University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Understanding the role of language in integration journeys: ESOL from refugees' perspectives

Sawsan Abdelghany BA Education, MSc TESOL

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of MPhil research postgraduate study.

School of Education

College of Social science

University of Glasgow

January 2023

Abstract

This thesis focuses on refugees and asylum seekers' needs in the context of learning English, and how language acts as a facilitator to their integration process. Drawing on an ethnographic research approach across Scotland – which included interviewing New Scots and ESOL practitioners and attending a variety of language classes for asylum seekers and refugees – the thesis presents an in-depth account of refugee integration and language in the Scottish context. In addition, the thesis draws on my own experience as a refugee in Scotland, which has assisted the research process. The research is timely as the Scottish Government is in the process of developing a new iteration of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy and reviewing ESOL provision in Scotland.

The thesis presents key research findings and argues that the current ESOL provision available to New Scots does not always meet their learning needs, as they have different experiences and circumstances from other language learners. The thesis identifies specific needs as well as barriers that New Scots encounter and argues for innovative approaches in ESOL teaching to be adopted more-widely, such as an ecological multilingual approach, and a trauma informed approach for dealing with refugee learners. Indeed, participants in the research believed that contextual learning not only improves New Scots' language acquisition but also supports better integration with their local community. Policy recommendations are included in the conclusion of the thesis, with the hope that these will assist New Scots in the future.

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Acknowledgments

Alhamdulillah (in Arabic means Thanks Allah). Alhamdulillah for being chosen for this position, and Alhamdulillah for accomplishing this thesis. Many Thanks for my Wonderful supervisors, Professor Alison Phipps, Dr Dan Fisher and Dr Sadie Ryan for their time, encouragement, and valuable feedback that they gave me during that journey. Really appreciate your time and the experience you gave me during this research, Special thanks to Dr Dan for his support and useful comments and introducing new skills to me patiently.

All my gratitude for my parents for raising me up on loving to be ambitious and having persistence to be the best version of myself even during difficult times. My love to my husband Abdulrahman, who always inspires me to do better, big hugs for my kids Mariam and Hamza for being such a great help and donating some of their time for me to work, accompanying me on some of my field work, and attending a conference with me. Love you so much. My appreciation to my research mate Adam Williamson for being a supportive colleague and for his help with proofreading. Thanks to Eva and Kirsten for believing in me and encouraging me to apply for this study.

I also cannot forget my research participants from New Scots or practitioners for sharing with me valuable information and helping me with my research.
This work is gifted to my sister Hajar, who passed away in 2019 at the age of 16 years. Miss you a lot my beautiful innocent little angel.

Author's declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution."

Printed Name: _____Sawsan Ali Abdelghany._____

Signature: ___Sawsan Ali_____

List of Abbreviations

ESOL: English to speakers of other languages

TESOL: Teaching English to speakers of Other Languages.

NSRIS: New Scots Refugee Integration strategy

CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning

COSLA: Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

EAL: English as an additional Language

IELTS: International English Language Testing System

IT: Information technology

NHS: National Health Service

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

VPRS: Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme

Chapter1 Introduction

"The limits of my language mean the limits of my world."

— Ludwig Wittgenstein (1922)

My research interest emerged the moment I was in the airport with my husband and my one-year-old daughter, feeling helpless, panicked, telling a police officer, "we are seeking revenge." I was embarrassed and confused when he did not understand me and asked me to repeat what I said, and after checking the word from my google translate, I said it again in an Egyptian accent, "sorry I mean we are seeking refuge." At this time, I felt that being a teacher of English in Egypt was not helping at all in having a meaningful conversation in English, especially in such a stressful situation that I never expected that I would find myself in. I felt relief when he asked me if I needed an interpreter, and then I spoke to a lady over the phone to translate what we want to say to this police officer. I felt like my voice came back after my screams in silence.

After spending some time improving my English by attending an English course at college and studying my TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) masters at Edinburgh University, I decided to research the topic of learning English and its importance in the lives of refugees and asylum seekers. During my stay in Scotland, I met many refugees who feel lonely, cannot find support, and do not know where or how to start integrating with their new community. I cannot forget one Algerian lady who I met in the mosque, she told me that she arrived in Scotland 8 months ago and this was only the third time she came to meet with people and have a nice chat with others. She did not know about available

activities or English classes in her area. She was scared to go to the shops to buy anything because she does not speak English. I met others who were on the waiting list for many months to join ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes in the college, or refugees who were already attending English language classes but making slow progress. All these situations drew my interest to investigate the relationship between learning English language for refugees or asylum seekers and improving their integration in Scotland.

In interviewing Hala, one participant, as part of my research, I got the following response:

> *"How can I integrate in a new place if I do not have the language that helps me to communicate with people, understand them, express myself clearly"*

That quote was said in Arabic language as an answer to my question about the most essential factor to integrate better in your community. It summarises the focus of my research in a few words, as learning the language of the host country is considered an essential element in the resettlement of refugees and asylum seekers (Hammond, 2018). For many refugees, language is the key to open new opportunities in employment, further education, access to services, and social connections. According to Court (2017), improving language level is a fundamental feature of being part of society, interacting with people, achieving personal goals, accessing services, and getting jobs with good salaries. However, the relationship between language learning and integration is underexplored in research (Court 2017). For that reason, I found it an opportune moment to conduct research into refugee integration in Scotland, with the aim to feed the results into development of the next Scottish Government New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (NSRIS).

1.1 Research Questions

My main research questions are:

- What role does language play in facilitating or creating barriers to refugee integration?
- How do language programmes impact the settlement process?
- From the perspective of refugees, what improvements might be adopted in ESOL settings to encourage /facilitate their integration?'
- To what extent is ESOL designed to meet the specific needs of displaced migrants and refugees?

My analysis includes, but is not confined to, formal courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), as well as informal language classes such as English cafés or community activities which aim to teach the language and introduce social activities to New Scots (a term this thesis adopts throughout to refer to both asylum seekers and refugees).

In Chapter 2 I situate my research in the wider context of the literature on language and refugee integration. Firstly, I explain what integration means in this context. I then discuss the incorporation of language learning into the NSRIS and how the strategy is based on intercultural ideas of integration, going beyond English language acquisition alone. I review Scottish Government efforts to support refugee integration and discuss the specific barriers and challenges that New Scots face in accessing language classes, as well as issues with the current provision and delivery of ESOL in Scotland. In Chapter 3, I explain the key literature that informs my theoretical framework concerning refugees' agency. Chapter 4 sets out my positionality as the researcher for this study and the methods that I used to answer my

research questions. These methods are the literature review, participant observation, focus groups, and interviews with refugees and ESOL practitioners. Ethical considerations and limitations of my research are also discussed. Chapter 5 considers the difference between New Scots and migrants from other backgrounds. Chapter 6 presents New Scots' views concerning different methods of English language learning, focusing specifically on their needs and how these can best be met. Chapter 7 presents recommendations for improving ESOL provision to be more inclusive for refugees and asylum seeker learners. In the concluding chapter I conclude with several policy recommendations focused on improving access to language support for New Scots.

Chapter2 Literature Review

2.1 Understanding Integration

It is worth highlighting the distinction between integration and assimilation. The term 'assimilation' tends to mean absorption of the newcomers into the host community to become similar in every aspect. Whereas the term 'integration' as it is used in the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy refers to a two-way process of adaptation by both migrants and host communities (Berry 1997; ECRE 1999 and Phipps,2018).

The definition of integration remains vague in some respects, although its absence can be easily noticed (Part, 2019). According to Blair (2006), "Integration isn't about what defines us as people, but as citizens, the rights and duties that go with being a member of our society." That was the view of integration in the UK for a long time (Antoniuk, 2020). Then the Home Office frameworks in 2004 and 2019 gave further insight about integration on many aspects of life. The following figure shows the components and main elements the Home Office worked on to facilitate integration among the refugee community.

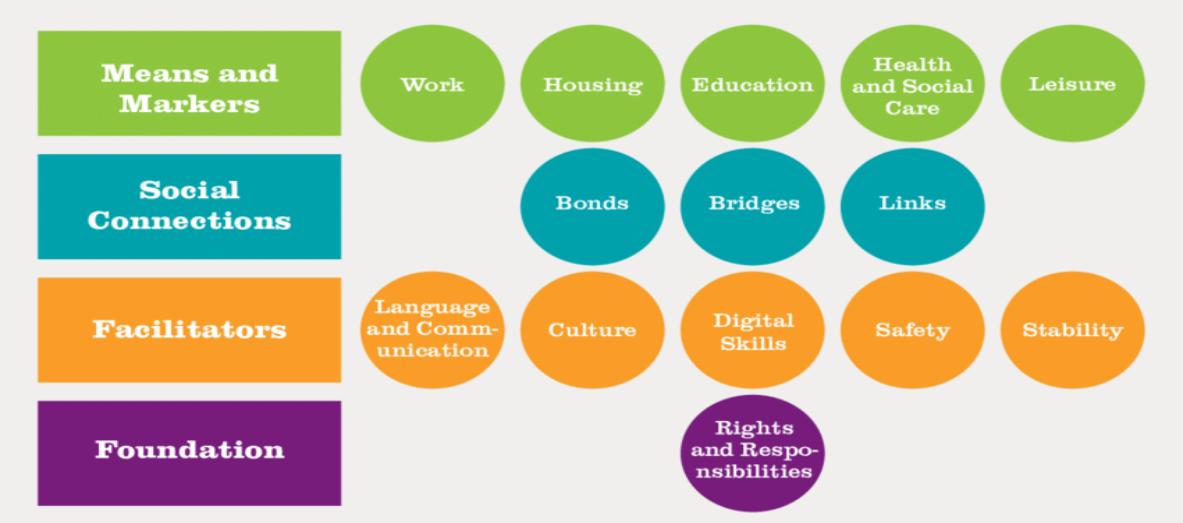

Figure 1: Home Office integration indicator

Scotland is considered a secure destination for many refugees around the world, and the country has a long history in welcoming and supporting refugees (Scottish Government 2018). Unlike the UK government, the Scottish government welcomes refugees from the first day of their arrival in Scotland regardless of their status (Mulvey, 2013). In the next section I outline the Scottish Government's strategies to improve refugees' integration.

2.2 Supporting refugee integration

To frame and organise strategies to support refugees' integration, the first New Scots programme was established and ran between 2014-2017, providing significant support for asylum seekers and refugees to make the most of the facilities and services available to them. Development of an integration strategy became necessary after the UK government committed to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees. Building on the first New Scots strategy, changes and further developments were made to generate a second strategy for 2018 – 2022. The strategy aimed to be flexible to adapt to the political and international situation

of refugees, and to benefit refugees and asylum seekers living in Scotland by adopting a set of outcomes (e.g., refugees' safety, rights, responsibilities, and entitlements) to be achieved.

The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (NSRIS) is a partnership between the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the Scottish Refugee Council and the Scottish Government, chaired by the UNESCO Chair for Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts (Phipps et al, 2022). It is a rights-based policy delivery framework and takes an intercultural approach to the common societal and cultural task of integration. The NSRIS takes an innovative 'integration from day one' approach, which means that it focuses on the integration of both refugees and people seeking asylum – and refers to both as 'New Scots'. This approach contrasts strongly with approaches to integration in England (Mulvey, 2013; MoHCLG 2018), which do not maintain a specific refugee focus and explicitly exclude the integration of those seeking asylum.

The NSRIS is based on the 'Indicators of Integration' model developed by Ager and Strang (2004; 2008), which understands 'language and culture' to be key facilitators of integration. Ager and Strang's original model (2004) highlighted the role of language in supporting the reciprocal interchange of culture and understanding in the context of integration. Moreover, the original model noted the importance of considering the relevance of languages other than English (such as Scottish Gaelic) to integration. The recently updated version of the Indicators of Integration framework from the UK Home Office (Ndofor-Tah et al. 2019), by contrast, omits mention of languages other than English. Despite recognition of language as being a key facilitator of integration in the Ager and Strang (2004) model, the first iteration of the NSRIS only acknowledged the importance of language in a footnote. The second

iteration of the strategy, however, includes language as a key thematic area of importance. This increased importance given to language in the NSRIS followed the identification of language and culture by asylum seekers, refugees, and other stakeholders as a factor of primary importance (Hammond 2018).

2.3 Language and its relationship with integration

English language education has been identified by Scottish policymakers as fundamental to supporting integration and improving community cohesion (Cannell and Hewett 2008; Phillimore 2010; Blake et al. 2019; Slade and Dickson 2021). Since the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Program was announced in 2015, Scotland has been a pioneer in resettlement with the help of local authorities and a Refugee Welcome civil society movement collaborating to include language learning activities (Phipps, 2018).

Education Scotland's ESOL policy states that speaking English is important to find employment, access healthcare and receive general support (Education Scotland 2015). English language education also plays an essential role in shaping refugees' future and personal plans, as well as enhancing their well-being and health (Education Scotland 2015; Hirsu and Bryson 2017; Frimberger 2016). Moreover, learning English is essential to having a democratic voice, reducing isolation, and engaging positively with the host community (Education Scotland, 2015). The Scottish Government has described ESOL as "…central to giving people a democratic voice and supporting them to contribute to the society in which they live" (Scottish Government 2015, p.6). In 2018, The Scottish Government also set out its ambition to give more freedom to New Scots by facilitating their participation in society

and helping them lead a fulfilling life through participation in education, employment, cultural or leisure activities (Brown 2021).

Despite these laudable aims, there are challenges that New Scots face accessing available language support, as well as issues concerning the delivery of language classes and language sharing opportunities. Another important issue stems from what Meer et al. (2019) argue is a "lack of a specific focus on the needs and abilities of asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland [which has] an adverse impact on how they access these services" (p.21) in language classes. In the next section I shed light on some of the barriers that New Scots face in accessing language support. Knowing about these barriers will help consideration of the needs of New Scots and how these can be better met by Scottish Government language policymaking and local-level ESOL provision.

2.4 Barriers to access ESOL classes for New Scots

New Scots might face barriers to access English language classes or improve their proficiency levels for a variety of reasons (Refugee Action, 2016; Martzoukou and Burnett, 2018). In this section I will discuss seven barriers faced by New Scots, namely; their experiences seeking asylum; lack of information concerning English language support; unstable lives while seeking asylum; the exclusion of asylum seekers from working for the first 12 months; long waiting lists for college classes to access ESOL provision; some barriers related to gender, specifically to women attending classes; age; and pre-migration education level.

Many asylum seekers or refugees have experienced distressing incidents before leaving their home countries or during their journey to Scotland (Strang and Quinn, 2021). Even after arrival, in most cases they suffer from loneliness, a lack of confidence or the experience of powerlessness (Strang and Quinn,2021). According to Iversen et al. (2004), post-traumatic stress could affect language acquisition and reduce motivation for learning among refugees. Additionally, Zahid (2018) stated, “Wars and conflicts tend to have a psychological impact on refugee students that is not often experienced by migrants” (p.18).

Another barrier is that asylum seekers and refugees’ lives are unstable. Asylum seekers and new refugees (who just got their refugee status) are usually accommodated in hostels, temporary flats and bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation for at least 5-7 months from their arrival (Strang et al, 2018). They experience interruptions which prevent them from focussing on learning; they do not have any choice in where they live or when they will be moved elsewhere (Meer, et al., 2019; Strang and Quinn, 2021). Refugees who are living in temporary homeless accommodation must bid on properties until they are successful in securing a permanent residence at any place across the city (Strang, et al, 2018). Once a housing offer has been made, refugees do not have the option to refuse it otherwise they will lose their priority in getting permanent accommodation (Mulvey, 2015). This leads to some refugees postponing starting regular ESOL classes; even those who have started might suddenly stop when they have to move to a new area (Meer, et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the exclusion of asylum seekers from working for the first 12 months after arrival results in less communication with the wider community (Meer et al., 2019). This, of course, means they do not develop English language skills acquired from everyday situations

and exposure to communication with the receiving community. On the other hand, after refugee status is granted, refugees are pushed to quickly find employment regardless of their qualifications or education history in their home countries. The Job Centre (which is responsible for welfare support) encourages refugees to accept any employment, invariably low-skilled jobs, with low qualification requirements (Strang, et al, 2016). This can affect refugees' attendance at college classes and lead to them becoming stuck at the same level without improving their career prospects (Hill, 2020). There is also a barrier in accessing ESOL for New Scots in the long waiting lists for college classes, which create high levels of disappointment as the demand for ESOL always outstrips supply (Meer, et al., 2019). This waiting time could also have a negative impact on refugees' financial situation. For instance, those who have been granted refugee status cannot access welfare support unless they attend formal ESOL classes, but in most cases, it is extremely hard to secure a place in a college ESOL class because of the long waiting time for a place (Hill 2020).

On top of that, there is a barrier related to gender as women in particular find it hard to access English language classes. It has been emphasised by many researchers that women have reduced access to classes due to expectations of childcare, household responsibilities and, in some cases, lower literacy levels, which all make it harder for them to attend formal English language education (Scottish Government, 2018a; Education Scotland, 2018b; Bassel, et al, 2018; Morrice et al, 2021). This issue has become more apparent in Glasgow as the number of women has increased in comparison to single male asylum seekers. Additionally, lack of information about English language support available (Refugee Action, 2016), and lack of travel expenses provision if an English class was offered (Slade and Dickson, 2021) can be problems that prevent New Scots from accessing classes.

What is more, pre-migrant education can heavily influence language learning for New Scots, (Morrice et al, 2021) if learners have previous exposure to the kind of formal education that will facilitate English language acquisition (Rahbarikorroyeh, 2020). In some cases, refugees who suffered from wars or interruption of education in their home countries have low or no literacy (Ayoub, 2014), which makes language learning more difficult than for New Scots who have completed formal education. Finally, there is the age barrier. According to Martzoukou and Burnett (2018), learning English is especially difficult for older participants, who need teachers with experience working with senior learners to help them learn at their own pace.

2.5 Issues with ESOL provision and funding in Scotland

After reviewing some of the barriers faced by refugees in accessing English language education that are covered in literature, this section focuses on the practices of ESOL provision in Scotland. In March 2016, Glasgow City Council, with the help of the Scottish Government, established an ESOL access project to expand the provision of ESOL classes through collaboration with other community providers (Meer, et al., 2019). Despite the Scottish Government's concerted efforts to provide ESOL classes and to set theoretical aims to support English language learning, there are issues when it comes to practical provision.

The first issue is the insufficient number of learning hours offered to New Scots. According to the Home Office (2017), resettled refugees are entitled to eight hours of local authority classes per week. However, some learners reported receiving only four hours per week, which is not enough to achieve any noticeable progress in language learning (Morrice, et.al.,

2021). Although the Scottish Government has made efforts to make ESOL provision in Scotland free-of-charge for asylum seekers and refugees, unlike the UK strategy of waiving fees depending on immigration status, (Meer, et al., 2019), there has been notable underfunding with respect to demand for these classes (Glasgow Community Planning Partnership, 2018). In 2016, a report issued by the UK Government recommended increasing the number of English language classes provided for refugees by increasing ESOL funding (UK Government, 2016). This was followed by the 2018 funding changes in Scotland, which gave priority to accredited ESOL courses or classes in which progress can be certified, leaving non-accredited courses in a vulnerable position (Meer, et al., 2019). These changes disproportionately affect refugees and asylum seekers as they are more likely to attend non-accredited courses, which are more suitable for those with limited prior formal education and provide an opportunity to develop language skills without the pressure of being graded or having exams at the end of the course (Meer et al. 2019).

Secondly, Colleges across Scotland provide ESOL classes for learners from diverse backgrounds and countries. In consequence, these courses are not usually tailored to consider refugees and asylum seekers' specific needs and literacy levels. Some New Scots have exceptional circumstances and other commitments that they should fit learning the language around. They also might suffer from trauma because of getting through difficult incidents in their life. Furthermore, some ESOL classes are designed to target learners with previous experience of formal education, ignoring diversity in learners' educational backgrounds (Rahbarikorroyeh, 2020). Since classes are delivered in classroom settings, participants with prior exposure to formal education show greater familiarity with this setting and engage more readily than their peers who never attended school or formal

education in their home country (Rahbarikorroyeh, 2020). According to current funding arrangements, most government funding to support ESOL classes goes to colleges which vulnerable refugees sometimes find hard to access, leaving other organisations that can provide ESOL in a more flexible way underfunded (Meer, et al., 2019). According to Slade and Dickson (2021), more funding is needed to enable strategies such as New Scots integration strategy to continue their crucial efforts in the field of refugee integration. Additionally, the decision by the Scottish Government to prioritise full-time formal ESOL programmes in colleges reduced the number of part-time courses available and increased competition for places (Meer, et al., 2019). Therefore, New Scots might need some pre-entry level classes before joining the mainstream ESOL provision, or to learn the language through community-based activities such as gardening or cooking, (Phipps, 2018).

Moreover, current ESOL provision is still mostly dependent on a monolingual approach in teaching the language (Cox, 2020). This is despite theoretical acceptance that it is essential to recognise refugees' own native languages and to take a multilingual approach to support their learning of the new language (ibid). This understanding was developed in the second New Scots integration strategy, which promotes a two-way integration process and encourages refugees to share their language and culture with the host community (Scottish Government, 2018). However, this vision does not seem to be applied consistently in practice in current adult ESOL language classes.

Another issue is that the ESOL syllabus tends to provide learners with knowledge and information about the host community's culture, which are not necessarily the skills and knowledge that are most relevant to them at this stage of their life (Brown, 2021). Likewise,

some ESOL courses focus on the 'Life in the UK' test, which requires learners to assimilate into their unfamiliar environment, ignoring any needs or requirements those learners may have (Brown, 2021). Finally, the English language classes that are taught as a preparation course when applying for British citizenship and the 'Life in the UK' test put significant pressure on refugees, imposing the English language on them instead of introducing it in an inclusive and caring atmosphere (Meer, et al, 2019). Providing ESOL in this way puts the entire responsibility for integration on refugees' shoulders and requires them to make an extra effort to live according to the norms of their new community. These types of language classes are prioritising assimilation over integration (Philip,2022).

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated where my research sits in relation to current initiatives by the Scottish Government to support the integration of New Scots. I also highlighted the focus of my research, which considers language a key facilitator to the integration process. Then I moved on to explain the efforts that have been made to provide language support and ESOL classes for New Scots. That led me to write about the barriers and challenges that New Scots face in accessing ESOL provision in Scotland. I then presented some problematic aspects of current ESOL and language learning and identified funding issues that affect the provision of language support. In the next chapter I will describe the theoretical framework on which I build my later discussions.

Chapter3 Theoretical framework

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the main literature that supports my theoretical framework by focusing on three primary areas. The first is the relationship between agency and enhancing New Scots' language learning to improve their integration (Philip, 2022). The second is adopting an ecological multilingual approach to teaching and learning in the target language (Cox, 2021). Finally, I explore a trauma informed approach and its relationship with language learning for refugees.

3.2 Agency and its relevance to refugees

In this section I focus on agency in the context of studying New Scots' integration and language learning specifically. According to Sen (1999), human agency can be defined as "people have to be … actively involved – given the opportunity – in shaping their own destiny" (p.53). Human agency has also been defined as "the ability to formulate strategic choices and control decisions effecting central life outcomes" (Malhorta 2003, cited in Gateley, 2015: p.31). With regards to the New Scots context, they are regularly discussed in relation to their lack of agency (Crawley et al., 2016; Wroe,2018; Safouane, Jünemann, and Göttsche, 2020), as they are perceived as 'forced migrants' who had no option but to leave their countries for fear of being persecuted or targeted (Essed,2004). New Scots also face restrictions on employment that other migrants do not experience, and they do not have

the freedom to choose where to live (Mulvey, 2015). Furthermore, refugees do not have the ability to return to their country and are experiencing forced dependency on state benefits either during the asylum-seeking process or in some cases after being granted their refugee status (Allsopp, Sigona, and Phillimore, 2014). This enforced dependency and the barriers which refugees face, in most cases, can lead to long term negative psychological effects on refugees' wellbeing and self-confidence and challenge their feeling of having control over their life (Allsopp et al., 2014; Mayblin, 2014; Stewart and Mulvey, 2014).

Another discussion of agency, in relation to language learning classes, is presented by Van Lier (2008), who presented six real life language classroom scenarios and classified students in terms of agency depending on their answers. Students who gave single word 'yes/no' answers to the questions posed to them in class demonstrated a low level of agency while students who initiated discussion were ascribed the highest level of agency. Based on this analysis, he proposed three main elements for agency, which are that agency "involves initiative or self-regulation," "mediates and is mediated by the social context," and "includes an awareness of the responsibility for one's own actions vis-à-vis the environment, including affected others" (Van Lier, 2008, p.172). Using examples from inside the classroom shows that agency is related to the situational context, and that it concerns something learners do instead of something imposed upon them.

Van Lier (2008) also illustrated that observation only is not enough in evaluating learners' agency, as this concept is more complex than can be seen through observation. He argued that agency can be something that learners choose 'not to do,' for example if a learner chooses not to participate in the classroom or in a wider context in their community this can

only be revealed by asking the person for their explanation. Based on this understanding, the methods I utilised were not dependent on observation only, but I also included interviews with participants to understand the impact of agency on their language learning. Consequently, agency is a critical issue to discuss when researching refugees due to its relevance to their lives (Philip, 2022), and to change the stereotyped idea about refugees' passivity and dependence (Essed,2004). Respecting New Scots' agency promotes social interaction and cohesion, which improves the two-way integration process among refugees and the host community (Cox, 2021). In addition, understanding agency also helps me to answer one of my research questions: What improvements need to be adopted in ESOL settings to be encouraging for integration? Increasing New Scots' agency in their language learning journey can be a starting point to the only stable time in their unstable life, from Home Office interviews to solicitors' appointments, moving accommodation, changing status from asylum seekers to refugees, finding employment and adjusting to their unfamiliar environment (Baynham, 2006). Giving refugees the option to choose what they learn can increase their confidence, agency, and encourage them to contribute and integrate to the best of their ability with talent they have (Philip, 2022).

3.3 Ecological multilingual approach

Language ecology was a concept used at the beginning of the 1970s by Haugen (1972), who defined it as "the study of interactions between any given language and its environment" (p. 325). Haugen's definition relates learning of a new language with the environment and the social context, highlighting the impact of these aspects on language learning. He added "language only functions in relating these users to one another and to nature i.e., their

social and natural environment" (Haugen, 1972, p. 325). This approach is seen as fundamentally linked to the social and physical environment of its users, therefore embracing an ecological approach gives greater importance to the context in which New Scots live.

Additionally, an ecological approach is connected to multilingualism (Cox, 2021); "part of ecology is psychological as the interaction with other languages is in the minds of bi and multilingual speakers" (Haugen, 1972, p. 325). Consequently, it is posited that acknowledging New Scots' languages in learning their new language can help and positively affect learning the target language. Similarly, Van Lier (2002, 2006, 2010), asserted that "if you take the context away there is no language left to be studied […] with language it's context all the way down" (Van Lier, 2006, p. 20). Kramsch (2002), also confirms the significance of an ecological approach, "there is a need for theory that views language not merely as a closed linguistic system with a logic of its own but as an ecosystem in which language learning and language use are seen as a relational human activity, co-constructed between people and their various languages" (p.5).

According to Van Lier, (2004b), language ecology can be seen as "a world view, a way of being and acting in the world that has an impact on how we conduct our lives, how we relate to others and to the environment, and of course also, how we conceive of teaching and learning" (Van Lier, 2004b, p. 86). Moreover, it is worth highlighting that an ecological approach is a two-way procedure in which "what happens in the classroom responds to aspects of the context and the context is also created out of learning, teaching and language use" (Kramsch et al., 2010, p. 8).

Reviewing this perspective about adopting an ecological approach provided guidance in answering one of my research questions "To what extent is ESOL designed to consider displaced migrants and refugees?" which is about considering New Scots while designing ESOL courses that are provided to them. It also shows the importance of shifting the focus from teaching language in a monolingual and traditional way, to connecting language learning with people's lives and relating it to situations New Scot learners are experiencing every day. Bringing this understanding to ESOL or language classrooms as a strategy of learning and teaching would benefit the most vulnerable learners as it would allow them to improve both language and communication with the world in parallel. I will revisit this concept again in my discussion section 7.3 'Using an ecological multilingual approach' to illustrate the relation between the ecological approach, and my research focus on New Scots language learning and integration.

3.4 Trauma informed/ aware approach

In many language teaching contexts, teachers are in the front line of dealing with some traumatised students, especially displaced refugees who went through difficult incidents in their life. For that reason, 'language learning classes are increasingly seen by many agencies as a potential space in which to deliver psychosocial support' (Capstick, 2018, p. 60). This viewpoint makes it essential for language teachers who deal with refugee, to have the awareness, gain knowledge and skills to deal with refugees' specific needs as effectively as they could, to help learners move on from their trauma to build new lives as well as improve their learning. According to Dunn, (2023), who taught ESOL for 15 years, once he started dealing with refugee learners he said 'It did not take me too long to realise that the copious

amounts of teacher training I have had in the past two decades had not prepared me for what awaited in the classrooms' (p.1). He also added 'My lack of awareness about mental health issues, and trauma, was becoming more and more apparent' (p.1) Of course, that does not require language teachers to be psychologists but at least have the basic skills in dealing with traumatised learners.

Trauma informed approach is a term which refers to implementing understanding of trauma throughout a program, or educational settings to improve the effectiveness of the delivery of services provided to individuals or groups (Champine, et al, 2019). Applying this approach to an ESOL classroom, it will require English language lessons, that are taught to refugees, to be used as instrument to help learners not only progress in learning but also progress in their lives and improve their mental health. According to Scottish Government (2021), moving towards trauma informed practices, require organisations to have creative way of delivery of their services, moving beyond the traditional models of delivering services. In chapter 7, application of having different forms of delivery is explained in more detail.

Chapter4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

My research focuses on studying New Scots' perspectives on attending English language classes and how it helps to improve their integration. Specific research questions are:

- What role does language play in facilitating or creating barriers to refugee integration?
- How do language programmes impact the settlement process?
- From the perspective of refugees, what improvements might be adopted in ESOL settings to encourage /facilitate their integration?'
- To what extent is ESOL designed to consider displaced migrants and refugees?

In this chapter, I shed light on my positionality as a researcher, then relate this to the field I am working in, and to my participants. I outline the rationale for choosing a qualitative approach, describe my research design, explain why I chose to combine multiple methods for collecting data, and justify my research sites and sampling techniques. I then discuss ethical considerations to protect my participants' confidentiality and anonymity, and outline issues encountered and how I overcame them. I end the chapter with limitations of my research and recommendations for future investigation.

4.2 Positionality

In this section I will introduce myself as the researcher of this study, Firstly I will explain the circumstances that brought me to the UK, thereafter I will discuss the academic background that has allowed me to specialise in this research topic. This also may have an impact on my choice of research questions as a researcher's position influences both the way research is conducted, and its results (Coghlan, and Brydon-Miller, 2014).

I am an Egyptian student researcher. I studied for my bachelor's degree in the English department at the Faculty of Education at Alexandria University in Egypt. I got married in Egypt in 2013. My husband is a journalist and T.V. presenter who was reporting the unheard truth of what was happening in Egypt and the demands of everyday Egyptian people through the programme that he was presenting at that time. On 3rd July 2013, the Egyptian military staged a coup and replaced the democratically elected president with the army chief (Laughland, 2013). The coup included a great deal of abuse of civilians, journalists, and protestors by the military in power (ibid). Following this, the Al-Jazeera Arabic channel in Egypt was immediately closed, as were three television stations that spoke out against the military coup (Laughland, 2013; Hamoud, 2020). Many journalists were arrested or killed (Laughland, 2013; Mustafa, 2013; Human rights watch report, 2015; Hamoud, 2020) for opposing the coup or trying to comment on it on the news or in programmes.

Faced with this situation, my husband and I were in danger of arrest, or being targeted by the military regime, as was the case for many journalists and news reporters and their families who were placed under arrest or even killed for doing their job, with mass killings

being filmed by military officers (Amnesty International, 2019). We therefore decided to search for another home to start a more secure life. My husband travelled in secret, then I followed him a month later, after giving birth to my daughter in 2014. We kept moving between countries trying to find a safe home, then were advised that we have the right to seek asylum in any country that protects human rights and journalists.

Seeking asylum was not an easy decision for us, we were uncertain what might happen or what seeking asylum looks like. We wondered if we would be staying in tents like we saw on television, and what difficulties we would experience. I was even worried about being labelled as a refugee. There were so many questions and worries, but we had no choice but to seek a more secure situation and to acquire papers to be able to travel to seek asylum. We finally took the decision and moved to the UK in 2015.

During my residency in Egypt, we used to have Syrian neighbours who moved to Egypt because of the unsettled situation in their country, as at that time Egypt was a safe place for people from other countries to come and live (Mansour, 2018). We had a strong relationship with them and always made them feel welcome and at home. Then we too experienced the sudden change of becoming refugees in another country with a different language, culture, and customs. My privilege was that I had good English, or so I thought. Upon my arrival, I found myself in the situation where I had to speak to immigration officers. I was so disappointed that I could not construct a meaningful sentence. I discovered I had so many words in my mind, but because I had never recalled them in situations like this, I was not able to engage in conversations with people. Even teaching English in Egypt was done mostly in Arabic apart from the English grammar rules that we were studying. My

experience with the UK border guards made me think of how hard it could be for people with little or no English to seek asylum.

To specialize in this area, I studied a TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) Masters at Edinburgh University in 2018. Afterwards, I found work as a heritage language tutor and interpreter at a solicitor's office in Glasgow, which represented refugees and asylum seekers. This increased my curiosity about how to improve refugees' experience through learning the English language. My interest in language and its role in the integration of New Scots therefore comes from my own experiences of travelling to the UK in order to claim asylum and the surprisingly difficult experience I had of using my existing English to communicate in official situations during my asylum process.

Regards my position within the field of research and my relation to my research participants, ''positionality refers to the stance or positioning of the researcher in relation to the social and political context of the study—the community, the organization, or the participant group" Coghlan and Brydon-Miller (2014, p. 2). It could also be defined according to the degree of relatedness of the researcher to the study participants (ibid). Positionality also "reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study" (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013 p.71).

There are many critiques of researchers in refugee studies critically questioning the issue of non-refugees representing refugee challenges (Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2013). It is more likely to effectively investigate a topic if the researcher is closer to the participants and shares their needs, struggles, feelings and hopes (Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2013). Similarly,

Voloder (2016, p.1) discussed the role that positionality plays in knowledge production, as well as how shared lived experience of ‘cultural, ethnic, linguistic, or religious identities’ with participants is important to produce more insightful findings. For example, migrants or forced migrant researchers would know more about the asylum process or the barriers in learning the language of the resettlement country than researchers from diverse backgrounds.

In my situation, being a refugee who lives in Scotland means that I share lived experience with many refugees and immigrants forced to flee their countries, which could position me as an 'insider' (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). Being an ‘insider researcher’ (Voloder and Kirpitchenko, 2014), sharing experiences, opinions and language with my participants enabled me to better understand their feelings. I was more aware of many of their struggles and worries than researchers who are not from the same background. This made them speak more freely and want to share more things with me as someone who is in the same situation, and to learn from my experience of overcoming the language barrier.

According to Chiseri-Strater (1996), researchers are always encouraged to consider their own experience and think of what they can bring to the field based on their positionality. My experience as a former ESOL student or having completed my master's degree in TESOL would give me an opportunity to reflect and compare my previous knowledge with what I was observing. I also considered the different circumstances and educational backgrounds that might exist among learners and aimed to know my participants’ perspectives instead of imposing my own thoughts on them.

It is also particularly important to consider the power relation between the researcher and participants (Block et al., 2013, Marmo, 2013) As Pittaway and Bartolomei write (2013, p.232), “Power imbalances between researchers and participants raise complex ethical issues. This might happen when a researcher is an outsider or not sharing any commonality with their participants.” I will expand on this in the ethics section below. Being a researcher with shared lived experience was favourable for my participants to reinforce their ‘agency’ (Gateley, 2015a, Gateley, 2015b) and avoid feelings they have lower status than the researcher. I had stories like the ones they were telling me, and I experienced amusing situations just as they did while communicating with people in buses or public services. Sometimes it is more comforting to feel you are not alone in suffering and to feel the hope that you will be better and more confident in speaking the language one day. I was also invited by one ESOL teacher whose class I was observing to tell her refugee students about my journey to my current position as a student researcher at the University of Glasgow. The teacher admired my story and asked me to be an inspiration to her class. I started by introducing myself and told them that I was sitting in their chair learning ESOL entry level 3 to focus on improving my speaking and writing seven years ago. They were surprised by the fact I was teaching English in Egypt and yet I was not able to communicate with people in English. I explained to them that engaging in a conversation is different from having tens of words in your mind. Some of the learners told me that my experience made them feel proud of the stage they have reached now, as they did not have any English when they first arrived in the country. They felt less shy to speak and make mistakes in any situation. Speaking the same language as many of my participants allowed me to conduct some interviews in Arabic which made them more comfortable and open to telling me things, they would not be able to fully express in English.

On the other hand, I am aware that this status does not make me an expert on the lives of all refugees. The fact I was able to understand English and fill out application forms or respond to letters in English meant I did not have the whole experience of isolation or not being able to negotiate everyday life in the host country's language. Other details of tough journeys for other refugees or any other struggles could position me as an 'outsider' (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). For people who lost family members or went through life-threatening incidents, or had traumatic memories, I was far removed from these experiences, but at least that 'preunderstanding' (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007) of the asylum system allowed me to understand and admire those who had survived all these circumstances and to give them hope that they can achieve anything they want, as what they went through made them tougher and able to deal with hardship.

4.3 Methods

Methodology 'is the approach taken to the research design as a whole in relation to reaching answers to the research question(s)' (Jackson, 2013; p.55). Since my study's aim was to get an in-depth insight into refugees' barriers to language learning, both in general and specific to accessing ESOL classes, and to find out how to improve their experience, a qualitative approach was considered to be the most appropriate choice (Bachiochi and Weiner, 2004) as it aims to provide a deep understanding of the researched topic through 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973). As the experiences that people have as refugees are different, it was important to gain in-depth understanding of their language learning and

integration journeys. Additionally, a qualitative approach allows researchers to produce 'a deepened, complex interpretation' (Ellingson, 2009). It also gives the researcher an opportunity to reflect on his or her work during each stage of the research (Cox, 2021).

Research methods are the techniques which have been used for gathering and interpreting data (Jackson, 2013; Mishra and Alok, 2022). With regards to the methods, I used during my research, I firstly conducted desk-based research to review recent policy documents about ESOL provision in Scotland from 2014 till 2022. Then my field work started, which included participant observation, focus groups and interviews. I chose to combine four methods to gather data from various sources to investigate ESOL provision in depth. I wanted to speak with refugee participants about their language learning experience, their needs, and suggestions for improvements from their perspective. In the next section, I will explain each method in more detail and justify its use in my research.

4.3.1 Desk-based research

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2019), and Snyder (2019), reviewing policy documents as a research method is considered an important source of data. Consequently, the first method I used was a review of published policy documents and reports by educational organisations, and Scottish Government publications in the area of refugee integration. I also reviewed reports about ESOL provision in Scotland, including ESOL strategies, the adult learning strategy, and its relationship with refugee integration. These reports and policy documents gave me an up-to-date picture of current ESOL provision and integration strategies in Scotland.

Reviewing New Scots: Refugee Integration Strategy 2018 to 2022 (Scottish Government, 2018), helped me to understand government efforts to welcome and support new Scots from day one when they arrive in Scotland. The language section in this strategy is focused on ESOL learning for refugees, with reference to Scotland's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Strategy 2015 – 2020. This drove my curiosity to try to investigate the extent to which this strategy is being implemented in practice and how inclusive ESOL classes are for refugees, especially those who have little or no literacy in their first language. Additionally, some initiatives such as 'Sharing Lives, Sharing Languages' (Hirsu and Bryson, 2017), introduced me to creative ways of exchanging language and culture with local people in the community, increasing their awareness, and helping them to welcome refugees and understand more about their traditions and culture. The project helped me to include that thinking in my research questions, try to compare formal provision with this kind of informal language exchange, and ask refugees about their preference for the kinds of learning they want to be engaging in. A list of the reports that have been reviewed is attached in the appendix under the 'Annotated bibliography' heading.

4.3.2 Participant observation

My fieldwork data collection methods included participant observation. In qualitative research, observation is one of the most common and fundamental research methods. This approach involves "collecting data using one's senses, especially looking and listening in a systematic and meaningful way" (McKechnie, 2008, p. 573). According to Angrosino (2007), observation is more formal and systematic than simply 'watching'. In participant

observation, the researcher needs to be in the lives of the participants being studied, see through their eyes, and engage in their activities (Bryman 2012).

In my research, to understand the role that ESOL classes play in improving refugees' integration, my plan was to attend as many ESOL classes as possible in different settings, locations, and platforms, to participate and observe the structure of classes in different cities across Scotland and have the experience from 'inside out' (Romaine, 1984). I wanted to record participants' reactions in various settings, for instance, in face-to-face classes compared to online ones, formal vs informal classes, accredited and non-accredited courses, community based ESOL compared to ESOL in colleges, and how this may vary in different local authority areas as well as how all these differences were experienced by refugee learners.

Attending classes was also helpful for shaping my research focus, seeing what might be difficult to describe (Smit and Onwuegbuzie, 2018) building trust between me and learners, and recruiting interview participants.

4.3.2.1 Locations of observations and reasons

My research is Edinburgh-focused as most of the work already done to investigate refugee integration in Scotland has been conducted in Glasgow (Philip, 2022) due to this being the dispersal destination for many asylum seekers (Scottish Government, 2018). There was a gap in the literature on refugee studies in cities such as Edinburgh (Philip, 2022), except for one about refugees' wellbeing published some years ago (Ager et al., 2002). Therefore, my

plan was to broaden the focus of my research to various locations throughout Scotland, including Dundee, Clackmannanshire, Aberdeen, Stirling, and the Scottish Borders (Galashiels). However, I did not exclude Glasgow from my research and had some field work there. Knowledge about ESOL provision in these places was gained from observing as many ESOL classes as I could and interviewing New Scots and stakeholders working in ESOL provision for asylum seekers and refugees in these cities.

Since COVID a lot of ESOL classes have moved online and some of these classes remain online. I also wanted to get sense of how this impacted leaners, and how online is different from face-to-face classes. Therefore, I chose to observe both in-person and online provision. Table 1 shows details of my observations at the various locations.

Course	**Location**	**Times attended**	**Level of learners**
IT class	Online	8	Beginners
Conversation class	Galashiels (Mix of face-to-face and online)	6	Intermediate
Women only English class	Edinburgh (Mix of face-to-face and online)	8	Beginners / pre-intermediate
ESOL Edinburgh College	Edinburgh	1	National 4 (Intermediate)

Cooking class	Edinburgh	1	Open for all levels
Gardening	Edinburgh	1	Mixed
General English	Alloa	2	Beginners
ESOL (community based)	Dundee	8	Mixed levels arranged by colours to indicate for each level
Construction course	Hybrid	3	Intermediate/ advanced
Educational trips	Edinburgh/ Dundee	3	Beginners/ intermediate
COSLA conference	Edinburgh	1	
ESOL network Conference	online	1	
New Scots conference	Glasgow	1	
NATESOL workshop	online	1	

Table 1: Observation locations

4.3.2.2 Acting as participant and volunteer teacher

My role as an observer was not passive or anonymous. On the contrary, I was an active participant in all classes. I was answering questions, taking a turn in responding to teachers' questions, and had a copy of the sheets that learners were using. In online classes or ESOL

classes in Edinburgh, I attended regularly on a weekly basis for a period of 2- 3 months. In other parts of Scotland, I attended classes intensively, e.g., every day for a week, as I was travelling to these cities for the purpose of the research. I have attended outdoor and extra-curricular activities such as cooking and gardening classes for minority groups and refugees where the aim was practicing speaking English informally. In every situation I engaged and built relationships with most of my participants. Speaking Arabic (the language that most of my participants were speaking) played a vital role in building relationships between me and my participants and helped me to reach some refugees who had just arrived and could not speak English yet. There were a range of projects and ESOL classes that I attended. I attended as an observer, but for some I also acted as a volunteer assistant. I have detailed my involvement in these classes and projects below.

I observed an IT (Information Technology) course for Arabic-speaking refugees. This was a beginners' level course on Saturdays from 11am-2pm (About 8 weeks of observation). The students were learning how to use computers as well as basic IT skills, such as how to book a flight ticket or do online shopping, and from these interactions they were acquiring new vocabulary to improve their English. I was a volunteer in the last part of the session teaching some situational English vocabulary that they could use in their day-to-day lives.

In the classes that I was participating as observer and volunteer teacher for part of the class, it was an interesting experience for me to teach beginners' level. In preparation for the class, I considered choosing interesting topics for learners to encourage them to speak and engage in the conversation. One of the topics that I taught was how to book flight tickets for

a holiday, and while we were progressing, we covered extensive vocabulary related to travel and holidays. Table 2 shows an example of this approach.

Vocabulary	**meaning**
direct flight/non-stop flight	a flight that goes directly from one place to another without having to stop in another city or change planes
outbound flight	the flight from where you live to where you want to go
jet lag	the feeling of being extremely tired with a messed-up body rhythm after flying across multiple time zones. You do not know when to sleep and when to eat.
one-way ticket	a ticket that just gets you from one place to another (but not the return journey)

Table 2: Some examples of vocabulary that I taught in a lesson.

4.3.2.3 Languages that were used during focus groups and interviews

I used both English and Arabic during my interviews and focus groups with participants who can speak Arabic and preferred to have their interview in Arabic. Some interviews were mix of the two languages, so we start in English and if the participant needs to speak about something they do not know how to express it in English, so we shift to the Arabic language. With participants who cannot speak Arabic (e.g., participants from Ukraine and Iran), I used English only, but I was trying to help them if they stuck and cannot express something, which I understood it from the meaning. I also encouraged them to use the dictionary if needed to explain their point to me.

4.3.3 Focus group

Focus groups are a type of group interview where people are encouraged to discuss a specific topic that is common to the lives of all participants (Bloor et al., 2001, cited in Parker and Tritter, 2006). Focus groups sometimes reveal specific levels of understanding about the researched topic that remained vague with other data collection methods (Doody et al, 2013).

In my research, I had two focus groups with students. One group consisted of 10 participants who were asylum seekers and refugee learners. I asked them about their ESOL learning experience, what difficulties they experienced to join the classes, and invited their suggestions for improvements. The other group was in the same centre. There were 5 participants who came to the UK on spouse visas and their partners were working or studying. I was trying to understand any differences between the two groups in terms of their access to the class, waiting time and learning experience, and to compare this with what I have got from information about refugees' challenges. This was an effective method for speaking with larger groups and getting useful information from everyone.

4.3.4 Interviews

According to Tomkinson (2015), interviews can be used to enhance data collected from participant observation. I prepared a list of questions arranged according to the themes I wanted to investigate. Examples of themes for learner participants were starting date and

waiting time, their differing experiences between college and community education and challenges in attending English classes. Themes for practitioner interviewees were about differences in ESOL provision between local authorities, dealing with individual differences and learners' well-being, and their opinion about the adult learning strategy. (Themes and full interview questions are attached in the Appendix). The following sections present more details about interviews with both refugee learners and ESOL teachers, practitioners, and project leaders.

The interviews were formal in the sense that the questions were arranged prior to our interview and a specific time and duration for the conversation was set. My interviews were arranged at a separate time from my observation of classes. They were semi-structured, combining formality with the spontaneity of unstructured interviews. I followed Yeo et al. (2014)'s six interview stages which are as follows. The first step was me introducing myself and my academic background, followed by my aims in conducting this research. The Second step was to provide an information sheet for the participants to read about the research itself. I had a simplified version for learners and a more elaborate one for practitioners. Also, I had both information sheet and consent form translated onto Arabic. Thereafter I allowed participants time to read and sign the consent form, which tells them everything about their right to withdraw or stop or take a break at any point. For participants who could not read the form, I helped them by reading it to them in Arabic and explained it in detail. Steps 3, 4 and 5 are the interview itself which was offered either in English or Arabic language as that was the language that most participants speak, beginning with contextual background information, then going into more detail around the themes explored, ending with a conclusion, and wrapping up the interview. I also asked participants about

recommendations for future provision and suggestions for other potential participants I might interview. Step six was to provide interviewees with information about how I will use and store their data, confidentiality, anonymity, and ethical considerations and to answer any questions they might have. Information Sheets and Consent Forms in both English and Arabic language can be consulted in the Appendix.

4.3.4.1 Interviews with New Scots

The purpose of interviewing New Scots was to find out about their experience of accessing ESOL classes as well as their aims, the barriers they face to integration, the benefits of the classes and what they hope to achieve from learning the English language. Additionally, I wanted to know from their viewpoint how their integration experience was and how to help them improve it. They are the only people who can speak for themselves and are best able to express their own needs. Interviews with New Scots were conducted in various locations. Interview participants were accessed through the classes and projects I had been observing as part of my data collection stage. The advantage of recruiting participants from observed classes is that I had established trust and they felt more comfortable speaking to me than speaking to a stranger. Kabranian-Melkonian (2015), stated that refugees are more likely not to trust an outsider, and that a researcher needs to build trust and connection with participants to gain more useful data.

According to Copland and Creese (2015), interviews might be spontaneous or happen in the middle of other activities, or they might be more formal. The interviews I did were in English with intermediate or higher-level speakers but some participants from Syria or Sudan (who

are complete beginners), got stuck when explaining something, so they were encouraged to switch to Arabic (our common language). Some interviews happened outdoors, during a trip down a river in a boat and a walk in the park. I used open-ended questions with refugee learners more to direct the narrative but at the same time to encourage them to speak more about their language learning journey and to feel free to talk about 'particular experiences' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). Additionally, I wanted them to express their opinion about the services they have received in Scotland, how much time they waited till they got a place on a language course and other key details. I allowed the conversation to flow; it was like a conversation or chat between two people who have lots to share together and who in most cases shared the same mother tongue. I also shared my own experiences to assure them I had been in their position and understood what they were feeling. I was keeping a record of what they said on my recording device and moved it to my university laptop which is secured by password.

In my interviews with New Scots the relationship between me and the participants was relaxed. There was not any tension, as in some cases, I was attending the course with them for several weeks before I started the interviews. It made things easier and made them more open to sharing details they might feel shy about when speaking to a native English speaker. For example, when they were explaining situations and they wanted to say something in English, but they could not find the word or a misunderstanding happened because of wrong pronunciation or replacing words, I nodded and told them about a similar situation that I had experienced. This might not happen spontaneously with other researchers who have not experienced learning another language. The ESOL teacher or project manager had introduced me as student researcher from the University of Glasgow

and explained I would be attending classes with them as an observer, and in some classes as a volunteer teacher for part of the class. The teacher also explained that I wanted to speak with them individually in an interview about one hour in length. She asked the students if they give permission for me to have their contact details and they were also given my university email address to contact me if they were interested in participating in the research. Also, my last question of any interview was if the participant could recommend any New Scots, they knew had recently arrived in Scotland that would be happy to be interviewed and that I allowed them to share my email with any potential participants. Table 3 shows interview participants pseudonyms, gender, nationality, and the duration of their stay in Scotland.

Pseudonym	**Gender**	**Over 50**	**Nationality**	**Duration of stay in Scotland**	**Language used in the interview**	**Status**
Rahma	female		Sudanese	12 months	Arabic	Refugee
Maya	female		Ukrainian	2 months	English	Refugee
Hassan	male		Syria	6 months	Arabic	Refugee (VPRS)
Kian	male		Iran	1 month	English	Refugee

Nora	female		Egypt	9 months	Mix of Arabic and English	Refugee (reunion)
Akram	female		Sudan	2 years	English	Refugee
Dalia	female	yes	Syria	3 months	Arabic	Refugee (VPRS)
Hala	female		Sudan	12 months	Arabic	Refugee (VPRS)
Radwa	female	yes	Syria	9 months	Arabic	Refugee (VPRS)
Rania	female	yes	Sudan	2 years	English	Refugee
Walaa	female		Syria	12 months	Arabic	Refugee (VPRS)
Tasbeeh	female		Sudan	4 years	English	Refugee
Mahmoud	male		Syria	6 months	Arabic	Asylum seeker
Hanan	female		Syria	6 months	Arabic	Refugee
Mohamed	male		Egypt	1 year and half	English	Refugee
Zainab	female		Syria	2 years	English	Refugee
Ahmed	male		Syria	4 years	Arabic	Asylum seeker

Table 3 Interview participant details

4.3.4.2 Interviews with practitioners

The idea behind interviewing practitioners and ESOL teachers was to understand the development of ESOL provision and if it varies in different cities and local authority areas across Scotland. I wanted to identify the challenges or differences they noticed when teaching refugees compared to teaching other migrants who come to work or study. By combining this variety of participants, I got a clearer and better understanding of the situation and certain challenges that refugees face.

Interviews with ESOL practitioners and local authority employees were more formal and directed to make the most of the interview time to understand about ESOL provision in their local authority area. Moreover, interviews with practitioner were at higher degree of formality as I was the one who has less knowledge, less fluency in English and of course less experience. I was therefore listening more than I was speaking and the conversation was more in the form of questions and answers, and I would comment on these answers, ask for more explanation, or direct the conversation onto my next theme.

Questions that were asked of practitioners and ESOL teachers were about how ESOL provision works in their local authority area and if they notice any differences between migrants who chose to come to the UK for work and refugees or forced migrants in terms of learning progression. There were also questions about the way they deal with women learners, elderly learners, those with post-traumatic stress and/or illiterate learners – and whether classes were inclusive for them or not. Similarly, a question was included for practitioners about suggested improvements that need to be considered to improve the quality of ESOL classes or English language learning in general.

Most of the practitioner interviews were online meetings via Teams due to their limited time availability, apart from ones done directly after they finished teaching a class. I prepared a list of questions divided by themes and topics I wanted to cover to help me direct the conversation in a way that focused on my topic of research. These questions were organised to generate a logical flow in the conversation (Bryman, 2016), to invite participants to focus on the intended purpose behind the question. However, questions were also open-ended to give participants the freedom to add more information from their personal experience (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019) and expand more if they wished.

I sent an email to the project manager to ask permission to attend classes as observer/researcher, and to have interviews with either learners or teachers and practitioners who were dealing with refugee learners. (A full list of interview questions is attached as an Appendix). The following table lists participants' pseudonyms and locations.

Pseudonym	**Location**
Maya	Stirling
Kate	Dundee
Calum	Edinburgh
Donna	Dundee
John	Alloa
Joy	Galashiels
Michael	Edinburgh
Nara	Dundee

Allan	Edinburgh
Laila	Glasgow
Sandra	Glasgow
Breige	Dundee
Eileen	Glasgow
Alice	Edinburgh
Sadie	Aberdeen
Andrea	Edinburgh

Table 4 : ESOL teacher and practitioner interviews

4.4 Ethical considerations

Qualitative research often includes direct interaction with people, either in interviews or observing participants' reactions in certain situations in which ethical issues arise (Van Liempt and Bilger, 2012). Before any field work was undertaken, I attended general research training on several types of methods and ethical considerations in a course called qualitative research methods. In this course I was trained to deal with vulnerable participants and manage emotions, and learned about various ethical considerations I should take care of before conducting my research. Working with vulnerable groups such as forced migrants or refugees requires higher attention to protect participants privacy and confidentiality (Bailey and Williams, 2018) and not cause any kind of harm (Mackenzie et al., 2007) by retraumatising participants without offering ongoing support.

The well-being of participants involved in the research was prioritized from the start of the research process. A detailed explanation of the research aims was explained in English and Arabic language in the invitation to participate sheet. Aims and benefits of the research were also discussed at the beginning of the interview. Consent forms were distributed to anyone involved in the research and data collection stage, and included information regarding data protection, anonymity, confidentiality, and the data storage procedure. All this information was explained fully and was discussed in the first meeting with participants.

Interviews did not proceed until permission was granted from the University of Glasgow. Careful consideration was given to the fact that interviews might involve a discussion of traumatic incidents. In case of any unexpected tension or discomfort, participants were informed that if they wish to simply stop the interview because of emotional or psychological discomfort or for any other reasons they were free to do so. They were informed of this both at the start of the interview and while organizing interviews. Because the focus of my research was more on the language learning, I or my participants were unlikely to experience any discomfort, or my questions to cause any kind of distress. In fact, we did not have to stop an interview for any of these reasons. Participants were also free to withdraw at any point during the research. Invitation to participate in the research as well as consent form were both translated into Arabic, and I read them to some participants if they could not read it in either language. I asked them about any questions or concerns they have before started the interviews.

Data was anonymized and all participants were given pseudonyms to make sure they would not be identified. My research data was also stored separately from personal data (Webster

et al., 2014), Personal data, such as the job positions, some certain places, or any personal details that participants could be identified from, were changed, or deleted from transcripts (British Educational Research Association, 2011).

For me as the researcher in this study, using mental health support services at the university was an option to manage my emotional engagement with participants' stories, but in my case, I did not need extra support to use this service. I also believed my own experience should not overshadow my participants' experience. Keeping a reflective journal helped me to prevent myself from over-engagement with the research and to make sure I separated myself and my experience from the experiences of participants.

4.5 Data analysis

All interviews were transcribed, then coded and analysed using NVivo 12 software. I separated interviews with New Scots from interviews with teachers and practitioners, then looked at the emergent themes among all the interviews from initial coding. Some of the codes were, for example, importance of community ESOL, motivation, online learning, progression, qualifications, trauma, and women only classes. I used the same way in coding and analysing my field work notes to compare it with what I had got from the interviews.

4.6 Issues encountered during the research process

One of the shared challenges for researchers is the need to obtain access (Brannic and Coghlan, 2007). It was difficult to get access to observe some classes. When I contacted

teachers by email or even after having a chat with the project organiser, some were concerned about having a researcher around and what types of questions I might ask learners. Although I made the point clear that my role was not to evaluate classes or the organisation, it was still an issue in some places to interview refugees. It was also a challenge to interview learners that I had interacted with through online lessons. I did not have their email addresses and the teacher every time recommended exchanging details after the class but once the lesson ended everyone left the virtual room, unlike face-to-face learners where I usually had time after the class to speak with them, to tell them about my research and ask if they were happy to participate.

Even though speaking Arabic was helpful in facilitating communications between me and the learners, it also affected students in a way that made them rely on me to translate some words and phrases they did not understand during the lesson instead of trying to guess the meaning. It happened also when we were on an educational trip to a science centre and learners were asking me to translate what the guide was telling them when we were having a tour around. I did not have a problem to translate, but I was worried that the learners did not focus on the English spoken and waited for the Arabic translation to understand. As I was only with them for a brief period of time, this was not a long-term issue.

4.7 Limitations

My research has some limitations, as all research does, and I identify them to inform further studies in the future. Given the amount of time available for MPhil research, I was unable to attend ESOL classes across many parts of Scotland as much as I would have liked to. This is

something I can do in a future study. Also, my aim was to meet as many refugees as I could to expand on my findings but having limited time for data collection restrained me from spending more time recruiting participants. The number of interviewees might be expanded in future research which could also include surveys to reach more refugees and gather quantitative data.

In terms of relating language learning and agency, I was planning to meet with people who faced real challenges with that concept but did not have the chance to speak to many asylum seekers (people who apply for refugee status but are still waiting for a decision, as they face many challenges with their agency) during my data collection period. I wanted to investigate this stage of their lives in more detail, as that time of uncertainty can have a clear impact on English language proficiency. Staying in a hostel, or waiting for an asylum decision is stressful, but it was hard to recruit and most of my participants were resettled refugees.

4.8 Conclusion

In this Chapter I outlined the motive and aims for conducting the research. I reflected on my positionality and justified the reasons for choosing a qualitative approach. I explained how and why I adopted and used each data collection method to answer my research questions. Then I reflected on how I chose my participants and the difference between the learner and practitioner participants. I explained ethical considerations and how I analysed my data. Finally, I explained issues encountered and limitations of my research with a view to making future improvements.

Chapter5 Different ESOL needs of New Scots

5.1 Introduction

To recap, this study aimed to identify New Scots' language learning needs and to make the difference between ESOL policy and practice clear to improve and support language learning to help refugees' integration. Discussion of findings is divided into three chapters. Chapter 5 deals with New Scots' needs and why ESOL is different for them. Chapter 6 is about New Scots' views on current ESOL provision and their preferred modes of learning. Chapter 7 offers recommendations to improve ESOL provision to address refugees' specific needs.

Sections 2.4. and 2.5. reviewed previous research outlining some of the challenges New Scots face that make them different from other ESOL learners.

In this Chapter, I add to previous research and focus on some of the challenges New Scots face across Scotland (not only in Glasgow), that make them to some extent different from other ESOL learners. Knowing more about their reasons and motives to learn English language will allow us to better address these needs. I also explore how New Scots fit learning English around other commitments they have to deal with along with language learning. Finally, I present some other barriers New Scots mentioned that might be an obstacle to joining ESOL classes. The aim in presenting these findings is to get to know New Scots more, and try to consider their circumstances, abilities and needs when organising ESOL classes for them.

5.2 Why Refugees need to be considered differently: Agency and language learning

Refugees' circumstances are often different from other migrant populations (Lau and Rodgers, 2021 and Kristen and Seuring, 2021). They share the fact that they all have been forced to leave their home countries and many of the experiences that come with this. This difference leads them to have specific needs and challenges when it comes to learning English. According to Taylor and Sidhu (2012), it is essential for ESOL teachers and practitioners to be aware of refugee learners' background to make sure that the education programme that they provide for them is responsive to their unique needs. For that reason, this chapter will discuss some of my participants' background and needs so this can be better addressed in their language learning journeys.

As mentioned in chapter 3, the first factor that differentiates refugees from other migrants is lacking agency (Bakewell, 2010). The central idea of what makes a refugee is being a forced migrant, which means having no choice but to leave their country and move to a safe place (Essed, 2004). Refugees also do not have the choice to return to their home country, and a majority of them experience restrictive rules regards employment (Phillimore, 2021). Refugees did not choose to be learning another language. The following examples from my interviews might explain the issues better. Hassan is one of the Syrian refugees who was settled in Egypt for 6 years. He and his family came to the UK two months ago through VPRS (Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme). He expressed in Arabic, and I translated:

> *"I never expected I will be moving to a country that speaks a language other than Arabic, so I was not prepared to start learning English before I came here..., I barely speak English [and] I didn't know which country they would move me to"*

Hassan presented the situation of many refugees who do not have prior English language proficiency before arriving to the UK because of the uncertain situation that they lived in. Hassan said that he did not have any idea about the country that he would be moved to, which meant that he could not even familiarise himself with some essential vocabulary that would help him on his arrival. Lack of agency and choice over the time and the country that they will move to does not give many refugees the opportunity to start preparing themselves and learn the language of the country they will travel to. In this situation because Hassan had no agency in deciding where to travel to, he was forced to start from scratch in terms of his language learning.

It was similar for Walaa, a Syrian refugee, who explained just how difficult and stressful it was to come to the UK and how they were chosen to be moved there:

> *"We were waiting for the phone call to be moved for more than one year. This call might come during the day or even at midnight, and if we miss this call there will not be another chance to travel. We had to accept the country they gave us and not refuse it, otherwise we would lose the offer. Sometimes they told people they were going to Canada, Holland, or the UK. I would not have minded any place"*

The above quote again shows the lack of agency and choice that many resettled refugees in Scotland have concerning where they might be moved to as part of the resettlement process. Again, in Walaa's case, learning the language prior to traveling was the last thing to worry about before moving to their assigned country.

What is more, as it was mentioned by Philimore, (2021), in the UK, the restrictive asylum policies on employment have a negative impact on integration. The problem expressed by Ahmed, a Syrian asylum seeker, is that he was not allowed to work. He had been working as

a carpenter and tried to find the same job in the UK, but nobody agreed to employ him as he did not have a work permit. He stated:

> *"I need 4 or 5 years to be able to speak English as my class is only two hours per week, If I was allowed to work, I would improve my speaking quickly while having some extra money to live better"*

So, for Ahmed he wanted to be working or even get training in a factory or a place where he can improve his English while doing the work that he has much experience in. According to Ager and Strang (2008), employment is often viewed as a crucial integration consequence for asylum seekers and refugees, as well to improve one's life by having wider social connections, developing language skills, and having a better quality of life. To solve this problem, allowing asylum seekers to work would increase their communication opportunities and empower them to learn by practice.

Another significant difference between resettled refugees and other migrants is that, in some cases, refugees have 'a low level of formal education' compared to non-refugee migrants who came to work or develop their career in the UK (Philip, 2022). An example, concerning migrants from non-refugee backgrounds, would be Ali, an Iraqi dentist, who I met during my fieldwork in Dundee. He came to work in the UK and told me that he was thinking of travelling for three years before he arrived. During that time, he was working on his speaking skills and waiting for an opportunity to come. Comparing this situation to forced migrants, refugees' moves to the host country are sudden and unprepared. As a result, many refugees' levels of English are lower compared to migrants from other countries upon arrival in Scotland. As Kate, an ESOL practitioner noted:

"The Syrian people who came through resettlement schemes had no education or very low levels of education. We did not get, doctors, lawyers, and accountants, because they all ended up going to the first safe country, Lebanon"

An additional challenge facing ESOL teachers and practitioners is dealing with low literacy levels or even learners who have no formal education (Ayoub 2014). Since refugees did not choose to come to the UK, they have also not chosen to learn to speak English. Instead, this is something that has been forced on them through no choice of their own (Phipps, 2022). For that reason, lack of agency as well as low literacy levels play a crucial role in affecting language learning. Ahmed wants to learn English to develop himself, to find a job in the UK and develop his career, whereas some other New Scots who are not educated in their first language did not choose to start learning a new language at this point of their life. Moreover, another issue that makes refugees different and could affect their English language acquisition is immigration status in the UK as "It becomes evident that any legal situation of insecurity is negatively related to language proficiency" (Kristen and Seuring, 2021, p.148). In my interview with Mahmoud, a young asylum seeker who came to the UK by boat and is attending ESOL in community classes, he said:

"The problem is I am worried about [whether the Home Office] accept my asylum application, and which city they will place me in if I get my refugee status, I do not know I will be in the same class or not, I can't do my homework or focus on learning English while I am having all these worries"

Again, this situation of uncertainty and losing control over his life slows Mahmoud's learning down, and all his focus is on finding good solicitor that will help him in his asylum case. He also told me that there is no time limit concerning his asylum claim, so he has no idea when he will be able to start living his life again. This period is referred to "waiting in the dark" by

Refugee Action (2018), because of the uncertainty and not having any time estimation of how long the process might take. Accordingly, living with an unclear time horizon causes negative impact on asylum seekers' lives (Brekke, 2004), as this contributes to the feeling of not being in control of their life and reducing their agency. Similarly, Hoffman, (2011) and Cortvriend, (2020), stated that asylum seekers are feeling that they always live in a state of limbo, because of the insecure situation they are in, and that is obviously affecting their settlement. Mulvey, (2015), also explained that asylum seekers during that waiting time are not allowed to work and cannot choose where they live while they are waiting for the decision on their asylum application.

Furthermore, unlike other migrant populations, New Scots' post-migration situations such as lack of social connections, unemployment, and poverty, and unsettled legal status can lead to distress (Li et al., 2016), all of which in turn have a negative impact on their learning. Quinn and Strang (2014) also highlighted how mental health could affect integration among New Scots. Not being able to communicate in the host country language can also cause lack of confidence and loneliness which affects integration negatively (Ding and Hargraves, 2009; Benseman 2013; Bogic et al., 2015). An example that shows the effect of post migration distress among refugees is Kian, an 18-year-old Iranian refugee, who stated:

> *"I did not choose to come here, I wanted to stay with my parents and my brother in Iran, I always think about them and wish they are with me as I have nobody here. I cannot study I always cry that they are not here."*

So, for young people who came alone and left their families back in their country, and do not have any social connections, it is very challenging to cope with the situation and concentrate on learning while having this feeling of nostalgia. In Kian's case, he is not ready

to be engaged in learning activities as he is still thinking about his family members who are not in the UK with him, and this takes up an enormous amount of mental and emotional energy. Kian states that 'he can't study' as he is 'always crying' because his family are not with him. That complicatesthe job of ESOL practitioners who struggle to motivate resettled refugees, as it relates to the difficulties that people have gone through both before and since being in the UK. Kate, an ESOL practitioner, stated:

> *"I think a lot of them (Refugees) they do not… Some of them want to stay. You can see the ones who want to stay and start building lives. A lot of them do still want to go back to Syria"*

In this quote Kate was speaking about losing agency and how this affect learners. She mentioned that because coming to the UK was not something refugees wanted from the beginning, some of them just do not give learning much attention, as they always dream of going back to their country.

Considering all these circumstances and stress, losing control to choose the next step or plan for what is coming, makes it challenging to have the power and motivation to concentrate on learning a new language. According to Philip (2022), there is clear evidence that refugees' lack of agentic identity might lead to them being less engaged to learn English. My findings align with what Philip states, as the classes that I observed, where learners did not have the control over their learning seemed to be less engaged and motivated. This is compared to learners in cooking class for example, where learners were taking the lead to cook a certain dish from their country and having control over. All these differences between refugee Learners and other ESOL learners need to be considered by social workers, ESOL teachers, and service providers who are dealing with refugees. In the

next Section I will move on to explain the individual differences among refugees themselves and their reasons for learning English language.

5.3 New Scots' reasons for accessing ESOL

In this section, I will focus on New Scots' aims and reasons for joining ESOL classes, and how knowing their motives and needs would allow tailoring of classes to match with their needs and improve their integration.

New Scots need to learn English for several reasons. They need English, for instance, to be able to access health and social services or legal aid, and to apply for school for their children (Hek, 2005). In other cases, they need English to access employment or to use services in the community (Ager and Strang, 2008). Most importantly, learning English gives refugees power, allowing them to have control over their lives and consolidate their agency (Philip, 2022). In an interview, Rahma, a Sudanese refugee who came to the UK with her kids described her need to learn English as such:

> *"I can do all my meeting, go to GP, or a school meeting with my children's teachers; I can do every single, without support or helper. I can read all the emails, all the letters come to my home; I can do everything on my own''*

Rahma wanted to be able to do everything by herself, attending meetings or appointments, understanding, or responding to letters, without feeling she needs help. She finds it more convenient to speak the language and not depend on others. Learning English is a key to running many essential daily situations in New Scots' lives and gave Rahma agency and control to do her own things at her preferred time, instead of waiting for a translator or helpers who might not be available all the time. According to Miller (2012), learning the

language of the country that one is living in mediates forms of agency for those learners. Another example would be Nora, an Egyptian refugee, who also said that she needed English from the first day she arrived at the hotel at the airport, as she arrived at the time of Covid and had to stay 10 days in the airport hotel for quarantine:

> *"I felt lonely. Must speak English, just English, no option. 10 days in a hotel. If you need anything, also you must speak English, you must express yourself, what you need, food or other thing."*

In this situation of being in the airport alone, Nora was put in a vulnerable situation, she did not find any option but to depend on herself and find the words to express her needs. She used Google translate and what she remembered from the few English words that she knew from school to deal with the situation during her quarantine time. So, the aim of learning English emerged from the need that Nora wanted to communicate in English.

Some other refugees attend English cafés or general conversation classes in their local area for the purpose of socialising and making new friends. Rania, for example, a young lady from Sudan who applied to study ESOL at a college, was attending the class I was observing in a community centre in her local area. She said that:

> *"I applied to learn English in the college, but I am still on the waiting list, So I am attending with this group as I want to make friends, know people in my area and do not feel I am wasting the time in waiting at least I am doing something."*

Learning English language is helpful for people who want to make new friends and know their local area (Riggs et al,2012). Kate, an ESOL practitioner and a project leader in community based ESOL confirmed that idea by stating:

"For me, it is important that we are based in a community learning and development service. ESOL is not just about language acquisition, but it is about supporting integration and supporting progression in its widest sense."

This quote highlights the importance of learning English for the purpose of communicating and achieving better integration with the host community. Furthermore, some New Scots expressed their ambition to learn English to open the door for them to progress and build a new life. For example, some learners wanted to progress to higher Education or have better jobs later which relate to their specialisms. For example, in interviewing Breig, student funding officer at a university in Scotland, she spoke about her experience in supporting many young refugees to pursue their education and secure places in the university. She said:

"One of the common themes is that young (Refugee) people are very high achievers and have high aspirations, they were all wanting to be doctors, engineers, dentists, you know, high professionals, which is fabulous."

Breig was working as a community development worker and dealing with many refugees, she described how they were enthusiastic to build their lives and progress and prove that they can make huge achievements in their new safe country. Other ESOL learners are improving their English language as a preparation for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam, which is a requirement to apply for university (Streitwieser, et al, 2019). Some New Scots also need English to pass the driving test, the life in the UK test, or gain some work qualifications. Despite these aims and aspirations, some refugee learners might experience challenges or interruptions during their education, as learning English is always going in parallel with other commitments that New Scots have. The next section explains this statement in more detail.

5.4 Fitting ESOL around other commitments

Refugees in most cases do not have the opportunity to learn English before they come to the UK like other migrants do. Even when asylum seekers and refugees arrive to the UK, they have other commitments that they must fit their language learning around. Judgments are made about New Sots without considering any of the barriers or difficulties that refugees go through, like the negative idea that is sometimes reflected by media about refugees' low English proficiency (Cook, 2006). In this section, I will shed light on some extra responsibilities that New Scots reported, and how they cope with these commitments beside their learning. Knowing about these commitments will help ESOL teachers, course organisers and practitioners to be aware of these challenges or commitments, so they do not try to assess all learners' abilities with one measure. In general, adult learners face more difficulties and more responsibilities than young learners (Baharudin, et al, 2013). For example, adult learners might have families and be dealing with issues such as arranging childcare, financial difficulties or having some learning difficulties and anxiety (ibid). New Scots might share many of these challenges and commitments, however, adults have some additional issues. My findings indicate that refugees are fitting learning English around their other responsibilities, which will be explained in more details in this section.

Refugee ESOL learners are dealing with many things beside learning, they have so many distractions; starting from attending Home Office interviews, to solicitor appointments, dealing with Job Centre appointments, while trying to learn English to be able to meet

essential requirements to start their new life. Radwa, a Syrian refugee above 50 years, said that:

> *"I was happy to learn English in the college, but the bad thing which I do not like it in the college that we have a lot of homework every day, I do not have time, cooking, cleaning, spend some time with my kids. I have appointment with Job Centre, and appointments with my social worker."*

Radwa preferred practicing conversation in the class, but not having extra work when she goes home as she has other responsibilities there, doing house chores, taking care of her family, and attending other appointments. Attending these appointments takes a lot from her time which could be a barrier to achieving quick progress in learning the language. New Scots have many issues that other learners do not. New Scots go through the asylum process, or if they came through a certain resettlement scheme, they still have commitments related to the Job Centre and moving accommodations according to the change of their status. These issues impact on their ability to attend the classes. Here is one quote from Donna, an ESOL teacher. I asked her about attendance percentage among refugee learners and other learners on different types of visas (non-refugees). She said that refugee learners are more likely to miss classes because of other commitments they have and gave this example.

> *"Some students take permission to miss some classes to attend job centre appointments, or they miss classes because moving from temporary to permanent accommodation for example. Tier 2 visa holders, for example, do not have this disruption."*

So that example might make the idea clear about refugee learners having to deal with other responsibilities and commitments while learning English language. As it was reported by

Phillimore et al (2007), learning hours could overlap with Job Centre requirements for finding a job. Add to that all the memories and family members who were left behind, and the traumatic difficulties that some refugees suffer from, and there is considerable distraction from learning

Childcare is also a barrier that was reported by New Scots participants as affecting their ability, or in some cases preventing them from attending classes. In most Arabic cultures children are the responsibility of the mother. Many women that I spoke to reported that they cannot start an ESOL class because of having babies or kids who did not yet reach the school age. Others reported that classes are at times that do not fit with their childcare responsibilities. According to White (2021), providing childcare for language classes attended by New Scots would enable them to attend ESOL.

Akram, a mother of four from Sudan, spoke about the childcare issue by saying:

> *"All English classes that I wanted to register at, doesn't provide childcare or creche for kids under school age, I couldn't start in the college unless, my youngest child started a full-time nursery"*

Consequently, providing childcare in this situation would allow Akram and other learners in her situation an early start to learn English language. Even with the support given by Scottish Government to children at the age of 2 years old, this was not applicable in all nurseries. Some nurseries offer places but only at certain times, for example, parents could choose either 8am to 1pm or the other time slot from 1pm to 6 pm, which is different from normal school hours so learners reported that they cannot go to colleges in far places as they need to pick their kids up at 1pm.

In Dundee, I met Hanan, a Syrian lady who was studying with her husband in the same class, they have a one-year-old baby, and told me:

> *"Our daughter stays in the creche for two hours, while we are in the class, that is more suitable for us to be together"*

Here in this case, providing creche as part of the class allowed the mother to join that class, which she could not manage without having a childcare arranged for her daughter. Moreover, the issue of transport is considered in some cases as a barrier to attending ESOL classes. New Scots reported that public transport is so expensive that it affects their budget to commute to classes. To solve the issue of transport some colleges made the option available for some learners to choose locations close to where they live, instead of having all classes on a main campus. For example, Tasbeeh who lives in Edinburgh stated:

> *"It is very difficult to study at Granton Campus because It's one hour to go and the same to return, and a day ticket is expensive if you need to take the bus four days a week. I need to pick my kids up from the school at 2:45pm, so no way I can arrive to them on time. But when they offered a place near the home it was good, and I do not need to take the bus anymore."*

Tasbeeh was offered a place in the college, but classes were held at a community centre near to where she lives. She said that Edinburgh College gave her the option to choose one of many locations in Edinburgh related to the college, instead of taking the bus one hour to go to the main college site. She found this a more convenient option to study for qualifications without travelling on a long journey to go to the college. Having some local spaces for studying ESOL made it more convenient for learners to attend their class locally and to save time and money of transport (Hunter, 2022).

Some refugee participants spoke about issues they encountered with accessing state benefits, how this impacted on their lives in Scotland and on their ability to participate in ESOL classes. An example of that is Walaa, a Syrian lady who cares for a disabled husband. They came through the VPRS (Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme) to live in Galashiels. She stated:

> *"My husband had a metal bullet in his leg, it is affecting his mobility to the highest degree, however, it was so difficult to apply for disability allowance, we were waiting for long period of time for the assessment, although my husband's case is matching to all the criteria, but it was very stressful and long process for us. I am also not allowed to study full time in the college as I am registered as a main carer for him"*

Walaa is a young lady who is ambitious to learn and improve herself to have a better future for herself and her family. But the barrier is that some learners cannot study full time in college without losing their carer's allowance. By considering these circumstances, being aware of learners' wellbeing in general, and about certain groups' problems and traumatic incidents will allow teachers, colleges, and course providers to better meet their needs.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has centred around a discussion of agency, emphasising its relationship to language learning. Some reasons why differentiated ESOL provision or language classes for New Scots should be considered have also been explored. Additionally, I have outlined reasons for New Scots to join language classes and how this helps them in several ways, whether that be in terms of communicating, socialising, or furthering their education. I have then taken a closer look at refugees' lives and their other commitments, aiming to give ESOL

course organisers and practitioners some background knowledge of the obstacles and challenges New Scots might experience alongside their language learning journey. The following chapter sets out to reveal more about New Scots' views on different modes of learning and how each type of learning meets their needs in one way or another.

Chapter6 New Scots views on preferred modes of learning

6.1 Introduction

A previous chapter investigated the circumstances and reasons why refugee learners are different from other learners, refugees' reasons for learning English and how they try to keep up their learning along with their other responsibilities. This chapter moves on to explore New Scots' perspectives of diverse types of ESOL provision, the number of hours required, and preferred degree of formality, so it can help in tailoring the ESOL provision that best suits their needs. Refugees' viewpoints about different types of provision, whether in college or community centre for example, differ according to their individual abilities and previous education level. In this section, I will discuss and present my participants' opinions on several types of provision, and how each type can be helpful to their needs and English language level to certain degree. Also, their opinions about online provision which became a more current way of learning after Covid restriction time. Finally, the chapter discusses the need for pre-entry level for those with low literacy levels or New Scots who never been in formal education previously.

6.2 New Scots' views about learning college or community based ESOL

It is important for ESOL providers to understand refugees' perspectives regarding the most beneficial type of ESOL provision to suit individual differences and educational backgrounds.

There was no agreement between refugee ESOL learners on whether college-based or community-based ESOL was preferred. Some beginner level learners preferred ESOL that is taught in a community centre. For example, Maya, a Ukrainian lady in her 30s who came to Edinburgh two months ago said that attending a conversation English class in the community centre in her local area in Edinburgh made a significant difference to her and her son's life:

> *"I think my English is a little bit better, just because of these several lessons. It is a very kind atmosphere, here. You can speak and do not be afraid that somebody will look at you and told you, you do some mistake."*

For Maya gaining access to community based ESOL was helpful for gaining some exposure to English language in a safe and welcoming atmosphere. She was happy that she was spending some time in her local community while learning new vocabulary. Maya was lucky to find an English class available in her local area. But that is not always the case in other places across Scotland, as I found when I met Nora who came to Glasgow 9 months ago and was not offered any English support available in her local area. She was told that she needed to apply to the college and wait till they give her a space:

> *"Yes. I applied to the college first month I was here, I applied for ESOL. I feel that is very important. I applied. But it had already started, the course, in August, I am here in September, no English class in the near community centre."*

In this case, community ESOL would allow learners to make the most of their waiting time. According to Stevenson, et al (2017), it is important to have some kind of immediately available informal language provision for those who are waiting to access formal learning. Moreover, learning ESOL in a community centre would, in most cases, be more flexible and attended by local people. Informal ESOL provision would be an introduction to learning as well as helping to establish motivation and learning about local services in their area. Accordingly, having options other than the college can give New Scots a start and allow them to acquire some English while they are waiting to start in the college. The waiting time can be a year or more in some cases (Cox and Phipps, 2022).

Another advantage of community classes that was noted by some refugee learners who attend both college and community centres was that they liked community classes as they include more conversation and interaction with people rather than studying writing or reading, which they considered to be less important skills than speaking. Abdul, who is a young Syrian asylum seeker, expressed his need for conversation with people ahead of his need to improve his writing and reading. He attends both college and community classes but prefers the general conversation course and benefited most from it as he mentioned.

> *"I attend in college four days and two days here (in the community centre). But I learn more conversation in the community centre. What is the use of writing amazing writing or answer comprehension and I am not able to speak to the GP or to my lawyer without interpreter."*

In this quote Abdul's need to learn conversational English was more important than other skills. He wants to have agency over his life, and for this he needs to have many conversations throughout his day which allow him to feel he can communicate. As I have

mentioned previously, refugees' needs to learn English differ according to many factors such as age, educational background, or future plans. Abdul also stated that studying in the college was 'less enjoyable' and 'needs more commitment' than studying English informally in community centres or other places that offer English language support. In such cases, New Scots need 'the survival English' (White, 2021) that enables them to communicate daily before engaging in any type of formal learning.

Hala, a Sudanese refugee, also commented on learning in the community centre that she felt she had some agency to choose what to learn in her English class. However, when she attended formal classes in college, she did not have that freedom of choice:

> *"In the college the teacher always in rush she wants to finish the lesson on time, and we cannot change topic or speak about ourselves, numbers (of students) are big. But my other class teacher here (in the community centre) sometimes asks us what you want to talk about, one time I told her we want to speak with doctor in the phone and all ladies said yes."*

That is an indication of flexibility for learners in informal classes, while there is a certain curriculum to follow in the more formal kind of English teaching. Here Hala preferred having the freedom to choose which topic she wants to know about. She needed to practice how to have a phone call with the GP, and so was happy when she suggested that topic, her classmates agreed, and the teacher allowed her to pick the topic. I also heard the same from Michael, a volunteer teacher in an organisation to help refugees, who said:

"I have five students in my class, and at the end of every lesson, I ask them, what do they want to learn about in the next time, we cover topics like, booking train ticket, start a conversation in the bus, booking a medical appointment, and so on."

Michael does not follow a set curriculum; he always asks learners at the end of their lesson what they are interested to learn in the next lesson. That freedom of choosing what to learn can raise learners' motivation and empower them by giving them the control to choose what to learn (Philip, 2022).

On the other hand, some learners preferred learning English in the college and said that they cannot depend only on community classes as it is two hours per week, which is not enough to make noticeable progress. Rahma, for example, was in favour of learning in the college as the main source of improving her English while complementing this by attending classes in the community centre:

"I think both is important and the college, you can improve your writing and your reading and the rules of language, and like spelling and something like that. And for community support, you can improve your speaking, if you contact other people, you can improve your speaking."

For Rahma, it was important for her to develop her English level to start employment. That is why she benefitted from attending both formal and informal ESOL provision.

In the case of advanced level participants or New Scots who are hoping to pursue their education in the university, they always preferred the college for providing a certificate. They want to pass national level 5 exams to progress to higher education or to gain equivalent certificates to be able to work in the UK.

In interviewing Alice, a very experienced ESOL practitioner, she was in favour of providing certification, and was against some community based ESOL which does not provide such certification for learners, she said:

"But the attitude of community learning always has been, "Oh well, it is more casual and we do not want to pressurise people with tests and people do not want it. Never in all my years teaching have I met somebody who does not want a certificate."

She also added that:

"I'm passionate about qualifications, I think everybody should get a qualification for learning, whether they're learning in a college, or whether they're learning in the community."

For that reason, college was preferred by those who want to progress and move on to higher education. An example is Rania, a Sudanese participant, who said that she would like to study engineering at university and that is the reason she wanted to study in the college:

"I prefer studying in the college, in my opinion, the community is for the first couple of months, but we can't improve our English by attending in the community only, there is no levels all mixed abilities, in college there is levels and by passing each level you can progress to set your IELTS Exam"

In some local authority areas, the way ESOL is arranged is that learners start with community ESOL first and then move on to the college to specialise in their area of study after they reach to upper intermediate level. Kate, an ESOL practitioner, explained the situation:

"One of the things we try to do is hold them back from going to college too early because of the way college funding works. If they go too early and use all their bursary funding up then they cannot go onto a vocational course later"

So, learners learn English language in the community centre to save their available funding for college for a more advanced level when they want to study in a specific area. For example, if a learner wants to study a course about childcare or teaching, they will learn English in a community centre to save the funding for the childcare course later.

6.3 New Scots views about online learning

During the pandemic online teaching was a necessity. Now with everything returning to normal after Covid, however, some classes either remain online or in a hybrid mode, which was not the preferred mode for some New Scots learners. Distance learning has many advantages such as flexibility, which allows learners to learn at their own pace, it saves time and money for transportation, and it can also be fitted around other commitment such as work or childcare (Polydoros and Alasona, 2021). However, many refugee learners I spoke to were in favour of face-to-face classes, especially those who are at beginner level. They gave many reasons such as not having a device to use for online lessons, lack of experience in dealing with technology, network problems, or finding it hard to concentrate while they are away from the teacher. Other refugee learners also reported that online classes lose the social elements and the good relationship between teacher and learners or among learners themselves. In this section, both viewpoints will be explained in more detail.

Some refugee learners that I interviewed said that they did not like to be learning English language online, due to their lack of digital knowledge and not knowing how to access the online platform to attend their class. For example, Akram, a Sudanese participant, reported:

"It is very difficult, because I am learning technology and English. This is very, very bad times, all for my stuff frozen, and the internet also, the problem with internet and how can you use Zoom."

The problem is that those who are still at beginner levels of English and some older learners have challenges to use the internet or deal with programmes that are used for online classes. This is because some of the programmes are available only in English and some learners are less likely to have experience with technology. That might cause learner dropout or loss of motivation to learn (Appana, 2008; Park and Choi, 2009). In the case of Akram, it felt like an extra burden to learn how to deal with technology while also learning a new language. In online classes, learners might need to deal with connection difficulties as well as trying to focus and engage with kids and other family responsibility (Thompson and Porto, 2014). As Akram said, sometimes the internet connection is bad and, if she missed part of her lesson, she might spend the whole class trying to catch up and follow what the teacher has explained.

Another drawback of online classes is that some refugee learners might not have the equipment they need to log in to their lesson, or what they have might not be good quality, which might prevent them from proceeding with their learning (Polydoros and Alasona, 2021). Walaa, a Syrian participant, said:

"I tried to apply to get a laptop device from the college, but it was difficult to get one, as many learners were asking for the same, me and my husband were sharing an old tablet to attend our lesson but sometimes we are at the same time so one of us should miss the class."

In this situation, lack of devices caused missed classes and learning interruption. Walaa also expressed that, in online lessons, she had to take the class while her baby son sat on her legs, which distracted her from focusing on the lesson.

> *"In online classes, my child is on my leg while I am on the lesson. He does not want to go to my husband as he sees me at home. I cannot focus, sometimes when he cries, I must leave the session. But when I go to the class myself, I can separate myself from any other responsibility."*

So again, in this case, part of the class was missed because kids see their mum at home, and do not understand that this is her study time, but when she goes to attend her class in person, she finds it more beneficial and easier to concentrate.

Furthermore, in online learning, learners do not communicate with friends or have the same support available from teachers and peers as they do in face-to-face classes (Kara et al, 2019). An example for this is Kian, an Iranian participant, who expressed that:

> *"In my class, they are older than me, but they are so kind. We are close to each other because they are so kind. We are speaking, laughing together after class, in online we never speak before or after the lesson."*

Kian's quote reflects a crucial advantage of meeting other ESOL learners who may be in similar circumstances. They value the human relationships that develop between them during or after a class, and the social elements in the face-to-face environment, however, these do not exist to the same degree in the online study mode. According to Mali and Lim, (2021), their qualitative study showed that students prefer in person classes due to having group work and engaging with each other in a class environment, and so having the opportunity to build robust relationships with teachers and peers. Similarly, Rania, a Sudanese refugee, reported her preference to face to face classes by saying:

"It is very nice. I see all friends. I come talk with friends. Sometimes I come early. I can talk."

Rania preferred the social side of attending a language class in person, as she communicates and has nice chats with her classmates either before or after the class. When participating in online classes, however, she reported that there is no chance to catch up with anyone. The teacher ends the meeting, and everybody logs out of the link or the virtual room.

In interviewing Allan, an ESOL teacher at Edinburgh college, he said:

"Face to face class is much more interesting and you get much more interaction rather than just faces on a screen."

Despite difficulties for beginner level and elderly learners in dealing with technology or attending a remote language class, online learning was a workable solution at more advanced levels and for refugees who are living in the Scottish Borders or rural areas in general and find it difficult to commute to attend ESOL classes. Joy, an ESOL teacher in a rural part of Scotland said:

"I know a lot of places are doing more of a hybrid approach, we have a couple of women who joined during COVID, and they were able to attend because it was online. So, we do not want to completely lose the online. Also, there are a few ladies from further away who think that online is better option for them".

In this case, having online classes allows more learners to attend, especially those who live in places that mean attending in person classes would be difficult for them. Additionally, some learners work in full time or part time jobs and only online classes can fit with their busy schedule. Joy also commented that some learners' preference to attend online depends on learners' level of English and their experience in dealing with technology.

An example of an advanced level learner and experienced user of online platforms is Ahmed, an engineer studying on a construction course. He stated:

> *"In the online class, you don't waste your time in leaving home half an hour before the class, and wasting more time after the class, it also makes you focus on the lesson and after you finish you can do another task straight after the class ends."*

Like Hunter, (2022) I found that some ESOL learners preferred the online mode of study for the specific reason of time saving. Ahmed was a busy person, so attending online allowed him to save the time of travelling to the class and to gain the required knowledge without spending time on commuting. Moreover, attending online can also be a good solution for people with a disability or with childcare responsibilities (Hunter, 2022).

Another example to show different learning preferences among learners was from my observation in Clackmannanshire, where I attended CSCS, (construction skills certification scheme) class with one group that was held face to face and another that was running online. This course was about teaching English but in the form of preparing learners to sit a construction exam to get a required qualification to work in the construction industry. Participants from each group were happy with their choice. The online group preferred remote learning either because of mobility issues or caring responsibilities and, in some cases, the cost of transportation. Those in the face-to-face class reported that their concentration is higher when they see the teacher and they are prepared to answer questions at any time, unlike being online, where it is easy to switch your camera off and not concentrate on your lesson. Other groups of learners or teachers were in favour of a blended mode of learning which could combine the advantages of each type. It was noted by Wood, (2022) that "many ESOL learners would find inclusion of blended approaches in

course provision beneficial to their learning" (p.1) and can reduce the waiting time for in person classes. Therefore, it is always good practise to give learners the opportunity to choose which type of ESOL class they would like to attend and believe would be more beneficial in helping to improve their language level as well as responding to their needs for socialising and integrating with others in the community.

6.4 New Scots need for pre-entry ESOL provision

According to Stevenson et al, (2017), the demand for pre-entry level ESOL or low literacy provision was high among many resettled refugees. Similarly, Mackey (2019) reported that some resettled Syrians needed low level literacy and pre-entry level ESOL classes. At the same time, a lack of provision of pre-entry level classes with literacy support was reported by many New Scots that I spoke to. An example is Zainab, a Syrian lady aged 45 and mother of two kids at school age. When I told her about my experience of communication difficulties after my arrival, she said in Arabic, and I translated:

> *"You are still young 'my daughter', you are educated and can learn quickly, I came out of the school on primary 4 in Syria, When I first came to Edinburgh, I attended beginner level at college but the level was too high for me, then I attended in a community centre, but I couldn't understand anything, everybody talking and laughing, and I don't know what they are talking about, I needed to learn letters and words from ABC."*

So, for Zainab neither college nor community centre classes would meet her needs. She wanted to start learning letters and numbers from the beginning and how to spell words.

Therefore, pre-entry classes would help a lot in preparing low literacy learners to start with beginners' level language learning. Also, Dalia, a Syrian refugee above 50 years old, stated that:

> *"My husband and I are not educated, he was working in a restaurant, and I am raising the kids, learning English is so difficult for me, I can't read and write in Arabic, So I want to learn letters like nursey kids."*

In Dalia's case she was illiterate in her first language, so of course it was very difficult for her to study formally and be in a classroom setting at this stage. For someone with a low literacy level, it is important to have a pre-stage of teaching the basics and qualified teachers to deal with literacy levels for those who need to start by learning how to write letters and numbers. According to Thickpenny (2017), low literacy refugees need a more tailored model of learning English to meet their specific needs.

Kate, who is an ESOL practitioner and project manager running community based ESOL programmes for refugees. She commented on that by saying:

> *"CELTA trains you to teach intermediate learners and above and you are taught by college staff who have only ever worked in colleges. Most of our learners are beginner, pre-elementary or even absolutely no English, no literacy, pre-literate. These staff do not come out of CELTA with the skills they need to work in communities. They have no literacy skills; literacies are not taught in CELTA. They certainly do not have the community work skills."*

Kate emphasised how important it is that ESOL teachers who deal with refugee learners should have the required skills and training to understand refugees' different situations, as well as having background knowledge about their circumstances, and that a CELTA

(Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) qualification is not enough for dealing with refugee learners or low literacy levels. Additionally, in my interview with Briege, an ESOL practitioner, she said:

> *"The people who have come here have come here with low skills and low education. One thing they are not used to being in classrooms. They are used to being out working, they have never been in these circumstances."*

In this quote, the ESOL practitioner was trying to explain the situation by stating that if learners do not have literacy in any language, the literacy-based methods often used for ESOL in Scotland will not work for them, as they need a tailored model of learning English. The other issue is that if learners have not experienced formal education, they might feel uncomfortable in a formal classroom environment. Some refugees have 'low education', they are not used to studying in a classroom and need something more introductory to at least prepare them for this kind of learning (White, 2021). As Bekar (2000), suggested, I would recommend adding more flexibility to classes taught to refugees in terms of attendance, length of classes, ordering of lessons within the curriculum, and using various activities to help with the problem of attention.

6.5 Conclusion

In chapter 6, the preferred mode of learning, whether that be in a college or community centre, was investigated from the perspective of New Scots. Understanding New Scots' views is important because it allows us to consider their needs and abilities when designing courses or assigning them a certain type of ESOL provision. New Scots' opinions about online learning or the difficulties they are facing are also of value, especially when it comes to low literacy levels or their experience of dealing with technology. Finally, the chapter highlighted the need for pre-entry language provision for New Scots who have never been to school or had any kind of formal education in their home countries. In this case, a need has been identified for more practical activities and more engaging small tasks to attract and motivate people to learn while doing another activity. The following chapter explores this idea in more depth.

Chapter7 Improving ESOL provision through innovative approaches

7.1 Introduction

According to Ćatibušić, et al (2021), there is a real demand for new approaches to be adopted in the context of ESOL provision to take into consideration the specific needs of many refugees, such as low literacy levels in their first language (Benseman 2014; Choi and Ziegler 2015), lack of confidence to speak in the English language (Court 2017), and other needs that were presented in Section 4.1. (See also Phillimore (2011); Riggs et al. (2012)). Beacco, et al (2014), also emphasised the need to identify appropriate pedagogic practices and interventions so that the varied and complex needs of all refugee students, particularly the most vulnerable, can be addressed.

In this section, I discuss some recommended approaches. The first is language learning through other activities (Phipps, 2018), such as a cooking or gardening classes, so that learning happens in context (Kramsch, Levine and Phipps, 2010). Learning in these classes happens spontaneously and meaningfully as New Scots learn new vocabulary while doing some fun activities and socialising with others. The second approach is employing an 'ecological multilingual approach,' where "language is seen as intrinsically linked and inseparable from the physical environment and its users" (Cox, 2021 p.31). In this approach, language learning and integration occur in parallel from an early stage. For example, learners are learning by going to the shops or signing up for a library membership, etc. This approach also encourages use of the learners' own language in teaching them the target

language (Cox, 2021). The third approach is being aware of the implications of trauma survival (Sellars and Murphy 2018). In other words, to adopt trauma informed methods and to raise ESOL teachers and service providers' awareness of the importance of knowing about learners' backgrounds to better address their needs and help them overcome their feelings of being isolated. Each of these approaches is explained in detail so that the diverse needs of New Scots, especially the most vulnerable, can be considered by ESOL practitioners and course organisers.

7.2 Language learning through other activities

One of the approaches to compliment the traditional ESOL teaching in the classroom is learning English language through other activities outside the class environment. This could be a separate course on its own, such as gardening or cooking classes, or it could be part of an ESOL programme by assigning time in the class or one day to learn outside the traditional classroom setting. In this section, I will draw on my fieldwork and the interview data I collected from New Scots and ESOL practitioners to highlight the importance of learning outside the classroom and using various activities to learn English language in a fun and relaxing atmosphere and how this is helping New Scots not only to learn English language but also to integrate in the community.

According to Phipps (2018), the development of language learning through various activities, such as a cooking, sewing, or gardening class, is considered a great divergence from the type of formal language provision that is taught in the classroom. This kind of language provision has been described as a CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning)

approach - ‘Content and Language Integrated Learning’ (van Rensburg and Son 2010) - where people learn the language by doing something else altogether. This method can be beneficial for people with low literacy levels or those not used to study in a classroom. Through a CLIL approach they can learn and practice speaking English through becoming involved in social activities, or by learning a specific skill. A representative case would be an IT class that was organised to be taught online from an organisation to support refugees. This class was taught by a Sudanese teacher to a group of absolute beginners, who were learning IT skills such as how to use Microsoft Word, and how to use online platforms. The teacher was teaching learners English vocabulary such as home, insert, layout, book, flight, holiday, (see methodology section 3.2). I was acting as participant and volunteer teacher for the main activity which is to familiarise them with some basic IT skills. I also observed a gardening class for refugees and met Tasbeeh, a Sudanese refugee, who stated that:

> *“I attend gardening class in the community centre. I love that class so much, I learn how to grow food and learned many names of vegetables in English, I also taught the group Arabic names of these vegetables”*

Tasbeeh was so happy to speak about her experience attending this gardening class and how it helped her to expand her English vocabulary while also learning a new skill. She also mentioned a jogging group which was organised by the same community to encourage refugees to go out, chat with locals, know their area as well as improve their wellbeing. The importance of such classes at beginner level is to start familiarising themselves with English language without feeling that they are studying in a formal environment. I observed this method of teaching already being applied in some parts of Scotland, namely in Edinburgh, Dundee, and Galashiels. I attended for my observation an English café for beginners' level in Galashiels. This was more social group than an English language class,

with everyone bringing food from their home and having tea and coffee. This class was attended by many Syrian refugees who had just arrived at Scotland and were in the Scottish Borders, they were socialising with local people from the community while speaking English in a fun atmosphere. These classes even included people from the host community which added more benefit to the class as it allowed them to know more about refugees' culture and try some new food while opening more conversations with New Scots and helping them to improve their English. According to Phillimore (2021), the host community plays a vital role in supporting refugees' integration and language learning. In addition to that, the relationship between refugees and host community was valued in Ager and Strang (2004 and 2008) integration framework as follows:

> *"Processes of social connection within and between groups within the community; and structural barriers to such connection related to language, culture and the local environment" (Ager and Strang 2008: 166).*

Furthermore, at the national conference for New Scots that was held in November 2022, I met organisers of a sewing group for refugees. They started this project as innovative way of teaching English language to women who do not have literacy at their mother tongue language. The project began with two sewing machines and has since grown to over 15 machines for use by women attending that group. One of the volunteers was a former learner who had benefited from the classes immensely and liked to help others to speak better English in an informal atmosphere. I also observed some gardening classes and yoga classes which were attended by both refugees and members of the host community. These classes were organised by the local community centre to help refugees speak English while doing some fun activities. The whole atmosphere during these classes was one of happiness and learners exchanged jokes and laughs while also having good exposure to English

language. Rahma, a Sudanese lady who always attended the cooking class, said in a mix of Arabic and English interview:

> *"In cooking class, I know new food recipes, I even know the names of spices and ingredients. I remember one time I wanted to make a Sudanese dish but because I could not figure out what is the name of one ingredient, I could not make it. I translated it from google translate and showed the man in the shop, but he said he does not recognise that word. Later I knew it was coriander" (Laughing).*

So, learners in these kinds of classes learn by cooking and chatting while preparing meals. They also exchange languages and learn what everyone in the class calls certain things in their country. They eat together and have an enjoyable time while learning some important words that they will use while shopping. This type of class might be particularly useful for pre-entry / beginner level learners, as well as those whose reasons for accessing ESOL are that they need 'survival English' and social English.

Another group I observed in Edinburgh was an informal English conversation class. The class is for women only from diverse backgrounds. It was attended by local people from the same area and their backgrounds included Scottish, Sudanese, Syrian, Bangladeshi, and Ukrainian members. The aim of the class is to exchange language, culture, information and spend happy times together while having coffee and cakes. These relaxed atmospheres would be a valuable support towards improving refugees' wellbeing as well as supporting their language learning and integration. This type of informal conversation classes would help New Scots who experienced some traumatic incidents to learn English without any pressure in an enjoyable way.). According to Refugee Action (2016), informal learning is helpful in acquiring second language for refugees, builds learner's confidence and improves their

integration in the community. Additionally, informal learning would give learners a safe space to speak and use the language they learn (Lexia, 2019).

The class was held every week for two hours; it was for women only. Children were allowed to attend - even babies in the prams - they were all understanding and helping the mums with a baby. They were having nice cakes made by a Bangladeshi lady who passed her driving test and was sharing that achievement and celebrating with the group. After we had the coffee and the cake, one volunteer distributed a game of snakes and ladders. The game was designed to teach English to speakers of other languages. The class was divided into two groups, each group had one person with English as their first learned language – it was an enjoyable time to learn and speak with volunteers. OBJ

Figure 2 photograph of ladies only class learning through games.

According to Hirsu and Bryson (2017), the support that resettled refugees who participated in the research received from local Scottish people in their community helped them to

speak freely and make efforts to communicate and introduce their culture to them. This communication with the host community members was particularly important as knowledge of other cultures plays a vital role in raising awareness of cultural differences. However, this communication needs to be supplemented by “an understanding of the dynamic way sociocultural contexts is constructed” (Baker, 2012, p.4). Cultural awareness plays a vital role in supporting language learning and communication (ibid). So, both refugees when they know about the host country's culture, or the native language speakers know about refugees' diverse cultures, that will help integration, cultural exchange, and learning. In the previously mentioned English conversation class, it was clearly noticeable how all the ladies, not only exchanged language, but also got to know each other’s cultures, learn more information about services in their local areas and spent wonderful time together.

The other type of language learning which I would like to highlight in this section is outdoor learning, a pedagogical approach that promotes experiential learning in informal settings, helping learners to improve their mental health and learn new skills (Humberstone, et al, 2017). Additionally, learners’ agency is increased during outdoor learning, as learners mediate and control their learning which is facilitated by the teacher (Banchi and Bell, 2008). The reason for increasing learners’ agency in the outdoor learning is that learning is happening spontaneously, without any restrictions by lesson plan or following a book. Reviewing literature shows a lack of research conducted to investigate the role of outdoor learning to improve refugee language learning and integration. However, the “Sharing Lives, Sharing Languages” project was a productive initiative in Scotland to promote social

inclusion, and for refugees to meet with locals and exchange culture and language outside the classroom in a welcoming and informal settings (see Hirsu, and Bryson, 2017).

Supplementing formal ESOL provision with outdoor learning can improve learning, as demonstrated by Akram, Sudanese participant, who was studying in a location related to Edinburgh college four days a week. She spoke of how each Thursday the teacher assigned this lesson for outings; they go to the park and learn about leaves or do some gardening, they even have some exercises led by professional coaches. She commented on that:

> *"I like Thursdays so much as it is a different day. We go out and have fun, we learn, and have a good time outside. Last Thursday we danced Zumba with (Alana) who came to teach us how to dance it."*

As Akram said, learning English happened in several ways; one day of the four main college days learners were going out to learn in nature. They use and learn new words while meeting members of the local community and opening natural conversations on several topics with them. That special day was Akram's favourite day in the four days of learning, as learning was combined with leisure and fun. Combining outdoor learning with formal learning doubled the benefit and encouraged learners to speak English freely and to love that special class. Moreover, learning outside provides a safe, non-judgmental atmosphere for learning. As Mohamed, an Egyptian participant, stated:

> *"I always feel less shy to speak when we learn outside the class, as we all busy and not focusing on what each one says and look at him, I feel less judged and free to say anything and the teacher always correct for us by repeating the sentence in a correct way"*

Hanna also stated that she likes when the teacher takes the students outside to go for a coffee or to have an educational trip outside of the classroom as that makes her 'not afraid' to speak:

> *"I like when we have the class outside or when we go to a trip. I find myself speaking and not [being] afraid [of] making mistakes like when I am in the class[room]."*

During an observation on an educational trip which included a boat ride, I also observed that learners were more open to speak and exchange information about free places to visit with their kids in Edinburgh. Learners were telling each other about nice places that they visited with their kids and could be free or in low cost. The topic was in their interest and encouraged them all to participate and add to the topic. It was a wonderful opportunity for everyone to speak and focus on the topic being taught instead of focusing on producing a full sentence without any wrong pronunciation, or grammar mistakes. The same learners who were talking and chatting confidently were those who I had otherwise observed as being silent and shy to participate in class.

Figure 3 Women's Conversation class boat trip

To conclude, supporting the formal provision of English language with other activities or adding outdoors learning activities would benefit learners and accommodate different New Scots' needs and educational backgrounds. Observing and listening to the positive feedback from New Sots attending these activities to learn English makes these approach worthy of being expanded and applied by more local authorities who provide ESOL classes.

7.3 Using an ecological multilingual approach

Policies in Scotland are increasingly adopting multilingual integration approaches (Phipps, 2019), however, that might not be the case in practice when it comes to teaching ESOL, where monolingual approaches are still being used in language classes (Cox and Phipps, 2022). It has previously been thought that focusing learning solely on the target language is the best way to learn that language, described by Simpson (2020) as the 'unexamined monolingual norm'. During my observations I noticed that most current ESOL classes do not use a multilingual approach, apart from a few informal classes that were incorporating learners' language in teaching English. For instance, in my fieldnotes from observing a cooking class in Edinburgh I wrote:

> *"Observing a cooking class for refugees to help them speak English was different from regular language classes, as everyone on the table was sharing the name of the vegetable in their own language that they were cutting, and the rest of the group try to pronounce the word in different languages to make sure they said it right. The teacher was so interested to know the name of this fruit or vegetable in learners' different languages" (Observation notes).*

In this cooking class, the teacher was experienced and was allowing the use of different languages in the class, as valuing students' spoken languages is always helpful in teaching new languages as opposed to labelling them as 'lacking' English language competence (Frimberger, 2016). The same was also happening in the IT online class that mixed both

Arabic and English to learn about some computer skills and related vocabularies in English language.

However, in most formal provision, other languages were not encouraged, English was the dominant language and the most used language in the classroom. Even teaching EAL (English as an Additional language), which is used to teach English for children in schools, allows for the use of home languages, but this is not applied to adult language education or ESOL yet (Cox and Phipps, 2022). According to (White, 2021), traditional ESOL classes do not always incorporate a multilingual approach and nor do they consider the specific needs of refugee learners in using immersive ways of teaching the language.

In my observations in Dundee, the whole group was made up of Syrian refugees who came through the Syrian Resettlement Scheme. They were all were sharing and speaking Arabic. They expressed the view that speaking Arabic with them in the class was helpful for making sure of certain instructions and helping them to express something they want to say, or to describe things in their culture. However, this view was not agreed on by some ESOL teachers. For example, in interviewing Allan, an ESOL teacher at Edinburgh college:

> *"It is much easier when you get a mix of first languages. Now, that depends on which area of Edinburgh you are in, so Leith classes tend to be more mixed, for example. But then around- you will get more Arabic speakers who tend to be sitting on one table and speak Arabic with each other most of the class."*

Allan is saying that it is more complicated to teach a group that all speaks the same language because people will not speak English to each other and will instead rely on their mother tongue. He implies that it is easier to teach groups of mixed mother tongues because they then cannot all rely on one language.

Besides adopting a multilingual approach, ESOL classes in Scotland also require an ecological approach to be included in language teaching settings (Cox, 2021). An ecological approach is the intentional relationship that connects classroom learning with the real world (Levine, 2020). It also encourages classroom learning to respond to the context (Kramsch, Levine and Phipps,2010). In interviewing Kate, an ESOL practitioner, she spoke about the importance of implementing an ecological approach by saying:

> *"One of the things we have really tried to do is to put things like our 'out and about' group. The teacher takes them (refugee ESOL learners) at 9:30 on a Monday and they walk around the city. She has taken them to the library to register for a library card. They have gone to a charity shop to look at buying stuff. She has taken them to different parts of the city to get people feeling comfortable using the city and knowing it."*

Teaching learners to discover their surroundings and make use of some free services in their community was adding extra benefit to learning the language. Learners not only gained some situational vocabulary and sentences, but they also familiarised themselves with their local area, knew how to use services, and built confidence to go out and about. Kate added:

> *"A lot of ESOL learners, particularly women, will just go from one place to the other and not go anywhere else. They do not feel safe maybe or they have not had anybody show them."*

Allowing learners to connect their learning with the outside environment, was helpful to encourage learners, especially women, to explore areas around them and show them how to ask about the price of any item, how to get a membership card for the library, etc. This way, language learning and integration will happen jointly, and the place in which people live is used to integrate and learn English. According to Van Lier (2004a, 2004b, 2006, 2010), language is inseparably connected to social, political, historical, and cultural contexts, which emphases the importance of an ecological approach.

7.4 Using a trauma aware ESOL approach.

Many Asylum seekers and refugees who were forced to leave their countries went through difficult and traumatic incidents or experienced losses in their families (Loescher et al., 2012). This chapter discusses the many difficulties that refugees went through, and how some language teachers find themselves in the situation of dealing with traumatised learners and being 'drawn into increasingly psychological roles' that they do not have broad experience with (Costa, 2018, p.19). While other ESOL practitioners are not aware of any problems in teaching refugees with trauma, it was clear from speaking to Eleen, an ESOL practitioner, who said:

> *"Umm well, I would not know if anyone had post-traumatic stress unless they came out and told me. Women learners I would say sometimes suffer from some memories or even domestic abuse, but I never ask, unless they speak out."*

In Eileen's case, she expects learners to tell her if they have trauma or suffer from certain mental health issues. However, not all learners would have the confidence to speak and open a conversation with their teachers concerning such matters. In such cases, teachers

should have trained to deal with traumatised learners as they might need extra care and attention in comparison to other learners. Whereas an awareness of the importance of considering refugees' mental health and their unsafe journeys till they arrive to the UK, or any other worries should be considered while dealing with them.

So, the skills needed to deal with refugees' specific needs and traumatic memories might exceed English language qualifications. When I asked Donna, an ESOL teacher who teaches beginner Syrian refugees' class, about whether she got the required training to deal with refugee learners, she said:

> *"I was only trained to deal with Violence against women, but for the other types of traumas, no, I didn't get specific training for that."*

She added:

> *"It is important that teachers who are dealing with refugees are well trained and having the awareness to meet the special needs for those students."*

Donna's quote emphasises the findings that such training would make a difference in supporting learners more and that trauma awareness training is really required in preparing ESOL teachers to deal with New Scots. ESOL teachers who deal with New Scots need this training to understand refugees better and build more trust and robust relationship with those learners. According to Nelson and Appleby (2015), the need for ESOL teacher training regarding teaching survivors of trauma is much needed for adult refugee learners. Kian and Mahmoud were two young asylum seekers (18 and 20 years old) that I interviewed. Both expressed their homesickness, and both had difficult journeys to arrive in the UK. At the time of our interviews, they also did not even have a proper place to study, as they were living is hostel. In their case, the teacher was completely aware of their circumstances and

offered support to help them to learn and integrate. That support included emotional support by listening to them or even helping them to have some phone calls with GP or job centre to solve some problems that learners are experiencing.

In classroom settings, while dealing with young refugee learners, trauma- aware practice started to be employed to help teachers understand the psychology of students and why some students might act or progress differently (Brunzell, 2021). A similar approach (trauma aware practice) should be employed to help ESOL teachers deal with the ongoing challenges and traumatic memories that adult refugees face. According to Im and Swan (2022), introducing 'trauma-informed' mental health training modules for professionals and social workers who deal with refugee communities is effective for better understanding refugees' needs and cultural differences as well as traumatic experiences that refugee share.

Such a trauma-aware approach could be applied using the Scottish Government (2021) model, Trauma-informed practice: toolkit, and the five principles which are safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. So, starting with these principles, ESOL learners should feel the class is a safe environment, safe to speak English without judgment of their level or accent and safe to be in a classroom setting, which they might be experiencing after a long time of having no formal education. Secondly, trustworthiness, refugee learners should feel trust to tell their teacher about some circumstances that could affect their ability to concentrate or study. They should also have this trust among their peers and be able to develop robust relationships with their classmates. The third principle is choice, which I went through in my discussion about agency, and how refugees lost the choice over their move to the UK, choice of

accommodation, and choice to learn the language or not. For that reason, allowing refugees to at least choose what mode they prefer to learn would make them feel they have agency over something. The fourth principle is collaboration, that might relate to collaboration among learners themselves, when they support each other, and use scaffolding methods to offer mutual self-help among learners. Moreover, collaboration between educational organisations, social services, and mental health supporters could help professionals to better address any problems that refugees go through or experience (Salvo and de C Williams, 2017) which hinder or slow down their language learning. Finally, empowerment, which gives learners strong voices to make important decisions about their learning and use that power to improve and achieve integration.

7.5 Conclusion

In chapter 7, some innovative approaches that can be applied in the context of ESOL and language learning were presented. One of these approaches is learning the language through other activities. Some organisations involved in teaching English to New Scots have started to move away from traditional models of provision and have generated innovative ideas to increase engagement among learners. One such idea is cooking classes in which each participant shares a dish from their country and then speaks about the ingredients of the dish and the occasions on which it is normally eaten. This gives all learners a chance to participate, speak, and have some control over what they learn. Furthermore, this chapter has discussed the need for an ecological multilingual approach. Including learners' own language in the learning process engages them more and helps them to learn the new language more successfully than they would by focusing only on the target language. Finally,

this chapter has underlined the importance of teachers and practitioners who support New Scots and their learning having a trauma-aware approach. Considering that language is an essential element in New Scots' integration journey, language classes should be inclusive of, and cater to, traumatised learners, helping them improve their well-being and motivating them to learn, leading to a higher quality of life.

Chapter8 Conclusion

8.1 Summary

My main questions for this research were:

- What role does language play in facilitating or creating barriers to refugee integration?
- How do language programmes impact the settlement process?
- From the perspective of refugees, what improvements might be adopted in ESOL settings to encourage /facilitate their integration?
- To what extent is ESOL designed to consider displaced migrants and refugees?

The aim of the research was to investigate refugees and asylum seekers' needs in the context of learning English and how language can be an essential element to support their integration. It was based on claims that the relationship between learning English language and integration was an under explored topic. My research sought to answer the above-mentioned questions by focusing on New Scots' own views and perceptions, and how my positionality as an insider of the topic of investigation allowed me to have better insight and become closer to my participants.

In the literature review section, I located my research in relation to current efforts that are being made by the Scottish Government to support refugees' integration from 2014 till now. After that, I reviewed the barriers and challenges that New Scots face in accessing ESOL

provision and language support in Scotland. I then presented some of the problematic issues of the current ESOL and language provision and identified some funding issues that affect the provision of language support.

In the theoretical framework section, I focused on agency and its relevance to refugees' lives. I added to that how increasing agency throughout the language learning journey can be beneficial to New Scots learners. The ecological multilingual approach is also illustrated in the same section as a way of improving the effectiveness of languages classes.

In the methodology chapter I detailed the grounds for conducting this research and its rationale. I also reflected on my positionality and my academic background that added contextual understanding of what the participants shared with me. I justified the reasons for choosing a qualitative approach and combining both participant observation and interviews to allow in-depth understanding of the current provision of language classes. I also considered how language support could be improved from New Scots perspectives to suit their needs and their unusual circumstances. I explained how and why I adopted and used each data collection method to answer my research questions. Then I reflected on how I chose my participants and the difference between learner and practitioner participants. Finally, I explained issues encountered and limitations of my research for future improvements.

In Chapters 5, 6 and 7 I presented my empirical discussion which aimed to discuss the themes that emerged from interviewing New Scots as well as ESOL teachers and practitioners who provide language support to asylum seekers and refugees. The first main

issue that was highlighted by many New Scots is that they have specific needs which are different from other ESOL learners. The discussion included a detailed description of why New Scots are different and in what ways, explored their reasons for attending ESOL classes, how they fit language learning around other commitments they have, and finally identified some other barriers to attending ESOL. Additionally, the discussion included detailed examples of New Scots' perspectives about their preferred mode of study according to their needs. Their views about learning formally or in fewer formal ways were presented, and how they reacted to online lessons during Covid restrictions. The Discussion section also offered some recommendations for how to facilitate classes to make them suitable for more vulnerable learners, for having accessible classes for those with low literacy levels in their first language and how to provide effective pre-entry level ESOL to prepare learners to join beginner level language classes. In the concluding section of my discussion, I looked at ways to improve ESOL provision by incorporating other activities for the purpose of learning English, the importance of using learners' language in an ecological multilingual approach, and the need for further training on how to deal with emerging situations of traumatised learners for ESOL teachers who facilitate language classes for refugees.

8.2 Recommendations

Considerable effort is being made to support the integration of New Scots and there is widespread recognition amongst policymakers and other stakeholders in Scotland of the importance of language in the process of integration. Based on the findings of my research, I offer the following recommendations to help overcome the real difficulties and barriers that New Scots currently face in accessing language support.

1. Language support, especially ESOL provision, should be increased as a priority and should adapt to the unsettled nature of New Scots' lives as well as the difficulties, substantial changes, and challenges they experience.

2. The monolingual approach to delivering ESOL should be adjusted to recognise the value of New Scots' own language(s) and ESOL teachers trained in teaching methods which employ learners' own language(s) to help them acquire English.

3. Attention should be paid to ensuring a variety of ESOL classes are provided to suit differing needs and learning abilities. This includes considering how to provide classes for New Scots with high levels of anxiety, low literacy skills, and varying employment rights.

4. Ensuring access for women and people with childcare responsibilities should be a priority. Providers need to be aware of the lack of funding for travel and child support available to many New Scots.

5. More help should be provided for newcomers to know about classes and translated information sheets about services and language support available in their local neighbourhoods should be made available.

6. There is a pressing need to increase funding for ESOL provision in Scotland given the existing waiting lists for language support and the high levels of unemployment among those New Scots with Leave to Remain.

7. Increase the venues and locations for ESOL provision and use available places at community centres and local buildings like churches or big halls for providing language support. Edinburgh College, for instance, provides community based ESOL college classes in different venues and locations, offering up to 11 hours of teaching per week to make classes more accessible (Meer, et al., 2019).

8. Provide professional training for ESOL teachers and practitioners to deal with New Scots' special needs and traumatic memories (Palanac, 2019). That will increase teachers' awareness about how to help refugees overcome the problems and barriers that hinder their learning progression.

9. A multilingual approach could be particularly beneficial where people are suffering from after-effects of trauma or have had interrupted education, as valuing learners' own language will increase their educational inclusion (Sutton, et al, 2021).

10. Increase informal language provision, and implement language learning through a range of activities, which differ from structured ESOL classes. For example, creative language provision initiatives such as befriending programmes, Sharing Languages, Sharing Lives project or arts-based language learning allow more open

communication for refugees, allowing them to integrate in a safe, multilingual space (Phipps, 2017).

11. Increase New Scots' agency by giving them the freedom to choose the right type of provision that is suitable to them. Empower New Scots and let them steer the lesson, as learning is improved by the interaction of the participants in the activity (Folkestad, 2006 and White, 2021).

12. Add more flexibility to classes taught to refugees in terms of attendance, length of classes, ordering of lessons within the curriculum, and using various activities to help with the problem of attention.

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Appendices

Information sheet

Understanding the role of language in integration journeys: ESOL from refugees' perspectives

The second New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022 is considered by many to be a unique and valuable contribution for supporting refugees' integration. As the current strategy is about to come to the end of its cycle, there will soon be a third iteration of the strategy. This is therefore an opportune moment to conduct research into refugee integration in Scotland and to hopefully feed the results into the development of the next strategy. The focus of this research will be on the role of language in refugees' experiences of their integration journeys – and how this can be improved. To do this, the project will analyse the current provision of ESOL and how this is experienced by New Scots. In addition, the research aims to develop innovative tools to improve the integration process in Scotland. It will also seek to find ways of including and reaching more refugees and to find ways to

encourage them to feel more settled in Scotland. My academic experience, in addition to my work with refugees, will be valuable in providing the necessary understanding on Teaching English to speakers of other languages in both theoretical and practical ways.

Some specific research questions include:

- What role does language play in facilitating or creating barriers to immigrant settlement, and how do language programmes impact the settlement process?
- The role of TESOL teachers in raising awareness about language in context and how to use this language to improve integration opportunities.
- What improvements need to be adopted in ESOL settings to be encouraging for integration from refugees' perspectives.
- To what extent ESOL is designed to consider displaced migrants and refugees? And what can be made to improve and include them?

To conduct this research, the study will adopt qualitative research methods. These methods will include semi-structured interviews, and participant observation to gather data from different perspectives and angles. I am interested in observing projects and classes that work with refugees with the aim of better understanding the challenges and opportunities facing New Scots.

At this stage I am looking for research participants and information on local contexts to carry out and plan this research. If you are interested in

participating in this research, I would be most grateful if you could return the below form to me.

Sawsan Abdelghany

XXXXXXXX@student.gla.ac.uk

Your name:

Position:

Institution:

Are you happy to be interviewed: Yes No

Your email address:

 Please could you tell us a little about your location and context concerning ESOL delivery in general? What are the structures for ESOL provision?

 you tell us what kind of ESOL delivery you provide (or is delivered in your area)? For

example, is there a focus on SQA qualifications, ESOL without qualifications, ESOL combined with social practice groups (e.g. women's groups, IT classes, cookery classes)?

Please could you provide us with some contextual information on the current provision of ESOL for refugees and people asylum seekers in your local authority. What are the issues and challenges that you are aware of that New Scots face concerning language? What solutions that have been implemented or that are implementable?

This project is part funded by the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Making management of migration flows more efficient across the European Union.

Information sheet (Arabic version)

University of Glasgow
College of Social Sciences

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNESCO Chair in Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

فهم دور اللغة في رحلات الاندماج: ESOL من وجهات نظر اللاجئين

ورقة معلومات

وسينصب تركيز هذا البحث على دور اللغة في تجارب اللاجئين في رحلات اندماجهم - وكيف يمكن تحسين ذلك. وسيحلل المشروع التوفير الحالي ل ESOL وكيف يعاني الاسكتلنديون الجدد من ذلك. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، يهدف البحث إلى تطوير أدوات مبتكرة لتحسين عملية التكامل في اسكتلندا. وستسعى أيضا إلى إيجاد سبل لضم المزيد من اللاجئين والوصول إليهم وإيجاد طرق لتشجيعهم على الشعور بمزيد من الاستقرار في اسكتلندا.

تتضمن بعض الأسئلة البحثية المحددة ما يلي:

- ما هو الدور الذي تلعبه اللغة في تسهيل أو خلق حواجز أمام توطين المهاجرين، وكيف تؤثر البرامج اللغوية على عملية التوطين؟
- ما هي التحسينات التي يجب اعتمادها في إعدادات ESOL لتكون مشجعة على الاندماج من وجهات نظر اللاجئين.
- إلى أي مدى تم تصميم حكم ESOL للنظر في المهاجرين واللاجئين المشردين؟ كيف يمكن تحسين دروس اللغة وأنشطة تقاسم اللغة لتشمل الاسكتلنديين الجدد؟

في هذه المرحلة ، أبحث عن مشاركين في البحث ومعلومات حول السياقات المحلية من أجل إجراء هذا البحث والتخطيط له. إذا كنت مهتما بالمشاركة في هذا البحث ، فسأكون ممتنا للغاية إذا تمكنت من إعادة النموذج أدناه إلي.

سوسن عبد الغني

XXXXXXXX@student.gla.ac.uk

الاسم:

مكان:

نوع فصل اللغة الإنجليزية أو النشاط اللغوي الذي تحضره:

هل أنت سعيد بإجراء مقابلة: نعم لا

عنوان بريدك الإلكتروني:

ملاحظة: يمكننا تقديم قسائم بقيمة 20 جنيها إسترلينيا لشكرك على وقتك. ومع ذلك ، نظرا للقيود التي تفرضها حكومة المملكة المتحدة ، يمكننا فقط تقديم قسائم للمشاركين الذين لديهم إجازة للبقاء.

This project is part funded by the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Making management of migration flows more efficient across the European Union.

Interview Questions ESOL practitioners

ESOL provision differences:

1. How does ESOL provision work in your local authority?
2. How is it organised / does it differ from ESOL provision in e.g. Glasgow?
3. What does your responsibility include?

Difference between College and community

4. Does the course you teach can be classified as Informal / formal/ employability/ life skills interacting with local community?
5. What is the main aim of the class?

New Scots experience

6. How many refugees and Asylum seekers do you have in your class?
7. How well classes are designed to include refugees needs?
8. What do you think of specific challenges refugees and asylum seekers experience?
9. Do you notice any differences between learners from diverse backgrounds and Refugees?
10. In what way do you think English classes help learners outside the classes?

learners' Wellbeing

11. How do classes are helping learners' wellbeing?
12. How do you deal with traumatic topics during the course?
13. For example if a topic about family or home country, etc
14. How do you deal with women learners, elderly, post-traumatic stress and/or illiterate learners – how can access for these groups be improved?

15. What are the reasons that some refugees have less English?
16. What are other classes that tie in with this class to support learning the language or any other skills?
17. How many hours a week are people learning English?

Dealing with individual differences

18. How do you deal with mix of age /abilities/ gender/ individual differences?
19. Are there particular challenges face you as a teacher in teaching English or dealing with refugees?
20. What improvement needs to be considered to improve the quality of ESOL classes or learning English language in general?

New Adult strategy

21. What are your hopes for the New Adult strategy?
22. What are your initial impressions of the New Adult Learning Strategy?

Funding

23. What is the amount of funding available and the way it goes to colleges and other ESOL providers?
24. How is the current funding structure of ESOL affects the delivery of your class?
25. Does the big share of funding go to accredited courses or full time programmes?

Questions for ESOL practitioners who work with the council

ESOL provision:

1. Can you tell me more about your role?
2. How does ESOL provision change in 2018? What was it like before?
3. What role does COSLA play to improve ESOL provision?
4. What improvements might be included in the new ESOL strategy that was not implemented in old on 2015-2020?
5. What are your initial impressions of the New Adult Learning Strategy?
6. Do you think ESOL is designed to include refugees and Asylum seekers? Or it is for general learners without any consideration for New Scots circumstances?
7. What is the difference between Local authority ESOL and college ESOL, which is better from your point of view?

New Scots experience

8. How many hours are learners entitled to? Do you think it is enough for improving their English or helping them find employment opportunities?

9. What do you think of specific challenges refugees and asylum seekers experience while starting learning English?

10. In what way do you think Esol classes are designed to help learners outside the classroom? Or improving their wellbeing?

11. What improvement needs to be considered to improve the quality of ESOL classes or learning English language in general? Especially after having more refugee from Afghan and Ukraine?

12. What are the current efforts to develop ESOL classes to include all big numbers of refugees who came recently?

13. Would other factors be affecting refugees learning like unsettled life or moving home, or traumatic experience is considered by local authorities?

Funding

14. Where is ESOL funding come from?

15. What is the amount of funding available and the way it goes to colleges and other ESOL providers?

16. Does finding available for ESOL cover the need for classes? Explain.

17. How is the current funding structure of ESOL affects the delivery of ESOL classes in your LA?

18. How can ESOL finding be more protected? what can be done or planned to secure more ESOL funding.

19. Can you tell me more about funding for Syrian resettlement scheme and how it is different from other refugee status or reunited families?

20. What is the determinant factor of whether LA give funding to colleges or distribute it to other organisations?

Interview Questions for learners

Starting date / waiting time

1. When did you start ESOL classes?
2. How did you gain access to this class?
3. What was your educational experience in your home country?

Difference between College and community

4. Do you study in college or community centre? Which one is more beneficial in your opinion?
5. How many hours per week would you like to study ESOL? If more than currently, what is stopping you?
6. What was your level in English before you start the course?
7. Will you have access to welfare benefits if you do not attend formal English course?

Challenges to attend English

8. Do you face any challenges to attend the classes? what are they?
9. What is your aim from studying ESOL? What do you want to gain from attending ESOL?
10. Do you feel like the classes you are currently attending will help you to achieve your aims?

11. How do you get there, is it difficult?
12. Would you attend another class if it were closer or easier to get there?
13. Do you get the required support from teachers and peers?

Improvement

14. Do you feel you have improved since your start of the course?
15. has your experience of learning English been positive or negative?

Recommendations

16. What do you think needs to be added to the classes to be more beneficial?
17. What is your goal after finishing studying ESOL?
18. Who else do you know I can interview?

Consent form

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNESCO Chair in Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

'New Scots' Refugee Integration Delivery Project

Principal Investigator: Prof Alison Phipps - School of Education; UNESCO RILA (Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts)

☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

☐ I consent / do not consent (delete as applicable) to interviews being audio-recorded.

☐

I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym.

☐

I consent / do not consent (delete as applicable) to the collection of visual data (photographs or videos) of myself.

☐ I consent / do not consent (delete as applicable) to the recording of audio data (sound, or voice recordings) of myself.

- ☐ The material will be treated as confidential and always kept in secure storage.

- ☐ The material will be destroyed once the project is complete.

  ☐

- The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.

  ☐

- I agree to waive my copyright to any data collected as part of this project.

- ☐ I understand that other RILA researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

- ☐ I understand that other RILA researchers may use my words in publications, reports, policy recommendations, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant …… Signature

……..

Date ……

Name of Researcher ……Sawsan Abdelghany…… Signature

…sawsan Ali

Date ……06/05/2022……

…… End of consent form

……

Consent form (Arabic version):

University of Glasgow
College of Social Sciences

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNESCO Chair in Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

مشروع "الاسكتلنديين الجدد" لإدماج اللاجئين

الباحث الرئيسي: البروفيسورة أليسون فيبس - كلية التربية. اليونسكو RILA

☐ أؤكد أنني قرأت وفهمت ورقة معلومات المشاركين للدراسة المذكورة أعلاه وأتيحت لي الفرصة لطرح الأسئلة.

☐ أفهم أن مشاركتي طوعية وأنني حر في الانسحاب في أي وقت ، دون إبداء أي سبب.

☐ أوافق / لا أوافق (أحذف حسب الاقتضاء) على تسجيل المقابلات صوتيا.

☐

أقر بأنه سيتم الإشارة إلى المشاركين باسم مستعار.

☐

أوافق / لا أوافق (أحذف حسب الاقتضاء) على جمع البيانات المرئية (الصور الفوتوغرافية أو مقاطع الفيديو) الخاصة بي.

☐ أوافق / لا أوافق (حذف حسب الاقتضاء) على تسجيل البيانات الصوتية (الصوت ، أو التسجيلات الصوتية) لنفسي.

- ☐ سيتم التعامل مع المواد على أنها سرية والاحتفاظ بها في تخزين آمن في جميع الأوقات.

- ☐ سيتم تدمير المواد بمجرد اكتمال المشروع.

- ☐ ويمكن استخدام هذه المواد في المنشورات المستقبلية، سواء المطبوعة أو الإلكترونية.

- ☐ أوافق على التنازل عن حقوق الطبع والنشر الخاصة بي لأي بيانات يتم جمعها كجزء من هذا المشروع.

- ☐ أفهم أن باحثي RILA الآخرين لن يتمكنوا من الوصول إلى هذه البيانات إلا إذا وافقوا على الحفاظ على سرية المعلومات كما هو مطلوب في هذا النموذج.

- ☐ أفهم أن باحثي RILA الآخرين قد يستخدمون كلماتي في المنشورات والتقارير وتوصيات السياسة وصفحات الويب ومخرجات البحث الأخرى ، فقط إذا وافقوا على الحفاظ على سرية المعلومات كما هو مطلوب في هذا النموذج.

أوافق / لا أوافق (احذف حسب الاقتضاء) على المشاركة في الدراسة المذكورة أعلاه.

اسم المشارك ..... توقيع.....

تاريخ.....

اسم الباحث ..... سوسن عبد الغني..... توقيع... سوسن علي

تاريخ..... 06/05/2022.....

..... نموذج نهاية الموافقة .....

Annotated bibliography

Brown, S. (2021). The emancipation continuum: analysing the role of ESOL in the settlement of immigrants. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *42*(5-6), 864-880.

Analytical framework that can be used to assess the role of Esol in the resettlement of refugees in Scotland. The journal is investigating how the language can help refugees not to feel marginalized and excluded from social life.

Confidence in using the English language helps people to engage and participate in civil society.

Using the Emancipation continuum to analyze the Scottish ESOL context.

CHEUNG, S. Y. and PHILLIMORE, J.(2017) 'Gender and Refugee Integration: A Quantitative Analysis of Integration and Social Policy Outcomes'. Journal of Social Policy46(02): 211–230.

Cox, S. (2020). Can an Ecological, Multilingual Approach Help Us to Better Support Reunited Refugee Families in Scotland with Language Learning? *Theory and Practice of Second Language Acquisition*, *2*(6), 11-34.

The journal focused on the relationship between policy, and practice in terms of language learning within refugee families who have recently reunited in Glasgow through the British Red Cross Family Reunion Integration Service

The research was conducted with refugees who arrived newly to Scotland to investigate how effective language learning is in their life. The findings indicated the impact of the recognition of refugees' own languages within the learning process.

Cox, S. J. (2021). *'You and me, we're the same. You struggle with Tigrinya and I struggle with English. 'An exploration of an ecological, multilingual approach to language learning with New Scots* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Glasgow).

Although the significant role of language learning is emphasized by integration strategy, the delivery of English language still follows the monolingual approach.

Research also spotted more challenges reported by women who came to the UK on reunion basis.

Frimberger, K. (2016). Towards a well-being focused language pedagogy: enabling arts-based, multilingual learning spaces for young people with refugee backgrounds. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, *24*(2), 285-299.

Graham-Brown, N. (2018). ESOL and integration: the story so far. *Language Issues: The ESOL Journal*, *29*(1), 3-16.

The paper introduces the policies of the UK to support refugee integration. As well as government provision for Esol classes to support refugees' language learning.

The research was conducted with women who just arrived and how their social relationships were built and increased.

Hill, E. (2020). Multilingual Citizens, Multicultural Citizenship? Somali People's Experiences of Language, Race and Belonging in Contemporary Scotland. In *Multilingualism and Politics* (pp. 157-179). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

The chapter was based on Somalis' experiences of multilingualism in Glasgow.

The research aims:

(1) how Scottish language policies impact the development and practice of Somali languages in Scotland, and their socio-political implications for Somali-Scots communities.

(2) how these policies impact Somali people's access to services and public spaces and

(3) the extent to which racialized discourses intersect with issues of language and multilingualism. It concludes with a critique of the gap between elite narratives of plural, multilingual citizenship and the reality of Somali people's everyday experiences in Scotland

Hirsu, L., & Bryson, E. (2017). Sharing lives, sharing languages: A pilot peer education project for New Scots' social and language integration. *Scottish Refugee Council*.

The Scottish refugee council has contributed to support social and language integration for refugees. 'Building on a peer education model, the project enabled peer groups to bring together non-native English speakers and local community members under the coordination of peer educators.

Peer sessions aimed to support the development of social connections, language learning and cultural exchange between multilingual peers. The pilot project aimed to complement the existing ESOL provision by providing group-based activities

which aided language acquisition'

Irvine, C., & Fisher, C. (2020). Widening access to higher education for refugees. *Language Issues: The ESOL Journal*, *31*(2), 15-24.

The journal was aiming to help refugees with high qualifications in their country to integrate and pursue their studies once they arrived in Scotland.

Isaacs, A., Burns, N., Macdonald, S., & O'Donnell, C. A. (2020). 'I don't think there's anything I can do which can keep me healthy': how the UK immigration and asylum system shapes the health & wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. *Critical public health*, 1-11.

Jarvis, J. (2020). Scotland's framework for good practice in working with volunteers in ESOL. *Language Issues: The ESOL Journal*, *31*(1), 4-15.

The project is to assist organizations develop better Esol provision according to ESOL learners

Khan, A. (2018). Educating Refugees through "Citizenship Classes and Tests": Integration by Coercion or Autonomous Agency?. *Educating refugee-background students: Critical issues and dynamic contexts*, 144-58.

MacKinnon, C. (2015) Glasgow's ESOL Providers: English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in Glasgow: Research to help increase engagement. Glasgow: CJM Research. Available at: http://www.glasgowslearning.org.uk/documents/2426 Last accessed 08/02/2019

Martzoukou, K., & Burnett, S. (2017). Syrian new Scots' information literacy way-finding practices: phase 1 research findings.

Two focused groups of Syrian refugees were held to gain insight of their needs. Learning English was a key factor in helping them to gain confidence and communicate better with the outside community.

Martzoukou, K., & Burnett, S. (2018). Exploring the everyday life information needs and the socio-cultural adaptation barriers of Syrian refugees in Scotland. *Journal of documentation*.

The research was conducted through interviewing three local authorities dealing with New Scots Syrian refugees, as well as focus group interviews with Syrian participants. The main information needs expressed by participants focused on the learning of English language which was linked to addressing health-related information, essential governmental procedures, housing, GP, etc. Also, findings highlighted the importance of the English language to improve community relationships.

Martzoukou, K. (2020). Scottish public libraries welcome Syrian new Scots: a transition from being a refugee to becoming an active part of the community. *Informed Societies*, 181.

''This chapter offers an overview of the information needs and experiences of Syrian refugees

in Scotland, drawing from data collected as part of 'Lost in Information: Syrian new Scots' information literacy way-finding practices', a research project which was funded by the CILIP Information Literacy Group (ILG) in the UK. The aim of the research was to explore the information needs of Syrian refugees, their habitual and adaptive information literacy practices and the barriers and enablers they encountered within their new socio-cultural setting'' (p.181).

Meer, N., Peace, T., & Hill, E. (2019). English language education for asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland: Provision and governance. *Edinburgh: GLIMER Project. Retrieved June*, *6*, 2019.

The paper reviewed ESOL provision in Scotland and how this is distinctive from England provision.

In Scotland ESOL is available for refugees and Asylum seekers for free, and it is divided by levels depending on its complexity. Funding for ESOL is from various sources, the Scottish Funding Council,

the Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), local authority Community Learning and

Development funds and NGO (Non Governmental Organisation) funders. Findings of this research recommend more work to be done to address some barriers expressed by ESOL learners.

Morrice, L., Tip, L. K., Collyer, M., & Brown, R. (2021). 'You cannot have a good integration when you do not have a good communication': English-language learning among resettled refugees in England. Journal of Refugee Studies, 34(1), 681-699.

Mulvey, G., & Council, S. R. (2013). In search of normality: Refugee integration in Scotland. *Structure*, *5*(6).

The language part in this report highlighted the importance of the English language for refugees and its link to other integration domains. The research shows the variety of educational levels among refugees and their ambition to pursue with their language learning or even for further education. Some barriers mentioned in the research such as the education level of refugees, financial level, or availability of childcare can hinder the process of language learning..

Mulvey, G. (2018). Social citizenship, social policy and refugee integration: a case of policy divergence in Scotland?. *Journal of Social Policy*, *47*(1), 161-178.

This article looks at the Scottish and UK Governments' views of social rights and how they apply to asylum seekers and refugees 'Despite the complexities of the devolved context, integration policy, from the perspective of the UK Government, has been Home Office driven so has usually applied to refugees throughout the UK. Thus, Scottish policy in many cases has been additional'

Mulvey, G. (2015). Refugee integration policy: the effects of UK policymaking on refugees in Scotland. *Journal of Social Policy*, *44*(2), 357-375.

The journal investigates integration development from the perspective of refugees. Additionally, it compares between the UK and Scotland policy of integration.

Oduntan, O., & Ruthven, I. (2021). People and places: Bridging the information gaps in refugee integration. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, *72*(1), 83-96.

This research dealt with integration from different angles this time, by increasing the awareness within the host community by providing more information to increase the acceptance of refugees among them.

It also used interviews to understand the lack of information areas from refugees themselves

Phipps, A. (2018). Language plenty, refugees and the post-Brexit world: new practices from Scotland. In *Languages after Brexit* (pp. 95-107). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

The chapter is arguing Scotland's multilingual nature as a plus point to support integration. It Also explains Scotland's policy unlike the U.K (United Kingdom) in supporting refugees

once their arrival to it, emphasizing on language's role in helping refugees to interact with outer society. The effect of language progression has been reported as a key supporter to integration.

Rahbarikorroyeh, H. (2020). Lived experiences of ESOL provision: English learning by Syrian refugees in Aberdeenshire. *Concept*, *11*(2), 1-13. Q

Simpson, J. (2015). English language learning for adult migrants in superdiverse Britain. *Adult language education and migration: Challenging agendas in policy and practice*, 200-213.

Simpson, J. (2021). ESOL, integration and immigration. *NYS Tesol Journal*.

Why ESOL is placed in policy

Slade, B. L., & Dickson, N. (2021). Adult education and migration in Scotland: Policies and practices for inclusion. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, *27*(1), 100-120.

Scotland policy is promoting inclusion for refugees and asylum seekers.

Findings of the research gave good indication for skilled provision of ESOL, recommending the need for funding to continue these classes.

Strang, A., Baillot, H., & Mignard, E. (2015). Insights into integration pathways: new Scots and the Holisitic Integration Service.

Evaluation report of year two of the Holistic Integration Service, offering up to twelve months support to people who have been granted Refugee Status, Humanitarian Protection, or Discretionary Leave to Remain following an asylum claim in Scotland.

Strang, A., Baillot, H., & Mignard, E. (2016). Rights, resilience and refugee integration in Scotland. *New Scots & the Holistic Integration Service*.

Refugees participants reported that without English language their life in Scotland will be much harder, dealing with local people, organizations, housing , medical centers, etc

Most participants have beginner language skills, and are encouraged to improve their level

Strang, A. B., & Quinn, N. (2021). Integration or isolation? Refugees' social connections and wellbeing. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *34*(1), 328-353..

Mulvey, G., Bynner, C., Murray, N., & Watson, N. (2018). Resettlement of Syrian Refugees in West Dunbartonshire.