people disposed to talk to tell me the history in the in the just talk to me, and when I saw I can't speak, is very frustrate, because I want to, I want to talk, I want to inter err
Interviewer	interact?
Celita	yes, interacting, and sometimes I'm just can't because my English don't do good. My English is terrible. Sometimes people try to speak to me, but they don't understand what I say. And it's

difficult. I know that people need to
have patience with me. And sometimes
people don't want to be patient because
he's hurrying, or the people need to do
other things. I know it is hard but, I
am try. (Interview 2, January 2021)

Similar to Amani's experience, Celita felt a connection to the local people
and welcomed into the community, supporting her need for relatedness.
However, perhaps because all of her interactions were verbal rather than via
an app, she was feeling extremely frustrated by her inability to express
herself clearly. Amani had initially relied on his wife to speak for him but
Celita did not have, or perhaps want, this option with her husband.

The three points in Term 1 where Celita's motivation decreased, were all
linked to her experiences at work (Figure 7.4). She had told me in the first
interview about finding employment at an Amazon warehouse and the
fatigue this was causing. I asked her to tell me more about the job and how it
had affected her motivation:

Celita	…working in Amazon so different than anything I'm already doing in my life because I confess to you I'm just work in offices.
Interviewer	Yeah, big difference.
Celita	So big difference, because it means to take out high boxes and other things. And I think the physical condition not is so good. But I think the situation and maybe because some day the people came and work with me, and I need listen, I need to understand, understand what people can ask me to do. So sometimes I'm tired, I'm trying to understand and try to talk. And I pass one situation in Amazon, and I really not comfortable because always, I am learn, anything we propose to do, you need to do the best. And the Amazon, the people maybe some the people don't work

```
                        correctly. The people sometimes just sit
                        in their station and don't do anything.
                        And the boxes just fast. And the people
                        sit down and wait, and I look why?
                        Someone contract you to come here and
                        paid you, you need to do your work.
                        (Interview 2, January 2021)
```

Celita had a strong work ethic and was not accustomed to working with
colleagues who lacked her commitment and focus, which caused mental
fatigue. The physicality of the work caused further tiredness and although
she was eventually able to report poor working practices to her manager in
December (Figure 7.4), she did not view this as a successful use of English.
Similar to Amani when he distanced himself from the other male students in
his class during the online learning, Celita could not relate to her new work
colleagues and her past experience as a highly qualified professional, did not
prepare her for a low-level position.

In addition, during the second interview she explained that the other reason
for her motivation decreasing on 27th November (Figure 7.4) was that it was
‘One week before my birthday’. Travel restrictions imposed by both
the British and Brazilian governments, meant that Celita had not seen her
family for over a year; ‘When I lived in Brazil, I, I used to go to
my mom's house every day two, three times per day. So this is
really hard for us’. Homesickness, coupled with worrying about her
family's safety during the pandemic and inability to work in the career she
had had before, all added to the demotivation she experienced at that time
as her need for autonomy was not being fulfilled.

The point in the term where her motivation increased (4th December, Figure
7.4) was triggered by a positive learning experience on her ESOL course
where her need for competence was being satisfied:

```
        When some people talk to me and give me a return
        [feedback] or I'm do exam and have a good return I am
        feel better because I think maybe for me with myself,
        I'm never do enough. But when the teacher or other other
```

people said to me "No, keep going, you are good"
something this way I think I am staying on I am
motivated. (Interview 2, January 2021)

Celita was not challenged by the test 'I can do the exam very fast
and I can complete everything' but the praise and reassurance she
received from her teachers about her level of English, was extremely
important for her motivation and feeling of competence:

Celita	…I'm trying to do my best. But for me, I'm never do I'm never doing enough. Or when some people say "No, you're good, yeah, it's good. Keep trying," I am relax.
Interviewer	It's good. It's good that you, that you, if people tell you you're doing well, like the teacher says you've done well, that you believe them and you, it helps you
Celita	Yeah. I think it's going to receive feedbacks, feedback, good or not. I think its good. Because if it's a good feedback, inspired, if bad feedback, we can change and improve (Interview 2, January 2021)

Tests and exams facilitated opportunities for her teachers to provide the
positive feedback she required. Celita was able to reflect on her work and
use the study skills she acquired at university to learn English in this context
and motivate herself to continue learning but she lacked confidence in her
competence in English and relied upon her teachers to sustain her
motivation.

7.4.3 *Term 2 Motivation*

Term 2 and the move to online classes brought new challenges for
Celita, just as the other participants had experienced. As previously
mentioned, during the interview in January she was isolating with her son
and husband as they had tested positive for Covid-19. This resulted in a

return to home schooling for her seven year old son, which Celita took responsibility for whilst attending online ESOL classes. In addition, her contract at Amazon had ended so she was unemployed and once again, looking for work.

Celita, like Marie, was grateful for the ESOL class continuing online as it meant she did not miss any classes whilst unwell, but acknowledged it was a difficult situation for everyone involved:

> We need to adapt with these different situation, use the new instruments [technology]to give the class so I think is very hard. And for me, [teachers' names] have all my respect because it's very hard. (Interview 2, January 2021)

During the third interview in June 2021, I asked Celita to tell me more about her experiences in the online ESOL class in Term 2. That term had a speaking and listening focus, which she found difficult online:

> So online is hard because when I talk with you face to face, if I don't understand something, I can see your body language and it's easy. But listen and speaking just online, it was hard for me because sometimes the internet don't work and sometimes I can't listening everything and sometimes my colleague is not mute their sound so a lot of noise and I need to concentrate and I can't understand what people say. (Interview 3, June 2021)

Similar to the experience of Amani, distractions from her classmates diminished Celita's learning experience and autonomy at that time. However, Celita's teacher offered online tutorials and she was able to complete extra work that he sent via email; 'He's amazing, amazing teacher' so she was able to continue learning through that term and her autonomy was supported.

7.4.4 *Term 3 Motivation and Future Plans*

By the final term, the ESOL course had returned to classrooms and we were able to meet at a café for our third interview. Celita chose the time and place but this meant meeting me after finishing her voluntary job and before collecting her son from school. She was now extremely busy but this was a positive change

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Like, oh my gosh, I'm never staying home this much time
because I worked since I'm, I was 14 years old. So I
love to work. I love to study… So it's hard for me just
stay home. (Interview 3, June 2021)
```

During the lockdowns and periods of unemployment, Celita had temporarily lost her identity as a professional and this made her feel `boring and not useful`. After losing her job at Amazon, she had found a voluntary job at a local community centre during Term 2;

```
I go to in Tuesday night, afternoon, evening help the
lady organise the food bank, just the bags for the food
bank…And now I apply for the other voluntary [job] so
until I find a job that pay me I try to make a voluntary
job, I think is a good thing can help people and they
can improve my skills. (Interview 3, June 2021)
```

As Celita explained in this extract, the voluntary work she was doing not only contributed to her confidence when using English but also provided her with the opportunity to contribute to her new community. When she first started at the voluntary job, she found it difficult to communicate; '…`old lady speak very quickly and use a lot of phrasal verbs and expressions. I don't understand anything!`'. Despite this, she returned the following week and by June 2021, she was able to see the benefits for her language learning. She was now applying for a second voluntary job as she found these positions fit in better with her son's school hours. Being away from the family support she had had in Brazil, her employment options were severely limited but as she had also expressed in January 2021; '`I hate just staying at home…I like a busy life`' (Interview 3, June 2021)

In addition to voluntary work, Celita was researching higher education courses at local universities to plan her future in England, as she explained here:

Celita	I want to help people. So maybe in the future. Maybe not law, because it's very different law here in Brazil. So I need to re-study everything again. And I don't know if it is an option, because I don't know. Maybe. I like family law. So I like mediation. Yeah. So but I think it's something about social service, social worker can help the people. Oh, I love it help people
Interviewer	Yeah. Is this something that you've been researching? Have you been looking at social work jobs?
Celita	Yeah. Obviously, in this moment, I don't have the qualification for some jobs. So contact with the two universities, [university names] to see which my options are, so expensive for me in this moment. So maybe I needed to send my certificate to NARIC to translate maybe Master in the future is option for me, but I don't know because I need to improve my English first, I think. (Interview 3, June 2021)

Celita was still focused on improving her level of English but now she was coming to the end of the ESOL course, this was the first time she had mentioned actively looking at her options for retraining. Her confidence when using English was increasing, no longer thinking she was terrible, and she was able to be an active member of the local community through her voluntary work, similar to Marie. Celita had completed an initial assessment for an English course, starting in September, and had been offered a place on Functional Skills English Level 2.

7.5　　Samina　'English is so important. I need it maybe more than my mother tongue… I'm going to find a job with this language. I'm going to continue my study with this language.'

　　　　Samina was the only Level One student to contribute to the interview study and her narrative is the final one to be included in this chapter. She had arrived in England from Iran in the autumn of 2019 but was too late to join an ESOL class, so she had to wait for almost a year before being offered a place.

After completing an MSc in Chemistry, she taught herself English at home with books and moved to England to marry a British-Iranian. Her husband worked full-time outside of the house so Samina was often alone during the time of the research study, also partly due to the pandemic restrictions in England. When I met her in September 2020, she was unemployed and looking for a job that would either provide her with work experience linked to her career in science or the chance to interact in English on a regular basis.

Samina did not own a computer and so the first two interviews were conducted on her mobile phone, at times convenient to her. For the final interview, Samina chose to meet with me in-person in a college classroom after the end of one of her classes on a Friday afternoon.

7.5.1　Initial Motivation to Learn English

　　　　Samina had been in England for 11 months when she enrolled on the ESOL course. She was in the country on a spouse visa and had to be resident here for a certain amount of time before she could apply for university, which was her main plan for the future:

> ```
> English is the most important thing for emigrating to UK
> because I think every every people need it because it's
> the way to interact with people. I'm very interested in
> learning English because I want to insert into society
> very more serious because I want to get a good job. And,
> er, I think, er, my, my first barrier is English,
> because I'm not fluent, I haven't fluency, also my
> skills is weak, so I should improve them to get a job
> and after that … I can go to university to continue my
> study. Because I emigrated to the UK about one years,
> ```

> and I should stay at UK for about three years, we can go university. (Interview 1, October 2020)

As can been seen in that extract, Samina had clear goals of integration into local society, finding employment and continuing her study at university, something that had been delayed due to her migration. Samina had graduated two years before moving to England but without work experience and having what she deemed to be a low level of fluency in English, she was not yet able to realise her dreams of becoming a scientist.

Interviewer:	So, is your plan to work as something in science or as a chemist?
Samina:	Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I hope I can, but because I don't have experience, unfortunately. Because the situation in my country is so different from here
Interviewer:	OK
Samina:	Because in Iran, erm, you study, but there isn't any job opportunity. Most of the people, especially young, younger people have erm are jobless, are unemployed. So it's a bad situation. So I don't have any experience related to my field. So, erm, and it's a problem for me here. I try to improve my English and after that, apply for internship or anything just like that to improve my experience related to my fields. (Interview 1, October 2020)

These themes of career goals and communication appeared in her response to the survey question related to initial motivation. In the survey she completed in September 2020, Samina had indicated five reasons for attending the ESOL course, which were:

To apply for a job or better job,

To study at a British university in the future,

To be more confident when talking to local people,

I enjoy learning languages,

To help me to understand British TV and films

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As Samina explained in the excerpt above, applying for a job was linked to further study and a career in science; `It's not important to get any money or any salary because experience, I need to experience and I think it's the best way to develop myself.'` Work experience would also provide her with the opportunity to communicate with local people, something the Covid-19 pandemic had restricted her from doing. Away from the ESOL class; `I just talk with wall [laughs], with mirror [laughs]'` and her husband was usually too tired to talk to her in the evenings `he [husband] work a lot, so er, he don't have any, enough time because when he came back to home [laughs] he would like to sleep [laughs]'.` The ESOL class was her only face to face contact with the outside world; she enjoyed talking to her classmates but valued her time with the teachers as she found them easier to understand and believed they would help to increase her competence in English.

Similar to the other student participants in this study, confidence when using English, particularly speaking, was a major motivating factor in her enrolment and attendance on the ESOL course, as she explained here:

Interviewer:	So Wow. So the first time you spoke in English with somebody was here in the UK?
Samina:	Yeah, and with teachers and with teacher here. You and the teacher, yeah [laughs]
Interviewer:	Yeah
Samina:	I try to be able to increase my self-confidence because I think it's more important than language. Because if I, the language is so important, but self-confidence is more important than everything. Because in the future, I should go to interview and if I don't have any self-confidence, I cannot speech. Most of them it needs to improve, and I try to improve them first of them. But I'm not a self-confidence person I try to be self-confidence
Interviewer:	You're doing so well, that's brilliant.

Samina: Thank you (Interview 1, October 2020)

Despite being at Level One (the highest level of ESOL at the college), Samina still lacked confidence in her language abilities, similar to the concerns expressed by Celita and Amani. As Samina indicated in the survey, she enjoyed learning the language; 'I'm so fond of learning English' and she valued the language for her future life:

> The first one is English, English is so important. It's my, I need it, erm, maybe, maybe more than my mother tongue. I mean, more than my mother language, because I'm going to find a job with this language. I'm going to study, continue my study with this language. So it's more important to be a strong person in learning that, and yeah, use it' (Interview 1, October 2020)

The importance of English that Samina expressed here was facilitated by her status in the country as the spouse of a British national. She was planning to live in England for the rest of her life, which allowed her to plan for a future in English. At age 30, Samina was one of the youngest student participants and unlike the others, she was at the start of building her professional identity and this was directly linked to her learning of English. Despite the isolation she was experiencing, after waiting 11 months for an ESOL class she was highly motivated to improve her fluency and achieve her goals.

7.5.2 *Term 1 Motivation*

Samina sent the least amount of text responses of all five participants, with two of the seven responses not including a long answer explanation (Figure 7.5). She also indicated the lowest level of motivation and use of English across the term. The five long answer responses she shared with me all focused on her ESOL class and as she explained in her interview in January 2021, this was because it was her only opportunity to use English. As she had expressed in the first interview, she was still talking to the walls at home and feeling isolated.

Figure 7.5 *Samina, Term 1 Text Messages*

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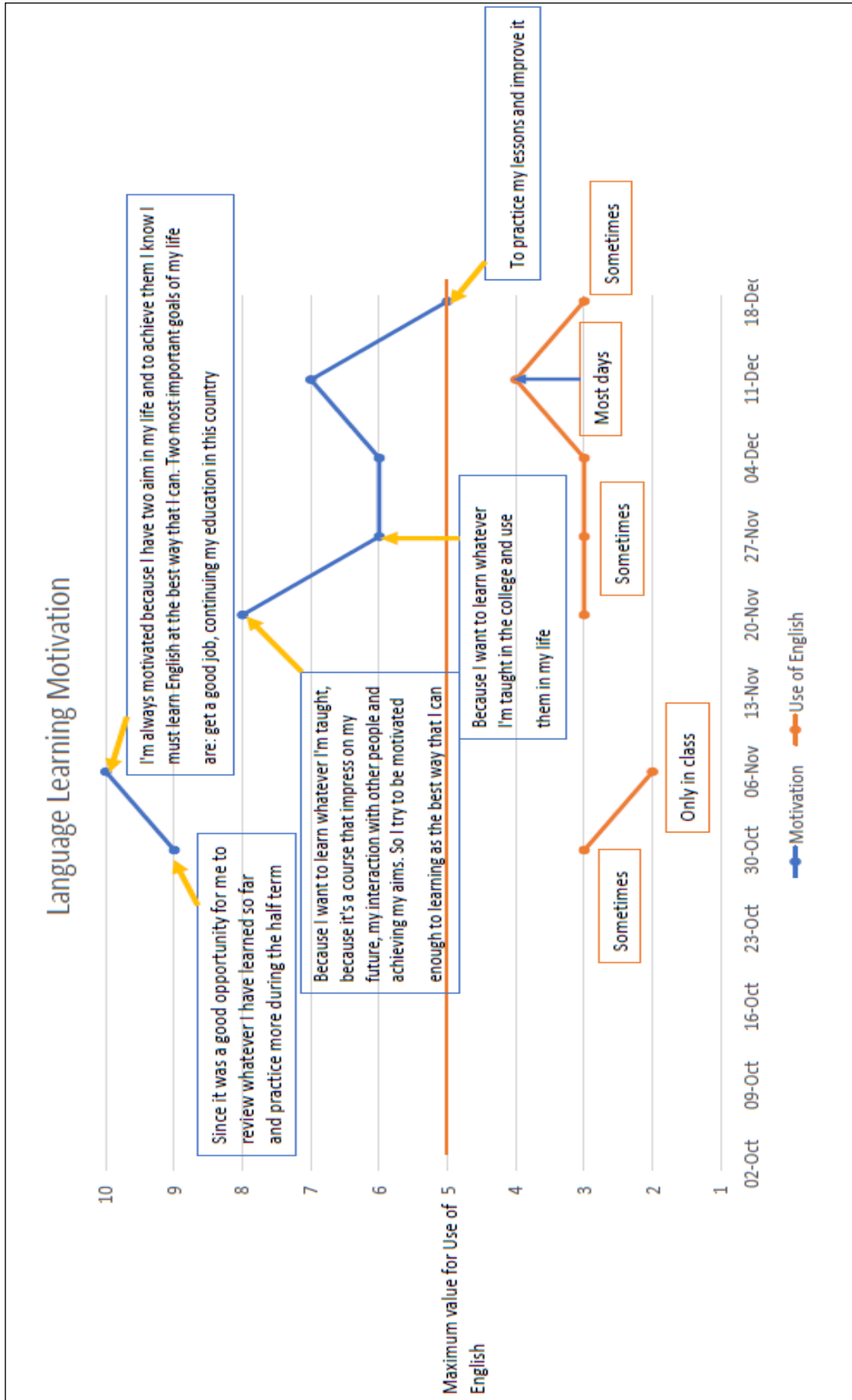
As with the other participants, we talked through the text messages in chronological order. Her response to my question about the first text message explained the difficulties she was facing finding employment during the pandemic and how this was impacting her opportunities to use English away from the ESOL classroom:

Interviewer:	So the first one you sent me said you were you were a number nine, so that's quite high motivation for learning. But you were only using English sometimes.
Samina:	Yeah. Because, for example, because in the at home I am speaking with my husband, Farsi, not English. And I, I'm talking more in class with classmates or teacher or sometimes I'm buying something, when I go out, so because of that I answer you sometimes, I use it, but when I'm at home, I do all of my practice that the teacher gave us
Interviewer:	Okay. Yeah. So it's maybe a little bit about the opportunity to speak with other people
Samina:	For example, in this level, because I need to improve my self confidence. I need to have more interact. So I'm applying for another job positions, but because the Coronavirus I didn't get an answer about some company and other places that I applied for that. So if I can, it's better because I can use all of the all of the things that I am learning at class. So because it's not enough, it'll help us to increase our vocabulary, writing or grammar, but we need to use it because if we can't use it, probably we forget it. (Interview 2, January 2021)

Just as Amani and Celita had expressed, Samina lacked confidence in her level of English despite being at a good level. In addition, similar to Marie, when she was at home she was alone for most of the time and struggled to

find someone to practice with. Her long term goal of attending university to further her career in science helped to motivate her studies (Figure 7.5, 6th Nov) but was delayed by Visa restrictions as she had no recourse to public funds until she had been the UK for three years. She was frustrated by the difficulties she was facing finding employment as her need for relatedness and competence were not being fully satisfied at this time.

After 6th November (Figure 7.5), Samina's motivation declined, ending the first term at a 5, which was her lowest point. I asked her whether she could explain why this happened and whether there were any particular internal or external factors that were affecting her over those weeks:

`Interviewer:`	`Can you remember, back then, what caused your motivation to go down?`
`Samina:`	`It's about 20 November, yeah,`
`Interviewer:`	`So we're looking at 27th November, 4th December.`
`Samina:`	`Because I'm human [laughs] this situation is hard for everyone, sometimes I get bored, I get tired. I get nervous. Sometimes I lose my hope. Because it's about three years ago, I graduated from university and after that, I just practice English speaking without any job, without any interaction. So it's difficult for me, and sometimes I lose my hope. But I try to get better to can to be more strong to continue, my way, so in these days, my motivation decreased, because I don't have any energy. So I give up everything around me.` (Interview 2, January 2021)

The dissatisfaction Samina described here seemed to be linked to her inability to continue with the life she had been creating in Iran. She had temporarily lost her identity as a scientist and academic and the intellectual stimulation that provided but she valued her ESOL class; '…it's not about the college because I like it, it's because of this situation. And my situation.' As she explained, it was difficult to stay motivated when she had very little control over her life outside the classroom, her need for autonomy was not being fulfilled. Her husband was supportive

and encouraged her to continue learning English; 'I talk with myself and I talk with my husband, sometimes he advise me, say me that I should be strong and fight [laughs]' but she struggled to maintain this level of focus as she had been unemployed and out of education for such a long time.

Samina attempted to interact with her classmates during Term 1 using a student group in Telegram but peer support appeared to be lacking in her class; 'I send messages but there isn't any enthusiastic students I can interact' so she had stopped sending texts by the end of the term, with her need for relatedness not being fulfilled.

At the end of the term, similar to Celita, she explained that she was extremely worried about her family in Iran during the pandemic. Her father was ill and she felt unable to help from the UK; '…the medicine is so short, in my country is very difficult for a sick person to find medicine.' I did not question her further on this as she became visibly upset whilst talking about her father so I moved the conversation back to her long term goals and future plans. She had remained on the ESOL course throughout the term, despite the demotivation she experienced, and she explained how she had managed to continue:

> Because I don't want lose this opportunity. I know the
> teacher are trying to learn us. So if I lose this
> opportunity, I can repeat it but if it repeat, I waste
> my time, because it's the time that I should learn.
> Sometimes I I can't focus because the problem that I
> have in my life but after a couple of days I try to
> focus and concentrate more and do my practice, don't
> lose this opportunity (Interview 2, January 2021)

Perhaps because Samina had waited a year for a class and she was determined to attend university in England, she wanted to learn what she could on the course. Her life outside the classroom made studying difficult but her hope of continuing her scientific career in the near future helped to maintain her motivation.

7.5.3 *Term 2 Motivation*

Like the other participants in this study, Samina's ESOL class was moved online in January 2021 for three months. The hours were reduced from nine to four and a half each week and classes were delivered synchronously in Teams. She was being prepared for a Speaking and Listening exam but she was unsure whether the exam would take place due to the lockdown restrictions. Samina was keen to get back into the classroom, as she explained here:

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Personally I think if it wasn't online it would be
better for us because, but there isn't any way. Because
in the normal classes we can have more interact with
each other because it's a listening and speaking course.
So it's so important to have more interact. The teachers
are trying to do it as the best one. (Interview 2,
January 2021)
```

As Celita had also expressed, there was sympathy for the teacher and an awareness that this was the only option for continuing the course. Around England, all the school and college buildings had been closed by the government and Samina was aware that if she did not attend the online course, she would lose at least three months of her class. When she reflected on this in the third interview in June 2021, she did not have any positive memories of the online class; 'It was so awful.' The teachers had started using breakout rooms, just as Ama Atta had described, but for Samina it was not an improvement on being at home alone; 'they put me with another person that do that they don't talk a lot. So I have to talk with myself.' (Interview 2, January 2021)

However, one aspect that did improve was Samina's interactions with peers away from the class during the second term;

```
I think the only problem was that messages [reads the
summary] but now it's a bit. It's, it's now a bit better
now. About before, at the beginning, when I messaged
yeah, I didn't get any more but now, they answered more.
I have we have WhatsApp. Yeah, we have WhatsApp and
```

Although they were not able to physically meet, this improved interaction online resulted in Samina's need for relatedness starting to be fulfilled, just as Marie and Ama Atta had described with their classmates. This was a positive change for Samina as she was still at home alone for most of the time. Unfortunately, she told me that she was the only student who did not have children and she felt that her classmates were too busy to socialise with her, even once the pandemic restrictions had been partially lifted in March 2021 when they returned to the classroom. This meant that her interactions were restricted to mobile phone apps but at least at this point other students were adding and responding to messages.

7.5.4 *Term 3 Motivation and Future Plans*

For the final interview in June 2021, Samina chose to meet with me in her classroom after her Friday afternoon class. I had to liaise with her teacher to book the room, which Samina understood and accepted that this resulted in her teacher knowing that she had participated in the interview study but as I discovered when I arrived at the college, Samina had already told her teacher about her involvement in the research. At this point in the year, she had completed an initial assessment for the following academic year and was waiting to hear whether she had been accepted onto a Level Two Functional Skills English course

```
My level is close to level two, after assessment. And I
think for the university is better to have functional
level two instead of functional level one, I don't know.
Because I'm talking with universities, and they don't
give me the I'm waiting for their reply, for their
answers. (Interview 3, June 2021)
```

By September 2022 she would have been in the UK for three years and therefore able to enrol at university. During this final interview, she expressed the frustration she experienced having chosen to move to England to get

married instead of continuing her studies abroad. Whilst reading the summary of her first two interviews, she explained this to me:

Samina	What should you do? And what's my chance? Anything like that. Yeah. [continues reading] it's especially because two, three of my classmates in the university in Iran, they take opportunity for studying abroad, one of my close friends applied for about two weeks later, immigrated to follow for PhD opportunity, and one of them want they, I mean, she's going to go to, to German and another one, too. Yeah, they take and because I was in that university, and that university that I was studying was one of the top universities in my country. And I know if I hadn't, if I was there, I can take this opportunity too because we have we are in the same level. But because I make a decision a different decision at that time, I get married, I come here and I am freezing so because of the government because of the English because of other things. So if I were at my university, I should get IELTS and after that I can get an opportunity for PhD. But now, I'm waiting for four years in and they are the reason that sometimes I have I make me to go to think if I did something wrong, how I should do and what should you do are something?
Interviewer	Did you know that when you decided to get married and come to the UK? Did you know that
Samina	Yeah, I don't know. No, I don't unfortunately, because my husband don't know about that. And when I come there, actually, I think after one year learning English, I can go to university and after that, I found out what?! I should wait for three years! So it's, it's something that annoys me a lot. (Interview 3, June 2021)

Samina had been in higher education in Iran for 12 years. Seeing her fellow classmates from university enrolling on PhD courses whilst she had to attend ESOL classes and delay or 'freezing' her career by three years, was extremely frustrating for her as her needs for autonomy and competence were not being fulfilled. She did not compare the speed of her progression in English with her ESOL classmates, as discussed by the teachers (5.4.3.2.1) as she felt little connection to them. Indeed, none of the five participants in this interview study compared themselves to their classmates; there was peer support offered in class and through WhatsApp groups but with everyone having different long-term goals, they focused on themselves.

When Samina messaged me in February 2022, she informed me that she had found a part-time job and had passed the Level Two Functional Skills English course in January 2022. She was preparing to enrol at university that September and she was feeling more positive about the future.

7.6 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shared the narratives of five students who attended adult ESOL classes during the 2020/21 academic year, narrowing the lens from the survey and teacher interview findings. Each participant had a different linguistic and cultural background but their needs were similar. All five were looking for their need for autonomy to be fulfilled, hoping to be supported to achieve their long term goals or become more independent in everyday life. Their need for relatedness was connected to both interactions in their local community and with their classmates but all linked to their status in England. None of the participants were going through the asylum system and viewed England as their new, permanent home. This aided their ability to make future plans and encouraged interactions with other speakers of English. For those who were unemployed or had little/no interactions with others at home, the pandemic severely restricted their chances to fulfil this need. However, through agentic engagement, all five students found different ways of connecting with the people around them in English, such as through mobile phone apps or finding voluntary work. Finally, their need for

competence was, in the main, being fulfilled by the ESOL class itself. In the months when they were taught in classrooms, they were given useful feedback from their teachers, they had the opportunity to use English in a supportive environment and their self-efficacy improved.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the results of the analysis found in chapters 5, 6 and 7 against the literature connected to Self-Determination Theory and more general language learning motivation literature of adult migrants.

8   Discussion of the Findings

The previous three chapters have presented the analysis of data collected from ESOL students and teachers over the course of an academic year (see section 3.3 for the timeline). Across the chapters, connections were highlighted whenever appropriate to the research questions and the similarities or differences between responses. The research questions this thesis aimed to answer were as follows:

1.   What motivates adults at Entry Level 3 and Level 1 to enrol on ESOL courses?

2.   What factors motivate adult learners whilst learning English at these levels?

3.   What factors demotivate adult learners whilst learning English at these levels?

4.   What impact did the Covid-19 pandemic have on adult ESOL learners' motivation in this context?

In this chapter, the aim is to synthesise the findings against the existing literature on language learning motivation, highlighting both the theoretical and methodological contributions arising from this thesis. This discussion chapter is organised into two sections: implications for teaching and learning and implications for motivation theory. These themes were chosen as they provide the space to discuss the findings at the micro, meso and macro levels, looking at student experiences first with a small lens and then widening the lens to situate the findings against the wider theoretical and methodological research landscape. As the findings chapters ended with the small lens, this is where the discussion will begin.

8.1   Implications for Teaching and Learning

Throughout the thesis, despite my inability to access ESOL classrooms, the focus of the study was on the experiences of adults learning English whilst attending ESOL courses. All student participants, (in the pilot study, survey and longitudinal study) were enrolled on ESOL courses in England. However, despite the pandemic restrictions, their learning was not

isolated to the classroom. In this first section, I will discuss the findings in relation to implications for ESOL teaching and learning, looking at the students' initial motivations for joining the course and the factors that affected their motivation during the academic year.

8.1.1 *Reasons for Enrolling*

As previously highlighted in Chapters 5 and 6, the most popular reasons for adults to enrol on ESOL courses at Entry Level 3 and Level 1 were to increase confidence when speaking to local people, and to apply for a job, closely followed by becoming more independent and to study at a British university in the future (Table 5.9). The majority of the student survey respondents indicated that they had moved to England to be with a family member or spouse, which was true for four of the five participants in the longitudinal study. This indicated that although these adults were not claiming asylum in Britain, they were also not here by choice, i.e. they had not applied for work here or come to learn English, but instead followed their relatives. This can be contrasted with earlier studies of migrant workers such as Matulionienė and Pundziuvienė (2014) and Warriner (2016), where participants had a clear work goal linked to learning English. Although future employment was a goal for the students who responded to the survey in this thesis, additional goals of increasing confidence and independence needed to be achieved before they felt able to embark on their chosen career.

This can also be compared to studies which only focused on people seeking asylum or refugees, who are often unable to make any future plans due to the unstable nature of their status in the country. This was highlighted in Ortiz-Cobo's study (2021) which compared the motivation of forced and voluntary migrants in Italy to learn Italian. The motivation to learn languages other than English (LOTE) is a growing field of research and the similarities of the participants with those in this thesis, are clear. However, in the Italian study anyone who was not claiming asylum in Italy was categorised as an immigrant and a degree of agency was assumed. As I discovered in this thesis, that categorisation is not so clear as two participants (Amani and Marie) had both claimed asylum elsewhere and this was the third country they had both settled in. In addition, for Ama Atta and Celita, who had been

separated from their immediate family for many months and years before being granted a visa to migrate to the UK, they were resuming their roles as wives and mothers whilst navigating a new life in a foreign country. Their husbands (and in Ama Atta's case sons) had moved to England first and they followed later. Celita initially stated that it had been her husband's decision for the family to relocate, though later acknowledged they had made this choice together for the benefit of their son. Ama Atta and Celita therefore represent a group who are often forgotten in the literature when research focuses on asylum seekers or migrant workers but does not include their wives who perhaps do not fall into either category.

Amani and Samina had both married British citizens and had made a decision to move to the UK to be with their new spouses. Amani's wife was also originally from the DRC and had successfully claimed asylum in the UK, attending ESOL classes when she first arrived, and Samina's husband was originally Iranian. None of the students lived with people who were British from birth, unlike the students in the Italian study (Ortiz-Cobo, 2021) who were motivated by their Italian spouses and connections they felt to the wider family who lived locally. It was not clear from the survey whether this was true for any of the participants and was not a topic discussed by the focus groups in the pilot study. For all five participants, their need to communicate with local people outside of their house and not rely on others in their daily lives, was their main motivation for studying at this level, echoing the results of the student survey. This indicated a need for autonomy which may not have been fulfilled when they entered the country or left their country of birth.

In the teacher interviews, the participants placed far more emphasis on gaining employment and enrolling on higher level courses than the students (Figure 6.1), as highlighted in section 6.5.3.1. Like the views of the students in the pilot study, most of the teachers did not believe the students were learning for purely intrinsic reasons. Although there was an acknowledgment that some students enjoy learning languages and many of them are multilingual, this was not enough motivation for someone to enrol on a course; they also required at least one extrinsic motivation.

The discrepancies between the student and teacher views on initial motivation may be explained by the very part-time nature of most of the courses. For some teachers, individual tutorials were not included in their timetable and there was an exam focus that occupied most of the curriculum. Similar to the situation of Cooke's (2006) participants, where their individual learning plan (ILP) goals did not match their learning needs and teachers were overworked, very little seems to have improved more than 15 years later. Although the focus has shifted from ILPs to exams, the number of guided learning hours has reduced, along with the opportunities for tutorials. When teachers were able to take the time to get to know their students and understand their long-term goals, they were able to design a more student-centred course. The teacher participants' knowledge of their students' future plans in this thesis was mixed, with some able to talk at length about students' prior learning, home lives and future aspirations, and others only able to say which exams they were working towards. Teachers such as Eliot, who only taught the class once a week and had missed sessions due to caring responsibilities, did not know his students at all – something he felt frustrated about as he felt this was not under his control. However, it should be noted that there were no instances of stereotyping by the teachers, which contradicts the findings of Sumithran (2018) in their investigation of the Australian context. This perhaps indicates a level of respect from the teachers towards the students as individuals with unique histories, which cannot be presumed from nationality or ethnicity, but which they do not always have the time to discover.

The five participants in the longitudinal study were generally very positive about their teachers and how their learning was supported. However, like some of the teachers, they were only able to tell me which exam they were doing each term and did not understand the concept of ILP goals. This is particularly concerning when we can see that only 9% of the survey respondents chose the ESOL exams as a reason for enrolling on the course (Table 5.9). This would indicate that for enrolling students, the ESOL Skills for Life exams have low value or usefulness despite being the main focus of

accredited courses. It is only when they are taken away, such as the situation described in the pilot study, that they become a reason to learn.

8.1.1.1   Long Term Goals

The initial motivations shared by the students and teachers through this study were a mix of long- and short-term goals, depending on the individual student. Goals linked to economic stability, as previously discussed, were high on students' priorities, which is perhaps not surprising as this is something many people would aspire to achieve, not just those in an ESOL class. However, looking at the explanations provided by the five student participants in their narratives, it is also closely linked to their imagined future selves and the regaining of identities lost since moving to England, such as parental or professional identities. This differentiates the research here from that of research into the experiences of children and young people who are still planning professional identities, whilst still living in their home countries.

The narratives of the four female students and their main reasons for enrolling in an ESOL class show there is a common theme of hoping to attend university to train in a similar career to the one they had or were working towards in their previous country. Ama Atta and Celita had had successful careers in pharmacy and law (respectively) and were hoping to gain qualifications in related subjects at British universities so they could return to the professional identities they once had. Working as a cleaner and warehouse operative, they were willing to work hard to earn money whilst studying but these were not occupations they had ever done before. In addition, they both arrived in England to re-join their families, with Ama Atta separated from her husband and sons for four years and Celita separated from her husband for one year. They had, perhaps temporarily, sacrificed their careers for their family, hoping life in Britain would provide more opportunities for their sons than their home countries of Ghana and Brazil. This sacrifice has similarities with the findings of an earlier study (Sidaway, 2022) where the female learners were unable to make their own plans for the future whilst they prioritised helping their children with schoolwork. Only 26.9% of the survey respondents in this thesis stated that they had enrolled

on the ESOL course to help their children with schoolwork but seven of the teachers mentioned this as a motivating factor (see section 6.6.3). Celita was one of those survey respondents and it was clear from her interviews that she wanted to be able to talk to her son's teachers and be more involved in his school life, as she had been in Brazil. Her own goals were not so clear at the start of the course but as her confidence grew and she found a voluntary position that fulfilled her need to help others, in a similar way to her prior career helping families in conflict, she was able to start planning her future.

Marie and Samina were also aiming to attend a British university but their careers were yet to begin. Marie had done some training as a nurse in Italy but had not been able to complete the course before moving to England. Samina had spent 12 years at university in Iran studying science and had hoped to immediately enrol on a PhD on her arrival in Britain having misunderstood her visa requirements. Both were also alone for most of the academic year with only occasional interactions with their partners at home and on the telephone. They were looking for work experience connected to their future careers to both aid their future university applications and find an opportunity to practise English with other people away from the ESOL classroom. In the final term, thanks to the relaxing of lockdown restrictions, Marie was able to find work as a carer, visiting the elderly in their homes. This was something she loved doing as it made her feel useful and connected to other people, which linked to her desire to train as a nurse in the future. However, Samina was still unable to find work experience as a scientist and her frustration with her lack of control over her career progression was clearly expressed.

For Amani, who hoped to be an entrepreneur, he viewed the ESOL class as an opportunity to improve his level of English to aid his business plans. He was not looking for a job nor was he intending to attend university; he desired the requisite confidence when speaking English to take full control of his business. This future economic stability was linked to his view of England as a place of opportunity, unlike Denmark where he had claimed asylum, and he intended to take every opportunity open to him.

As predicted, none of the participants were learning English for survival at this level but were learning to attain their goals for professional identity and economic stability. However, their ability to internalise these goals was affected by their self-confidence using English and their ability to find activities that connected to their past and hoped-for identities, such as voluntary work.

8.1.2 *Factors Affecting Motivation During an ESOL Course*

Taking the *person-in-context* (Ushioda, 2009) approach to exploring learner motivation, the context cannot be separated from the learner but, as Ushioda (2015, pp48-52) also argues, it can be challenging to decide which aspects of the learner and context to include in the research. In the present study, I had initially planned for the context to be ESOL classrooms in different cities in England but government restrictions removed this option. Thus, as data was collected remotely from wherever the participants were at those points in time, the context was chosen by the students. These geographical contexts were viewed by the learners in different ways, depending on their past histories and future plans and are therefore more than just background information that sets the scene. The following section will discuss the findings in relation to the different contexts that the students chose to describe in Chapter 7 in connection with their language learning and use of English, highlighting individual differences and their responses to the people and places around them.

8.1.2.1 **Resilience During an ESOL Course**

Resilience, grit, resourcefulness, perseverance; whichever term is chosen, highlights the ability to continue doing something despite difficult circumstances. ESOL students, due to their lack of cultural capital and ability to self-advocate, are often living in difficult circumstances and face adversity in their daily lives, such as racial abuse, xenophobia, low confidence when speaking English and restricted access to employment (either due to their status in the UK or their level of English and/or qualifications). The ESOL classroom, therefore, should provide a sanctuary. It should be a welcoming place where students are treated with respect and given the opportunity to practise English and improve their confidence with friends. From the

interviews in this thesis, the traditional classroom setting, even when socially distancing, was exactly as described. Students forged friendships and offered peer support. Teachers encouraged the students to express their views in class and provided a range of opportunities to speak. As Amani told me, he would answer every question and even come up to the front of the class to speak, which he felt increased his confidence to speak outside of the classroom.

Grit, as a concept in education, has been defined as 'perseverance and passion for long-term goals' (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007, p.1087) but also linked to personality. In this study, I am not suggesting it is a personality trait but rather a life skill that people who have experienced great upheavals in their lives have had to develop to survive. Amani and Marie both shared the experience of having to leave their home countries to seek sanctuary, travelling thousands of miles looking for safety. Of the millions of displaced people in the world, it would be a fallacy to label them all as having a resilient personality as any of us could become refugees at any point in our lives.

The trauma that is experienced through seeking asylum and escaping persecution was not a theme that emerged with the student participants in this study. Teachers Amber and Marie spoke of students feeling demotivated by slow progression caused by trauma but at the intermediate levels in general, it seems if students have managed to achieve this level of English, trauma may not be having as much of an effect on their learning as those at the lower levels who are learning for survival. It may also be explained by the low numbers of asylum seekers attending classes at these levels. According to the survey results, only nine respondents had moved to Britain to claim asylum, although as I found during the longitudinal study, this did not mean they had not claimed asylum elsewhere. The type of trauma linked to fleeing war and persecution was not discussed by the five students who attended interviews. However, the distress caused by being separated from family members, either due to visa restrictions or the pandemic, did appear in all five narratives, although not necessarily occurring during the data collection. For Ama Atta and Amani, the trauma had occurred in the past, before they

arrived in Britain and they were now living with their family and working towards their goals, seemingly able to focus on the future and learn English. For Celita, Marie and Samina, their trauma was very much in the present and was having a direct effect on their motivation to learn English (see table 8.1).

Table 8.1 *Trauma experienced by student interview participants*

Name	Past	Present
Amani	Claimed asylum in Denmark as a young adult, fleeing the war in DRC	
Ama Atta	Separated from husband and three children for approx. 3 years	
Marie	Claimed asylum as a child in Italy	Separated from fiancé in Italy due to Visa restrictions
Celita	Separated from husband for approx. one year	Home sickness, unable to visit family in Brazil due to pandemic restrictions, worried about the spread of Covid-19 in Brazil
Samina		Home sickness, unable to visit family in Iran due to pandemic restrictions, worried about the spread of Covid-19 in Iran

The support they received from teachers, classmates and relatives, all helped the five students to persist with their language learning despite past and present difficulties, for example, as Samina explained; '...I talk with my husband, sometimes he advise me, say me that I should be strong and fight'. There was a focus on improving their lives in the present, similar to my findings with women attending classes in 2019 (Sidaway, 2022) but there was a link with improving their socio-economic status through learning English, either through better employment prospects or further study. Their ability to persist in their English learning, completing an ESOL course during a pandemic, passing exams and improving their language level, illustrated how high their motivation levels were.

8.1.2.2   Online Spaces and Emergency Online Learning

There is often a distinction made between EFL and ESOL learners in relation to their access to speakers of the L1 (Kinginger, 2004). However, partly due to the pandemic restrictions and partly due to the students' self-confidence, the participants in this study had perhaps a great deal in common with learners in non-English speaking countries. Their lack of interaction with local people supports the findings of Norton (2000) and her studies of women learning English in Canada. As newcomers to a country, immigrants do not always live in English speaking communities and can find it difficult to make friends with local people. The students in this thesis had the extra limitation of Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions on their proximity to others, which further limited their interactions with English speakers.

An incident that required resilience from all involved, was the move from classroom to online teaching. The location of the ESOL courses themselves became a factor that affected motivation in September 2020 when students discovered that some classes were online, some were in classrooms and a few were offering a blended approach. As one survey respondent stated *'I am not attending the ESOL classes this year because I don't like online lessons. I prefer to wait until next year to continue my studies.'* (Survey, Student 31). This supports the overall drop in enrolments in adult ESOL in 2020/21, which rose back to expected levels in September 2021 once the lockdowns had finished and all classes were back in the classroom (Table 1.2).

Through the interviews with the teachers and students, the concept of quickly adapting to new surroundings and continuing to attend classes no matter how difficult the circumstances, emerged as a common theme. The teachers shared stories of students relying on mobile data and sharing mobile phones with family members to attend their online classes. There were students struggling to find quiet places to study but they did not withdraw from the course, they persevered even if this meant home-schooling their children or sitting in stairwells whilst attending ESOL classes.

None of the five participants in this context were able or willing to acknowledge their own resilience, this was just a way of life and nothing

unusual for them. For example, Celita attended a research interview whilst isolating with Covid-19, home-schooling her son and attending her ESOL class, a situation that many of the teachers had described when talking about their students. Additionally, Ama Atta explained how she used both a tablet and her mobile phone in the online class as she did not own a device that could give her access to everything. These types of problems did not demotivate the students, instead, they found solutions that enabled them to continue studying. Even for Marie, who was too unwell to go to work during the third lockdown in January 2021, she continued to attend her class online and organised her research interview for February when she had recovered. The students had enrolled on classroom-based ESOL courses in September 2020 but the unexpected move online did not affect the students' motivation and it perhaps made them even more determined to make the most of the opportunity to access an ESOL class, similar to the findings on research on the resilience of refugee learners (Hutchinson & Dorsett, 2012).

8.1.2.3   Spaces for Peer Interactions

During class time, the student participants completed homework and practised English with classmates but they also practised English away from class using mobile apps and talking to local people. As I was unable to collect data via classroom observation due to Covid-19 restrictions, my research was conducted in several places. The initial surveys were completed in classrooms, the interviews were conducted online in our homes and in-person in a classroom and a café, and the text messages were typed wherever the participants were when they had time to respond, which could be different every week. Perhaps because data were collected both in and away from the ESOL classroom, student participants shared stories of language learning and use of English in a variety of places. Those who were working, mentioned speaking to colleagues in English and their journeys to work. For Samina who was alone at home and unemployed, her responses were mainly focused on the ESOL classroom and her home, where she `talked to the walls`. The participants chose the venues for their data collection throughout the year and although I was not always aware of where this was occurring, such as the text messages, it seemed to open up the idea

of English language learning happening in all aspects of their lives. As Benson (2021) argues, the space where narrative inquiry takes place over a period of time, needs more attention in SLA research, rather than merely viewing it as a background to learning. If a person-in-context approach (Ushioda, 2009) is to be taken, all aspects of participants' lives need to be taken into account, including the often multiple places where learning occurs, both physical and virtual.

Virtual spaces, partly due to an increase in online learning during the pandemic, provided ESOL learners with more language learning opportunities than before. Both the teachers and students talked of establishing peer support and friendship groups using apps such as WhatsApp and Telegram. Pre-pandemic, students would chat before and after class and during break times, something I had found to be extremely valuable to the students in past research (Sidaway, 2022) and a scenario 'Sarah' mentioned in her interview (see section 6.6.2). These opportunities for incidental language learning where students grew in confidence, using language in a spontaneous, real-life way not only aided their proficiency but also encouraged autonomy (see Ushioda, 2011b). When classes moved online, these opportunities were lost due to a number of reasons, as highlighted by the teachers and students in this study. As Ama Atta explained, when she was at home, she was expected to continue her domestic chores even during class time because she had not left the house. Tasks such as cooking, cleaning and looking after children meant that the students were not able to socialise with their classmates as they were too busy, something that seemed to affect the female learners in particular.

There was also the issue of teachers not providing a social space online. As Amani and Marie described, their teacher asked them to turn their cameras off except for during breakout room activities. Teachers did not open online 'meetings' before the class start time, often as they were going from class to class or the time before class was given over to technical support for students unable to follow instructions for the online environment. During synchronous online classes, teachers also encouraged students to take a break from screens during the break times to prevent eye strain and fatigue,

which was the correct thing to do for the students' health. This did mean, therefore, that there were no online spaces where students could speak face to face. Teachers, such as Kieron, mentioned opening up spaces for text chat in class Teams groups, which were met with mixed results. The online text communication that seemed to work best was in groups established by the students themselves, away from the teacher. It seems when students were able to take control of the situation, their need for autonomy being supported by their peers, authentic language use was possible and friendships developed supporting the work of Reeve (2022) and Joesaar et al. (2012). This could also be compared with the findings of Watkins (2022) who found that online learning communities attended by Japanese learners of English not only supported their need for autonomy, but also highlighted the interconnectedness of all three, basic psychological needs.

Examining these relationships in terms of the students' need for relatedness, there seemed to be a clear connection between the feeling of being part of a learning community, forming friendships with peers and feeling motivated to learn English. Integration into the local community was not a topic discussed by the teachers but *'To be more confident when speaking to local people'* was the most popular answer in the student survey, suggesting there was a desire to at least communicate with people living nearby, if not integrate into the wider community. For one student, Amani, this was one of his main goals for improving his level of English. The ESOL course played an important role as it provided him with the space to practise English and increase his self-confidence. Local people were also important contributors, with his neighbours inviting him to join a neighbourhood app to communicate with others in the local area. Amani felt welcome in the community and this fulfilled his need for relatedness and helped to internalise his motivation as he became more autonomous and self-determined, even during lockdowns when he was not allowed to leave the house or socialise with others. Perhaps surprisingly as Amani was in an English-speaking country, these restrictions aligned his experience with EFL research into this type of motivation, where L2 users are often in different countries and only accessible online, such as Dincer and Isik (2022).

8.1.2.4   Workplaces

The use of English at work was described by all four participants who were either in paid employment, voluntary work or both. As the pilot study participants had explained, the need for English at work can vary according to one's role. For Marie, who initially used set phrases in her job, although the language was restricted it was her only opportunity to use English away from the ESOL classroom as she lived alone. For Amani, Celita and Samina, it was the lack of confidence when speaking English, whether at work or looking for work, that motivated them to enrol on the ESOL course. In Amani's case, this linked to his desire to be an entrepreneur which he did not believe he could achieve if he had to rely on his wife to make telephone calls for him. Celita only began to interact with others at work at a level she deemed useful once she had left her factory job and begun volunteering at a local food bank where she interacted with local people. When she valued the work, her motivation to speak English increased in line with feelings of autonomy and relatedness.

Ama Atta, who worked as a cleaner, shared the story of arriving late for work and being able to explain what had delayed her journey. This type of interaction, although not linked to a specific career, illustrates the importance of learning language that can be used in real world situations. There have been criticisms of ESOL courses not providing relevant or useful language for learners (e.g. Cooke, 2006) but in this case, the student believed she had been prepared for such an encounter. For Samina, in contrast, part of her motivation to join the course was because she was unemployed. She was partly attending to fill time and partly because she wanted to increase her confidence when speaking English as she hoped to find employment in England, which would involve speaking English with others. As she told me in October 2020, after living in England for over a year, the only English people she had spoken to were her teacher and me. With no prior work experience and her goal of attending university delayed due to visa restrictions she felt frustrated but had no clear plan for gaining employment whilst waiting to apply for university.

8.2   Implications for Language Learning Motivation Theory

Self-Determination Theory was utilised in this thesis as it explores to what extent human behaviour is controlled by outside factors or is autonomous, i.e. self-determined. To promote self-determination, with motivations internalised, three basic psychological needs must be satisfied, namely autonomy, competence and relatedness. These three needs formed the basis of my data analysis, partly because the students enrolling on ESOL courses did so under their own volition but also because there is a clear link to the Person-in-context relational view (Ushioda, 2009) of motivation. If adult learners are to be respected as people with past histories and lives outside the classroom, then their needs can be discovered and supported.

The findings clearly show that the use of the L2 motivational self-system theory (L2MSS) would have been difficult with this group of learners. The absence of an ought-to L2 self was perhaps expected, as participants were attending non-compulsory English classes and had some power over when and where they used English away from the course. The ideal L2 self was difficult to imagine for some of the participants as they struggled with low self-confidence and uncertainty brought on by the pandemic and their inability to find employment. Celita and Samina had left their ideal selves in Brazil and Iran, but they were setting goals to hopefully rebuild their careers, in different ways. Amani was the one participant who had envisioned and was living his ideal L2 self by the end of the study. He was also the only one who had made an informed decision to migrate to England, with achievable plans for the future. Furthermore, regarding the possible use of Expectancy Value Cost theory, as the data was collected both in and away from the classroom, the focus was not on tasks that could have been predicted by the researcher. Spaces and places have been discussed in some detail earlier in this chapter (see 8.1.2.2) and this combination of English use and goals both connected to the ESOL course and their daily lives, opens up the scope for the range of data supplied by the participants. Additionally, the focus of investment researchers, such as Darvin and Norton (2015) has mainly been on adult migrants' use of English away from the classroom as the majority of their participants have not been engaged in formal language learning.

Although there are many similarities between investment and motivation, as Darvin and Norton (2023) argue they are quite distinct and so should not be analysed as one. As with all qualitative work, data could be analysed in a range of ways and therefore further studies could perhaps utilise investment and motivation foci when researching the experiences of adult migrant students, encouraging the participants to choose the spaces and places to be included, as I have done in this study.

This section of Chapter 8 will discuss the findings explicitly against the Self-Determination sub-theory of basic psychological needs, discussing to what extent this theory can describe adult ESOL student motivation.

8.2.1 *Autonomy*

The concept of autonomy, as previously outlined in Chapter 2, is widely debated in the literature as it can be viewed as both a basic psychological need related to wellness and general life satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2018) and the ability to make decisions about one's own learning (Benson, 2013). The findings emerging from this thesis will be discussed using both viewpoints to aid the depth and detail of the analysis.

Making the decision to enrol on a non-compulsory course as an adult, as all the student participants had done, indicates an element of autonomy connected to taking control of their language learning. At Entry Level Three/Level One, students are not learning for survival as they have enough English to complete tasks such as registering with a doctor or applying for a low-level job. As expressed by the teacher participants, there is generally a presumption of aiming for higher level study or better employment prospects to improve their economic and social status in the country. For students in this context, taking control of their English language learning has a direct impact on their overall life satisfaction. As teachers such as Kieron explained, many learners were living in extreme poverty, accessing their ESOL classes in whichever way they could.

When the students' decision-making power was removed, this was when they became demotivated. For example, in the pilot study, students spoke of not being registered for exams by their teachers, based on the results of their

initial assessments. In contrast to the earlier study (Sidaway, 2018), where students were demotivated by repeatedly resitting exams until they all passed, the students here were not all given the opportunity to take an exam. In both studies, the decision-making power was partly with the teachers as they administered initial assessments but the exam benchmarks were set by the funding bodies, meaning essentially, the power lay with the government at the macro level. Initial assessments were being used as predictive tests to decide who would be ready for exams some months later. Students could choose to attend and participate in ESOL classes and practise English away from class but they could not take exams and progress to the next level until the ESOL provider allowed. The demotivation that followed such decisions was similar to the findings of Shohamy (2001, p.9) where a group of school children were not allowed to take tests for fear of them lowering the results of the school overall. This type of exclusion may result in funding being renewed thanks to high pass rates but the negative effect on the self-esteem and motivation of those not allowed to take exams should not be ignored.

The five students in Chapter 7 were all attending so-called 'exam classes' and I was unsuccessful in recruiting students in bridging courses as I was not invited to visit any of their classes. The introduction of bridging courses may have counterbalanced the stress caused by continually failing exams until they eventually passed, but all five students passed each exam first time and did not express any negative emotions in connection to the exams. They were essentially indifferent towards the Skills for Life exams as they knew they would pass, just as Eliot predicted in his teaching context. However, looking at the range of levels to which the participants progressed, a pass at Entry Level Three was not an indication of a student being ready for Level One nor was it an indication of which English Functional Skills level they may attend. For example, Kieron had expressed concern over the length of time it could take a student to move from ESOL to passing English Functional Skills Level Two but Samina completed this in less than six months. This contrasted with the findings of Baynham and Simpson (2010) where all students were moved from ESOL to a lower level of 'Literacy'. The examinations have changed in the past 12 years (the Cambridge exams in

the 2010 study were discontinued in 2016) but there is still a disparity between ESOL and Functional Skills English, which students are not necessarily aware of or prepared for, which could affect their motivation and need for autonomy. Samina was, we must note, highly educated having spent 12 years at university in Iran. She had study skills, and despite experiencing extreme loneliness during her course, she discovered ways of practising English on her own, just as she had done whilst preparing to move to England. Samina was frustrated by her career being delayed by her move to the UK but the autonomy she was able to preserve through self-study and ESOL attendance helped to maintain her motivation in addition to the support from her husband, which then continued into the next academic year when she completed Functional Skills English.

8.2.2 *Relatedness*

The five participants in this thesis had all decided to settle in England and perhaps that is why they had been able to form clear goals, unlike 'Nicolae' (Carson, 2008) who had no long term English language learning goals at the start of his course. Nicolae was claiming asylum in Ireland, so he was in a state of limbo, not knowing whether his application would be successful so he could stay in the country, which is in direct contrast to the five participants here who were not going through the asylum process. 'Nicolae' felt no connection to the English language and Ireland as he would have preferred to live in France because he spoke French. This difference in status, therefore, seems to have an impact on the students' feelings of relatedness, alongside their need for autonomy when choosing where to live and which language to speak. For people claiming asylum, these choices are often taken away, which highlights the vast difference between this group of learners and those in the more traditional EFL environments, supporting the arguments put forward by Mathews-Aydinli (2008). Although school children may be attending compulsory EFL classes, the language they use outside of class is their choice, as is the decision to ever use a language after completing school. For the five participants in Chapter 7, there was a degree of autonomy in their use of English as none of them had migrated to England against their will. This, perhaps, gives an illustration of the diversity found in

any ESOL class. There may be students learning together who have moved to England for work, to join family members after a long separation, to claim asylum or to start life again for a second time, after successfully claiming asylum elsewhere.

If adult learners are able to communicate with others in English, including locals, teachers and classmates, then they may begin to feel more of a connection to their new home. This was the most prevalent for Amani, for whom integration into the local community was highly important and linked back to his difficult experiences in Denmark, where he claimed asylum. Like Nicolae in Ireland (Carson, 2008) and Yuichi in New Zealand (Hignett & Barkhuisen, 2020), Amani had felt little connection to Danish people and did not feel able to assimilate. His connection to the wider community in England was far more important than any friendships he could build with classmates on the ESOL course, perhaps because his motivation to learn was to speak to local people and become more independent at work, something he had not achieved in Denmark.

In contrast, for the other four participants in the longitudinal study, integrating into the local community was not a motivating factor. For them, their need for relatedness was linked to making friends in the ESOL class, helping their children, and communicating with their work colleagues. However, all of their off-line interactions in English took place in the same city where they all lived, worked, studied and socialised (when not under lockdown restrictions). The city itself perhaps also supported the need for relatedness. In contrast to participants in earlier studies, such as those living in Canada (Norton, 2010) and London (Court, 2017), the students in Chapter 7 felt welcomed by local people and encouraged to speak in English. This was a small, multicultural city which prided itself on being a place of peace and reconciliation, having welcomed people from around the world throughout the last century and into the present millennium. No stories were shared of hostility towards them, only of their own frustration, which seemed to ease as the academic year progressed and their levels of English and self-confidence rose and the country opened-up with lockdown restrictions ending. These experiences may have been different had they been living in a different town or country,

which strengthens the argument for the importance of context within language learning motivation research.

8.2.3 *Competence*

Self-Determination Theory defines competence as the need to feel 'effective in one's own interactions with the social environment' (Ryan & Deci, 2018, p.86). This is achieved through support from those around you to develop skills and talents, and the chance to express yourself fully. In the language learning context, this has obvious links to the classroom environment, course design and the student-teacher relationship. This is perhaps most obvious at the meso level where the teacher holds most of the decision-making power, but also at the micro level where students are interacting with classmates and colleagues.

The topic of testing appeared in interviews with all five of the student participants as they all took Skills for Life exams. These exams did not seem to cause them any stress and everyone was expected to pass, which they did. The feedback they received from teachers surrounding exams or tests seemed to have the largest impact on their motivation and their resilience to continue learning English. Celita spoke of receiving good test scores and positive feedback from the teacher, which encouraged her to keep challenging herself to learn more, as she said '…`if it's a good feedback, inspired, if bad feedback, we can change and improve.`' (Celita Interview 2, January 2021)

This was echoed by Marie who described the impact of failing a homework task which almost resulted in her leaving the course, had the teacher not taken the time to explain how she could improve. Thanks to this teacher's intervention, Marie continued on the course and used this experience to help her classmates who also failed a test. As she explained to one peer `'I said, if you don't go [back to class] you you you don't join your dream, if you fail, you go ahead you go ahead, one day nobody remember you failed'` (Marie Interview 3, June 2021). Marie was able to remind her classmates of their long term plans to keep them motivated, showing the importance of peer support in this context. However,

it also shows the negative washback these classroom tests were producing. Despite their low-stakes status outside of ESOL, the students viewed them as high-stakes as they had the power to demotivate them to the point of considering leaving the course and halting their language learning. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, there is very little research into the impact of low-stakes tests on the motivation of adults to learn English. As Shohamy (2001) explains, how the test is viewed by the test taker and, in the example she gave, the response of those with an influence on the test taker's life such as parents, can potentially have life changing effects. Thankfully, the actions of the teacher helped Marie regain her confidence, which she replicated with her peers.

The impact of the teacher on the students' feeling of competence is an important factor. As previously shown in Chapter 6, the teachers themselves acknowledged their own influence on the students with regard to both the reaction to emergency online teaching and general attitude towards the learners. The impact of teachers on learner motivation has been investigated to some extent in the compulsory school context (e.g. Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Moskovsky et al.,2013) whereby teaching styles and feedback can influence student motivation. Similar findings seem to be present in this thesis, which indicate that despite the students being more mature and attending non-compulsory classes, the teacher has the power to affect learner motivation both positively and negatively. In addition, despite being able to withdraw from the course at any point, all of the students in Chapter 6 completed the academic year with only Marie admitting to contemplating withdrawing. Even during Term 2 when their classes were moved online and they all expressed their frustration with the mode of delivery and the teacher's online teaching style, they all continued to attend, perhaps in the hope that lockdown would end and they would eventually return to the classroom. However, their motivation did drop as they were not being provided the opportunities to practice English with their cameras on and some of their classmates were unable or unwilling as Amani argued, to fully participate.

8.2.4 *The Use of SDT with Adult ESOL Students*

As this thesis has shown, the Three Basic Psychological Needs sub-theory of SDT works well to explain the varying and interlinking needs of adults learning English in England. Unlike theories of motivation that focus solely on future goals or L2 future selves, this theory allows us (as researchers) to incorporate participants'· foci on both the present and the future, whilst acknowledging their personal histories that might have an influence.

There is often a presumption that ESOL students will be learning English to assimilate into the culture of their new environment and as such, Gardner's theory of integrativeness could be used as a starting point. The ability to talk to local people was one of the most popular reasons for enrolling but integrating into local culture did not appear as a reason for students to learn English. This may be explained by the multicultural and multilingual nature of the city where the participants in Chapter 7 where living and therefore English was needed as a means of communicating with local people, but this did not involve joining a new culture. Only Amani spoke of becoming part of his local community, it was not a priority for the other four participants. In addition, it was not a priority for the students in the focus groups during the pilot study. They were also living in a multicultural city, a different one to the adults in Chapter 7, and so this may explain why integration was not a language learning goal. The need for relatedness, however, is slightly different here as it may include a connection to others learning the language or the teacher, as found in this study. This does not presume that the language learners are aiming to join a new community of native speakers, indeed many of them will not interact with native speakers unless they meet them at work or college.

The needs for competence and autonomy may appear to be obvious in an educational setting. Indeed, all five students in Chapter 7 wanted to feel confident in their use of English and take control of their lives in England. These needs were both in the present, to aid their daily lives, but also in the future as they worked towards higher education and career plans. In contrast to students attending classes in community settings (Sidaway, 2022), these

students were attending FE colleges and were more focused on improving their own futures. All three needs were, however, impacted by the students' status in England and how their careers had been delayed. Categorising students as forced or voluntary migrants may therefore be too simplistic and further factors such as career stage, domestic situation and local context must also be included to fully investigate their needs when learning a new language.

8.3 Limitations of the Study

In this final section of the discussion, the limitations of the study will be addressed. As previously stated in Chapter 3, the research design had to be changed due to the restrictions imposed by the British government during the Covid-19 pandemic. This affected the study in one major way – access to students.

The response rate of the survey was directly related to my inability to visit ESOL classrooms and share the instrument with students, as I had done successfully during the piloting stage. After visiting two classrooms in September, I was thereafter reliant on teachers sharing the survey link with their students and the students completing it away from class time. As predicted in Chapter 3, this produced a low response rate and the results cannot, therefore, be relied upon for generalisability. However, I chose to include them in the thesis as they provide a small-scale overview of some of the students being taught by the teacher participants in Chapter 6 and could be contrasted with the results of the survey in the pilot study. If the main study were to be replicated in safer circumstances, a higher response rate would be expected as the researcher would have direct access to students.

The interviews were also affected by the pandemic restrictions as only students who had an internet connection and device that could access Microsoft Teams could participate in the longitudinal study. This excluded at least one student who I was aware of wanting to participate but as she did not have a mobile phone or broadband at home, I had no way of contacting her to organise interviews. The ideal scenario would be a combination of in-person and online interviews, where participants are able to decide how,

where and when to be interviewed so no one is excluded. I was as flexible as I could be with dates and times but I had no choice but to interview participants online. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, telephone interviews were not a viable option as this is often quite a difficult way for language learners to communicate as they cannot see any visual clues. In addition, this would not have helped the student who did not have a telephone and so would not have widened participation.

Additionally, I was not allowed to conduct classroom observations during the study, also due to pandemic restrictions. This would have enhanced the research by adding student-teacher and student-student interactions, captured in real-time rather than through reflections. I had attempted to access online classes as a substitute for classroom observations but the teachers I approached in August 2020 did not feel confident enough in their online teaching to have an outsider visit the class. However, the use of text messages to keep in touch with the student participants and capture their motivation and use of English in real-time, served as a useful alternative. This was an experimental approach to data collection as it had not been attempted before but the feedback I received from the five students who participated in this stage of data collection was that it was easy and convenient for them to complete. However, for me as the researcher it was far more time-consuming as all five of the participants responded at different times over the Friday and weekend and I had to respond to each message manually. The responses that I collected during this time provided an insight into the students' lives and use of English that I may not have been able to collect had I situated the study in the college. They also worked well as stimulated recall devices in the second interviews as they had been written by the participants themselves and were date stamped.

One limitation that was not caused by the pandemic was the length of the study. Longitudinal studies often aim to cover many years, perhaps tracking student motivation through secondary school or university, where students are likely to attend classes for three or more years. Adult ESOL is different in that students usually enrol for a year, or even a term, with no guarantee that they will re-enrol on the next ESOL course. If I had had more time during the

PhD, I would have revisited the participants in the year following data collection, tracking their language learning motivation as they either completed Level 1 ESOL or Functional Skills English courses. This thesis provides an insight into one academic year, when all five participants were attending ESOL classes at the same college, which was not true for the following year as they all progressed to different courses or left the college. The context was therefore the same for each participant in Chapter 7, which aided the focus of the analysis, but it would be interesting to investigate their language learning motivation once the educational context changed.

Overall, I was satisfied with the levels of student and teacher participation in the study. However, to add to the transdisciplinary nature of the research, data from stakeholders at the macro level would provide another level of triangulation, which is possibly missing here. The study could therefore be extended by interviewing relevant people in government or at examination boards for their views on the findings displayed here.

9   Contributions and Conclusions

This thesis aimed to investigate the reasons why adults enrol on ESOL courses in England at Entry level 3 and Level 1, and the factors that affect their motivation through an academic year. Data were collected through a survey, online and in-person interviews with students and teachers, and text messages sent to students during the first term. A dialogic approach to data collection and analysis was taken whereby each stage was checked and discussed with the participants, allowing their voices to be heard above that of the researcher. No doubt, my own bias as a former ESOL teacher is included in this thesis but by using direct quotes from all participants and by involving them in checking my interpretations of their data, I hope that their views are the ones being shared here and not mine.

The findings suggest that for the majority of adults who enrol at the intermediate levels, the main motivation is the desire to increase their self-confidence when speaking with local people in England. For those who can achieve this, they are able to work towards goals related to careers and further education and begin to build an identity that they either lost during migration or had not yet achieved. The factors that impacted their motivation were directly connected to the needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence that each individual student felt was being met or neglected at certain points. This also connected to the student's status in the country, their reasons for moving to England and the clarity of their future plans.

This final chapter will discuss the contributions this thesis makes in relation to mixed multimethod research, ESOL policy in England and future directions for research into language learning motivation.

9.1   Methodological Contributions

The Douglas Fir Group's transdisciplinary framework (2016) not only called for data to be collected on a wide range of topics pertaining to SLA but also from or with the stakeholders involved. By organising the findings of the survey and teacher interviews into macro, meso and micro levels, the

analysis could be separated into factors created by stakeholders and gatekeepers at each level, for example, decisions made by government (macro), teachers (meso) and students (micro). Within these levels, topics such as examinations, students' socio-economic status, identity and everyday interactions could all be categorised and presented in relation to the impact on student motivation, emphasising the importance of looking at each student as a whole person with a life outside the classroom (Ushioda, 2009).

The 'trans' nature of the framework moved it away from interdisciplinary by working with stakeholders (Szostak, 2015), in this case the teachers and the students. There have been calls for ESOL teachers and students to have their voices heard in research literature for some time (e.g. Cooke & Simpson, 2008) which align with the arguments of scholars such as Ushioda (2021), Harvey (2015) and Atkins (2013) that participants need to be involved in the data collection and analysis. Through the use of verbatim quotes and longer excerpts of interview interactions, the participants' voices are central to the thesis. By asking student participants to influence the survey design, respond to open-ended text message questions and reflect on the analysis through the study, I aimed to ensure that the findings reflected the student experience in this context. This thesis has shown that it is possible to work with adult ESOL students at the intermediate level to design data collection instruments and reflect upon the emerging findings. To attempt this with students at the lower levels, translations would be required or the research would need to be conducted in their L1 to ensure they are able to contribute.

The next stage of transdisciplinary work is both the practical and academic application of the research, which will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

9.1.1 *Narratives*

Through storytelling, the five participants in Chapter 7 were able to position themselves within different contexts, expressing their opinions and identities in different ways. The findings support the work of De Fina and

Tseng, (2017), as student participants were more likely to express opinions through storytelling than directly sharing their views. Examples of this can be seen in all five narratives, such as Ama Atta's story of arriving late at work, Marie encouraging a peer to continue studying, Amani's arrival in England, Celita's experience at work and Samina's tales of loneliness at home during the pandemic. Of all five students, Samina expressed the most direct opinions, particularly when describing the online learning; the other four participants used stories, while Samina simply stated 'it was awful'. This may be because Samina was the highest level student and therefore felt the most self-assured when speaking English but it might also be connected to her reason for enrolling on an ESOL course. Where other students had enrolled with clear goals for their use of English, Samina was filling the time until she could apply for a university course and the ESOL course gave her something to do. This is similar to the reasons expressed by an asylum seeker in Carson's (2008) study in Ireland who had no desire to learn English but was attending classes whilst he was not allowed to work. In the Irish study, the student was able to eventually set language learning goals when his need for relatedness was supported by his classmates and teacher, as he had felt no connection to the country or local people. For Samina, her need for relatedness was also unsupported as she was alone at home for most of the study and as one of the few people on the course without children, she felt isolated from the group. However, she had made a commitment to living in England through her marriage and this seemed to motivate her through the course. England was now her home and so even though she did not want to attend ESOL classes, she could see that they helped to improve her confidence when speaking English and this perhaps appeared through the way she was able to express direct opinions in her interviews.

Storytelling also allowed the teachers to express opinions, sharing examples from their teaching experience. Although their interviews were more structured than the student interviews, I tried to allow the teachers the space and time to speak freely and lead the conversation to some extent. The majority of the teacher participants were not known to me prior to the

interviews and so rapport and trust had to be built quickly during the interviews, which perhaps explains their use of stories to express opinions. The dataset in Chapter 6 was analysed thematically but many of the excerpts displayed contained short stories, such as how the students were coping with learning during the pandemic and descriptions of events that motivated and demotivated their learners in 'normal' years. The story that Amber shared (see section 6.5.1.4) of a student suffering the effects of trauma and how they affected her language learning progression and motivation, is one example of the usefulness of stories in this context as it clearly explains the difficulties faced by some ESOL students and the importance of teachers who can provide appropriate support. This example supports the findings of earlier research on the impact of trauma on the education of asylum seekers (Chamorro et al., 2008) which was not discussed by any of the student participants here, perhaps because they were not claiming asylum in England.

9.2   Text Messages

Weekly text messages in Term 1 provided not only a way of tracking student motivation and use of English but also ensured that I kept in touch with the participants when I was not allowed to visit their classrooms. The students shared the factors that affected their motivation each week and did not limit their responses to the ESOL course, sharing stories such as visiting the doctor, going to work and making future plans. As text messages do not require an internet connection, this method of data collection could be used in other contexts where participants cannot afford to use mobile data or the infrastructure is not present in their country.

Unlike diaries which are traditionally written only for the author to read, text messages are always composed for a recipient to read and respond. In the 21st century, it is unusual to find someone who has never sent a text message and so the participants in this study were comfortable with the scenario, understanding that I would read their messages. Texts, as opposed to diary entries, are also usually quite short, which may make them a more accessible form of communication when participants are being asked to write

in an additional language. If I had known the first languages of the participants in advance, I would have been able to provide the option of messages in their preferred language. However, mirroring the reality of an ESOL class, there was no way for me to know which languages the participants would speak before they volunteered. These student participants were not beginners and so I expected them to be able to use English to respond to the text messages, especially as they could choose how much or how little to write each time. Samina, the student with the highest level of English, actually wrote the least in her responses but this might have been connected to her general lack of language learning motivation rather than her inability to explain her levels of motivation.

The decision to adapt a quantitative method (the Experience Sampling Method) for qualitative analysis, increased the 'mixed' element of the methodology, rather than following the traditional survey plus interviews research design favoured by many. Although the text messages were compiled into charts, the results were not analysed quantitatively as I believed the numbers to be subjective responses, which could only be explained through interviews that explored the stories and the reasons behind them. With the increase in popularity of motigraphs in the field of language learning motivation research (Walker et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2021), this innovative approach (using text messages) offers an alternative way of constructing the charts. The combination of an adaptation of the Experience Sampling Method with motigraphs (or motometers) was novel and experimental. It provided three months of language learning motivation data that I would not have been able to collect whilst unable to visit the participants; it was simple yet effective.

The decision to use the motigraphs as a stimulated recall device worked well to encourage the student participants to talk through their experiences of the first term. It also acknowledged that the motivation levels (shared as numbers from one to ten) were highly subjective and varied between participants. One student's ten was another student's seven; the numbers acted as intra rather than inter alia devices. This data collection method helped the participants express their needs and opinions connected to

learning, using English in a format where they had control. They could share as much or as little as they chose, on whatever factor they deemed important each week. In addition, all the data was stored in their phones as well as mine so they could look back at any point of the study to reflect on their responses. These techniques could easily be replicated in future studies, encouraging the sharing of student experiences over longer periods of time.

9.3 Suggestions for ESOL Policy

As I complete this thesis in early 2023, England still does not have an ESOL policy. This is the same situation as Northern Ireland and now that the one in Scotland has expired, Wales is the only country in the UK with an ESOL policy. The disparity across courses and examinations described in this thesis, particularly by the teachers in Chapter 6, result in the student experience varying according to ESOL provider, in some cases leading students losing all motivation to learn. The results of this thesis show that for learners to internalise their motivation, make clear future plans and achieve their individual goals and potential, ESOL courses need to be designed in such a way that the needs of learners are understood and met. Therefore, I would make the following suggestions for ESOL in England:

- The launch of an ESOL policy in England
  An ESOL policy needs to be created in England to organise provision across the country, taking into account the differences between regions. This could be modelled on the policies enacted by the Welsh and Scottish governments and adjusted as England has a much larger ESOL population.
- Overhaul of the Skills for Life Examinations
  Adult ESOL students need to be given the opportunity to take examinations that can help them to achieve their goals and provide an adequate challenge to aid their need for competence. Until there is funding available for exams that are accepted by employers, universities and even Functional Skills English tutors, they will continue to be used as gatekeeping devices by ESOL providers, stopping learners from progressing to the next level of ESOL and

potentially demotivating them. If all exams were externally set and marked, ESOL levels would not vary across providers and certificates would hold value and reliability. Learners need to be respected as adults who can choose how to use a certificate, rather than being forced to take exams that cannot help their learning needs or excluded from exams based on an initial assessment.

- Increase of Course Funding

Since the reduction in funding in 2015, all adult ESOL courses in England have been part time but students are still expected to complete the same exams. This has taken time away that had been used for tutorials, which included vital time set aside for teachers to familiarise themselves with their students, assess learners' needs and goals, and set appropriate targets in the classroom. Without this time, which teachers used to get to know their learners and set targets, teachers are unable to plan learner-centred lessons and adequately meet their individual needs. Funding needs to be returned to the pre-2015 levels in order to adequately support students' needs through an increase in class time and tutorials. By speaking to the participants in Chapter 7 three times through the year, I learned about their reasons for studying, their needs that were being met or needed supporting, and their hopes for the future. In contrast, some of the teachers could only tell me which exams their students were taking but knew nothing of their individual needs, which could result in low levels of student satisfaction and attainment through the year. As an outsider, I was able to build rapport and provide a safe space where learners felt comfortable to share their language learning experiences. If instead it were teachers who were able to regularly meet with their students during their course to create this space and rapport, they would be able to use this information to adapt to their students' needs and goals. This would provide a firmer learning support system for students as well as more bespoke instruction that would suit each learners' needs, contributing to student wellbeing and achievement.

9.4   Pedagogical Implications

The theoretical framework used in this thesis connected the initial motivation of learners to enrol on an ESOL course with their three, basic, psychological needs, analysing to what extent those needs were being met and their ability to internalise their motivation. For the majority of learners at the levels in scope here, increasing self-confidence when speaking English was extremely important and had a direct link to their ability to both set and achieve future goals. Learners therefore need to have the space to speak English in class using authentic language that could be used in their everyday lives. This may be provided through the use of unscripted role plays or discussions on current events, or even ample break times where students can socialise together and form friendships with people who do not speak the same first language. Oral storytelling, which emerged in the interviews, could be encouraged in English language classes as a way of both getting to know students and improving fluency. Much has been written about 'bringing the outside in' (Cooke & Wallace, 2004; Baynham et al., 2007) whereby real-life situations are used as teaching aids to generate authentic language use in the classroom but the importance of peer support is an area of adult language learning that requires further investigation.

WhatsApp and Telegram groups grew in popularity with ESOL students during the pandemic and these seemed to work well as they encouraged students to interact away from the classroom. Peer interactions, as highlighted by both the student and teacher participants in this thesis, can also help to fulfil the need for relatedness as some learners rarely interact with local people or anyone away from their ESOL class. This need was particularly heightened during the pandemic but for students who live alone and are unemployed, similar situations can occur in 'normal' times. As we emerge from the pandemic and the majority of ESOL classes are back in traditional classroom settings, the use of technology both during and outside class time needs to continue as not only does it support the students' need for relatedness but also their needs of autonomy and competence as their confidence grows and they are able to discover their own ways of using English online.

Interactions with teachers were also highlighted as important, with both sets of interview participants sharing examples of how the teacher can have an impact on motivation. The impact of the teacher on language learning motivation is a growing field of inquiry (see Al-Hoorie, 2016; Henry & Thorson, 2018, 2021) and teachers should be encouraged to reflect on how they respond to their learners and the unconscious bias they may hold. Feedback on formative assessment, such as in-class tasks, homework and practice tests, was important for the participants in Chapter 7 and they described how it directly impacted their motivation to learn English, both positively and negatively. If a researcher is able to access classrooms, an ethnographic approach could be taken to investigate the impact of teachers on adult ESOL learners' motivation, integrating classroom observations with interviews during a course.

9.5 Future Directions

One of the main themes of this thesis was the importance of including the voices of both teachers and students from the adult ESOL sector in language learning motivation research. The views and experiences shared here are not the same as those of children and young adults in the EFL sector, not only because they are at a later stage of life but also because they often have less autonomy over where they live, the work they are employed to do and the language they are learning. The ability to internalise one's motivation to learn a language is reliant on the needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence being fulfilled but also being at a stage in life where you are open to these needs being met. If a learner is living in limbo, waiting for the next stage of life to begin but not having any control over this decision, language learning goals will also be delayed. Self-belief, which may be supported by the teacher, peers or family members, can aid adults to believe they have the competence to begin making future plans, even when their career and education have been disrupted to the point of seemingly no return. This is something that needs to be at the heart of every adult ESOL course, remembering that many learners may be alone in the country with no support or living with relatives whose needs often come before their own.

It is perhaps a cliché to say that more research is needed in this area but if more voices are shared from this sector of language education, we can continue to understand the needs of the learners and better support them to achieve their potential as language users. Future studies that take a longitudinal, qualitative approach would be welcomed, particularly following adult learners over a longer period of time to examine language learning motivation as students progress through the levels, move on to other courses or learn in their own time, similar to the work of Lamb in Indonesia (2012; 2018). There are currently research projects across Europe investigating the educational experiences of people navigating the asylum process, such as the Migration, Learning and Social Inclusion research programme at Linköping University, Sweden which is following adults, and a project in England researching unaccompanied children in schools (Hutchinson & Reader, 2021). If language learning motivation could be included as an analytical lens, such as the Basic Psychological Needs theory utilised in this thesis, motivation could be tracked alongside enrolments and achievements, and the full learning experience could be shared.

I intend to continue to work with ESOL stakeholders to share the findings in this thesis through talks, publications, workshops and designing course materials. As the PhD comes to an end, the impact and public engagement work can increase; sharing the voices of ESOL students and teachers to influence course design and ESOL policy through my involvement with teaching associations such as IATEFL and NATECLA. As shown in this thesis, adults attending ESOL courses at the intermediate level may have much in common, but their individual differences highlight the need to increase course hours so that teachers can learn more about their students' needs and ensure they are supported through their language learning journey.

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11   Appendix

11.1   Appendix 1a – Survey used in January 2020 Pilot

ESOL Student Survey

Hi, my name is Kathryn Sidaway and I was an ESOL teacher for 11 years, teaching adults in colleges in Bradford and Coventry. I have recently gone back to university to research student motivation and the impact of exams.

This survey will help me to design the one I will use for my PhD. If you find the questions difficult or you think any important questions are missing, please let me know at the end of the survey.

You do not have to tell me your name and all your answers will be anonymous.

Thank you for helping with my research, I hope you will find it useful for your language learning.

Part One – Personal Information

1. What is your gender? (Please circle)
    a. Female
    b. Male
    c. Other
    d. Prefer not to say

2. Country of Origin

    _____

3. Nationality

    _____

4. First Language

    _____

5. Age group (please circle)

    a. 18-20
    b. 21-30
    c. 31-40
    d. 41-50
    e. 51-60
    f. 60+

6. When did you come to the UK?

    _____

Part Two – Learning English

7. Did you study English in your home country?
    a. Yes

b. No

8. When did you start attending ESOL classes in the UK? If you had a break and then returned, please mention this.

_____

9. Which level are you studying at? Please circle.
   a. Entry 3
   b. Level 1

10. How many hours per week is your course?

_____

11. How many hours of ESOL would you like to have each week?

_____

12. Have you passed any ESOL exams in the UK?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. No result yet

13. If you answered YES to the last question, please write the name of the last exam you passed, and when you passed it:

    Name: When:

14. Will you take an ESOL exam at the end of this course?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Not sure

15. What are your main reasons for learning English? Please tick no more than 5 that apply to you.

I am learning English so that I can apply for a job or a better job	
I am learning English to make friends with English-speaking people	
I am learning English to help me with the job I have now	
I am learning English so that I can be more independent (for example, talk to the doctor, learn to drive)	
I am learning English so that I can take an English exam (for example, ESOL exams, IELTS)	
I am learning English so that I can study at a British university	

I am learning English to help me start a college course	
I am learning English to help my children with their school work	
I am learning English because I enjoy learning languages	
Other (please write):	

16. Do any of the problems in the list below ever stop you from attending ESOL classes? Please tick any that do.

Sometimes I don't come to class…

because I have to look after my children	
because of family commitments	
because of my job	
because the class is too difficult	
because I think the class is not the right class for me	
because I am tired	
because I am worried about forgetting my first language	
because I have appointments (for example, Home Office, solicitor, Job Centre)	
Other (please write):	

Not applicable – I have 100% attendance ☐

17. Do any of the problems in the list below stop you from doing your ESOL homework or practising English outside of class?
Please tick any that do.

Sometimes I don't do my homework…

because I have to look after my children	
because of family commitments	
because of my job	
because the class is too difficult	
because I think the class is not the right class for me	
because I am tired	
because I am worried about forgetting my first language	
because I have appointments (for example, Home Office, solicitor, Job Centre)	
Other (please write):	

18. Do you have anything else you would like to tell me about learning English, your class or your exams?

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for completing this survey.

If you would like to take part in a group interview about these questions, please let me know.

Kathryn

11.2 Appendix 1b Final version of the survey used September – December 2020

Blue = Questions added after the January 2020 pilot study

ESOL Student Survey

Hi, my name is Kathryn Sidaway and I was an ESOL teacher for 11 years, teaching adults in colleges in Bradford and Coventry. I have recently gone back to university to research student motivation and the impact of exams.

You do not have to tell me your name and all your answers will be anonymous.

Thank you for helping with my research, I hope you will find it useful for your language learning.

Part One – Personal Information

What is your gender? (Please circle)

    a. Female
    b. Male
    c. Other
    d. Prefer not to say

2. Country of Origin

_____

3. First Language

_____

4. Age group (please circle)

    a. 18-20
    b. 21-30
    c. 31-40
    d. 41-50
    e. 51-60
    f. 60+

7. Do you have a job?   YES/NO

If YES, what is your job?

_____

8. What is your family situation? Please tick as many as you need to.

I have a child or children at school	
I have a young child or children at home or at nursery	
I do not have children (in this country)	
Other:	

5. When did you come to the UK?

    _____

6. What was the **main reason** you came to the UK? Please tick ONE only:

To work	
To be with family/husband/wife	
To claim asylum	
To learn English	
To study	
Other (please explain	

Part Two – Learning English

7. Did you study English in your home country?
    a. Yes
    b. No

8. When did you start attending ESOL classes in the UK? If you had a break and then returned, please mention this.

    _____

9. Which level are you studying at? Please circle.
    a. Entry 3
    b. Level 1

10. How many hours per week is your course?

    _____

11. How many hours of ESOL would you like to have each week?

    _____

12. Have you passed any ESOL exams in the UK?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. No result yet

13. If you answered YES to the last question, please write the name of the last exam you passed, and when you passed it:

    Exam: When:

14. Will you take an ESOL exam at the end of this course?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Not sure

15. What are your main reasons for coming to an ESOL class this year?
    Please choose no more than five and order them from 1 – 5 with 1 being the most
    important reason for you.
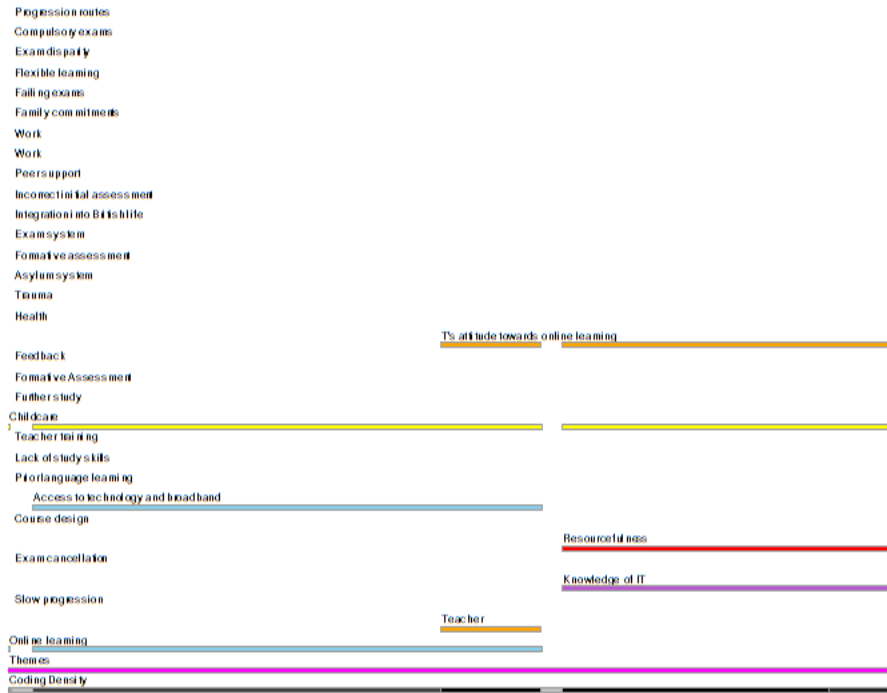   You can choose less than 5 if you want.

I am learning English…

so that I can apply for a job or a better job	
to be more confident when talking to local people	
to make friends in the class	
to help me with the job I have now	
so that I can be more independent and not use an interpreter in my daily life	
so that I can take an English exam (for example, ESOL exams, IELTS)	
to learn about British culture	
so that I can study at a British university	
to help me start a college course (for example hairdressing, accountancy, mechanics, childcare)	
to help me to understand official letters (for example from the hospital, school or solicitor)	
to help my children with their school work	
because I enjoy learning languages	
because the Job Centre told me to join a class	
to help me to understand British TV and films	
Other (please write):	

16. Do you have anything else you would like to tell me about learning English, your
    class or your exams?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

Thank you for completing this survey!

11.3 Appendix 2 Example transcript and coding

Progression routes
Compulsory exams
Exam disparity
Flexible learning
Failing exams
Family commitments
Work
Work
Peer support
Incorrect initial assessment
Integration into British life
Exam system
Formative assessment
Asylum system
Trauma
Health

Ts attitude towards online learning

Feedback
Formative Assessment
Further study
Childcare
Teacher training
Lack of study skills
Prior language learning
Access to technology and broadband
Course design

Resourcefulness

Exam cancellation

Knowledge of IT

Slow progression

Teacher

Online learning
Themes
Coding Density

Kathryn Sidaway 07:28
Yeah, yeah. So do you have students then that have been studying online since March?

07:37 **Vanessa**
Erm, across our department? Yes. I mean, I, we all continue teaching in some way online. But what I found was, and all the students I was teaching was a, it was a real, not a real handful, not a real handful, only a handful

Kathryn Sidaway 07:56
[laughs]

07:57 **Vanessa**
Who chose to engage, well, I think chose to engage. That sounds a bit unfair but they did engage, I guess, mainly because they again, a lot of them had children at home. The children were using the internet, they couldn't or they were managing their children or helping their children with their lessons, or they literally didn't have the time.

Kathryn Sidaway 08:20
Yeah.

08:20 **Vanessa**
And it was a very small number of students who actually engaged so I did it as tutorials. We had tutorials, we didn't have lessons, as such. I gave him tutorial slots, and those who did engage it worked really, really well. And it was really, erm, I really enjoyed the experience because if no one had booked the next slot, we just carried on. But yeah I didn't do a classroom sort of teaching.

Kathryn Sidaway 08:48
Do you know if any of those students that that you lost, or the college lost in March, did they re-enrol in September?

08:59 **Vanessa**
Yes, most I would say, thinking of my own classes, I'd say most of them did re-enrol. Yes.

Kathryn Sidaway 09:08
That's, that's good because, considering that they were re enrolling on an online course that they hadn't been able to access back in March.

09:19 **Vanessa**
Well, yes, so my, and the schools opening obviously made a big difference but I still got students who've got preschool children at home and one's got a baby she brings to class sometimes, all of a sudden she just disappears because the baby's feeding. Yeah, so they're handling, they're dealing with a lot and but and I really admire those particularly those who've got children around them who are