The Non-Literate ‘Other’: The Gendered Narratives of Indian and Pakistani Female Migrant Spouses with emerging English language and literacy skills

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A dissertation presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education (EdD) in the Graduate School of Education, University of Nottingham.

2021

Abstract

Adult migrant women with limited formal schooling or emerging English language and literacy skills (known as LESLLA[1] learners) face formidable challenges not only in their personal lives, but also in their efforts to improve their English language and literacy skills in a hyper-literate society that expects migrants to be proficient in the language to demonstrate their willingness to integrate and belong. The presence of these learners in institutions where practitioners are skilled at teaching students from either literacy-based cultures or those already literate in a language other than English, presents various challenges for Further Education (FE) lecturers. Despite these challenges, LESLLA learners remain an under-researched group of students in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and English Language Teaching (ELT) studies, in particular with regards to research that focuses on LESLLA women, learners who have been discursively produced within the wider media and policy landscape as passive victims of oppression in need of empowerment; incapable or ignorant learners; and migrants reluctant to learn English.

This cross-linguistic and cross-cultural study was designed to provide a counter-story to this deficit view. It contributes to knowledge by giving visibility to the voices of seven emergent-English speaking and emerging-literate female migrant spouses from India and Pakistan. A theoretical fusion of the Community Cultural Wealth framework (Yosso, 2005) and the Capability Approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000) was used to examine the role education plays in the women's lives, highlight their knowledge and assets and identify the complex ways in which their lives, educational experiences and aspirations are shaped by broader social, cultural, and institutional contexts.

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[1] LESLLA stands for 'Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults' since 2007 (LESLLA, 2022).

Dedication

Le dedico esta tesis a mi familia.

- A mi hija, Lucia, por impulsarme a ser mejor cada día y por ser la fuente de inspiración en todo lo que hago.
- A mi mamá y mi papá por su amor incondicional, por siempre impulsarme a ser mejor y cumplir con éxito mis objetivos.
- A mi hermano, Chris, uno de mis primeros maestros, por siempre creer en mí. Te llevo en el alma.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis is the result of contributions from many people whom I wish to acknowledge.

- First, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the seven women who took part in this study. Thank you for giving your time and inviting me into your homes and your lives.
- I am incredibly grateful to Professor Monica McLean for supervising my EdD thesis and for her continuous support, encouragement, and guidance. Over the years, you have guided me to become a better, more reflexive researcher. Thanks for guiding me patiently, providing feedback and suggestions and offering your expertise and professional knowledge.
- I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr Susan Jones for her thoughtful comments on my chapters.
- My sincere gratitude goes to my family who always encouraged me to believe in myself and to continue studying despite the many challenges that came my way. To my sister Candy, thanks for always offering your help and to my sister Madeleine, thanks for the conversations, your constant support, and your unwavering belief in my ability to complete this journey.
- I am grateful to my friends for their encouraging words and for keeping me motivated. To Rob, thanks for the many thought-provoking conversations and for always challenging me to think critically.
- Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my husband Ross. Thanks for your unconditional love and support, for always listening and for encouraging me to strive for all that I could achieve.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

'Education? Studying? Studying is lifting yourself up. It is like flying. You can do…well, you can do anything.'

(Razia, 51-year-old Pakistani ESOL student)

1.1. Introduction

Around the world, asylum seekers, refugees and other migrant learners arrive in adult education classrooms not only without speaking English, but also with no print literacy or formal schooling. Razia (pseudonym) is part of this increasing group of linguistically and culturally diverse students, known as Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults (LESLLA) learners, who face the demanding undertaking of not only acquiring English language spoken skills, but also learning to read and write for the first time as adults and in another language. The presence of these learners in institutions where practitioners are skilled at and more familiar with teaching students from either literacy-based cultures or those already literate in a language other than English, presents various challenges for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) lecturers, including myself, who struggle to bridge the gap between 'contextually oriented oral indigenous cultures and the distant cultures of high literacy and digitacy' (Watson, 2010: 4).

Despite the difficulties teachers face, and the acknowledgement that we do not know enough about how to teach LESLLA learners (OECD, 2018), this group of students remain under-researched compared to highly-literate learners. Several scholars have remarked on the dearth of research that includes adolescents and adults with emerging literacy skills or formal schooling in second language learning and teaching literature (Barton and Pitt, 2003; Bigelow and Schwarz, 2010; Condelli and Wrigley, 2004; Tarone et al., 2009; Young-Scholten and Peyton, 2020; van de Craats et al., 2005). Bigelow and

Tarone (2004) attribute this blind spot to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers being located in higher education institutions and having more access to learners from Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic societies (W.E.I.R.D. learners – Henrich et al., 2010: 1).

Although LESLLA research is slowly becoming more widespread and internationally recognised (Bigelow and Vinogradov, 2011; Kurvers and van de Craats, 2008), it remains a still largely unexplored field of practice. This is particularly the case with research that focuses on LESLLA women (Gonzalves, 2011), learners who have been discursively presented within the wider media and policy landscape as victims of oppression and in need of empowerment (Winter and Pauwels, 2005); parents who disadvantage their children by being reluctant to learn English and integrate (Dustmann and Van Soest, 2001); and individuals who are seen as incapable or ignorant for not being literate (Street, 1993).

In contrast to these media and policy representations, I have encountered a different reality in my classes: students like Razia who are 'invested' (Norton, 2013) in learning and a British education system that is failing them by neglecting their needs. Sunderland and Moon (2008), and more recently Simpson (2019), argue that the British education system is rendering these students invisible. For instance, specific provision for this population has become almost non-existent. Government funding for pre-entry students in mainstream or mixed-level classes continues to decline as FE policy adopts a narrower focus on preparing ESOL learners for accreditation and employment (Klenk, 2017). There are also widespread structural obstacles that can cause serious setbacks for women, including lack of suitable childcare, flexible schedules, and fewer classes available in the community (Kofman et. al., 2009). Equally distressing was the removal of full fee remission in 2011 for those students who are not on active benefits (e.g. Universal Credit) and the further exclusion of learners from gaining access to free ESOL classes in 2013 due to austerity measures (Simpson, 2015), cuts which have had a disproportionate impact on women.

It is clear that the UK projects what Blackledge and Pavlenko (2001) describe as conflicting linguistic representations. On the one hand, current political rhetoric, which uses liberal, egalitarian and common-sense arguments (Blackledge, 2009), insists that language proficiency is paramount for community building, necessary for national security and the route to responsible citizenship, while, on the other hand, British politicians continue to cut back on provision for ESOL. Furthermore, prioritisation of classes leading to accreditation, or with an employment focus, leads towards a narrow and prescriptive curriculum which endorses instrumental rationales, as opposed to affirming women's intrinsic values for pursuing education, recognising gender inequality, and positioning women 'as tools for rather than actors in development' (Eyben and Napier-Moore, 2009, cited in Klenk, 169:169).

In this chapter, I introduce this research study in three parts. First, I provide the context for my research by reflecting on a critical incident. Secondly, I describe the origins of the study, highlight its significance, and discuss the research focus. Finally, I outline the structure of this thesis.

1.2. Research Context

On a Saturday morning in June 2016, Razia, a 51-year-old Pakistani Muslim woman, was refused a bus ride to the centre of one of the largest cities in the United Kingdom (UK) because of her Islamic dress. Considered to be a threat to the other passengers, the British driver asked her to remove her *niqab*[2] if she wanted to board the vehicle. When she said "*No*", she was not only refused a ride; she was also mocked because of her basic spoken English skills and was called a "*Paki*", an offensive term used to describe a person from Pakistan or South Asia. Razia was understandably upset, however, instead of going back home, she walked for almost an hour, determined to attend her ESOL class at the main campus of one of the largest FE colleges in the city. After arriving at class and apologizing for her lateness, she told me (with the help of the research mediator – see Chapter 3) how she felt her beliefs, race, nationality, and whole being were being questioned. One of the things that upset her the most was that reporting this to the police could adversely affect her chances of obtaining her British passport, a false notion shared by several students. Also upsetting was that, despite being a student at the college for some time, she had been unable to read and write down the license plate number on the bus.

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[2] Muslim veils include the *hijab*, or headscarf, the *niqab*, which covers the face and the *burqa* which is a full-body garment.

This incident struck me in several ways. Firstly, it demonstrated the negative feelings towards immigration manifested in the anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic behaviour not only of the bus driver, but also of the passengers who failed to intervene when confronted with such rhetoric and actions. Besides being highly emblematic of the resurgence of nationalist political ideologies exemplified in 2016 by the 'Leave the European Union' campaign in the UK and Donald Trump's candidacy for the presidency of the United States, this account shows how the *niqab* has now become a symbol not only for identifying Muslim identity, but also for expressing Islamophobia (Williamson and Khiabany, 2010).

Secondly, this discriminatory and illegal act of racism illustrates how Razia was seen as the non-adaptable Muslim 'Other' (Joppke, 2007; Poynting and Mason, 2007), a woman stereotypically viewed as oppressed and subjugated by the misogynist and patriarchal men in her family (Al-Saji, 2010). Tolerance is not the norm, despite Razia living in a working class, 'superdiverse'[3] neighbourhood, home to a variety of nationalities, cultures, beliefs and residents with legal statuses where high ethnocultural heterogeneity and multiculturalism are evident on each street. Hate crimes like this one are increasingly seen as a response to the multiple perceived 'threats' of the Muslim 'Other' in the public sphere, namely gender inequality, self-segregation, lack of socio-cultural integration, ghettoisation and religious fundamentalism.

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[3] According to Vertovec (2007: 1025), it is not enough to see 'diversity' in terms of ethnicity only, instead, additional variables should be considered, including 'differential legal statuses and their concomitant conditions, divergent labour market experiences, discrete configurations of gender and age, patterns of spatial distribution, and mixed local area responses by service providers and residents'. 'Superdiversity' is the interaction of these variables.

The driver and passengers on the bus saw and treated Razia as part of this collective Muslim 'Other', a group with a single identity. In doing so, they failed to consider Razia's personal history, assets, knowledge and life experiences. They did not know that Razia was attending classes at the weekend to improve her English language skills and that she is determined not only to learn the language of her adopted country (Norton, 1995; 2000) but also to acquire literacy as way to 'belong' and 'be' British (Yurval-Davis, 2011). Nor did they know that, although she was born in Kotli, the main town of the Kotli District in the Azad Kashmir Division of Pakistan, Razia considers herself both British and Pakistani, because she has lived in the UK for almost a decade. Or that she chooses to wear the veil – she is not required to do so by her husband or any members of her family. To her, it is an expression of agency and empowerment.

Razia's account also highlighted the difficult reality of Pakistani and other non-EEA migrant spouses in the UK, not only in terms of their social positioning, but also in terms of the fear of not obtaining their desired legal status. Since 2001, granting entry, settlement and naturalisation to spouses has been conditional on passing the 'Life in the UK' citizenship test, having a pre- intermediate knowledge of English, and attending a citizenship ceremony (Home Office, 2010). Moreover, since 2013, an additional English language test and a minimum income threshold are requirements that non-EEA spouses must meet before they are admitted into the country (Home Office, 2013). There is no doubt that these policies are part of the migration-related securitisation of the British nation, whereby its 'integrity of the nation state and its security can only be assured if migration flows and migrants themselves are closely controlled and monitored' (Waite, 2012: 353).

It is also worth noting that unlike the many formally educated migrants who live in England, Razia never went to school as a child. She is one of 493 million women who lack basic literacy skills in the world (UNESCO, 2013); one of six million low-literate women in Pakistan (ibid.) and one of 77,380 spouses granted settlement in the UK in 2010. Despite her emerging literacy skills, and low levels of spoken English, Razia has had to find ways to learn the ropes in an unfamiliar social, political, and cultural context, while trying to improve her English language and literacy skills in a hyper-literate society that expects her and other LESLLA learners to be proficient in the language to demonstrate their willingness to integrate and belong.

Razia and six other South Asian women are the central concern of this research, which stemmed from my personal experiences of teaching ESOL since 2006.

1.3. Origins of the research

This research and my interest in adult second language literacy originated from a feeling of powerlessness. In the past 15 years, I have met several ESOL learners who experienced difficulties with language acquisition and who had emerging literacy skills and limited formal schooling. Despite trying different techniques, activities, and materials in class, these difficulties often resulted in failure or limited progress. Thus, to understand my own students and the instructional approaches I used in class, I conducted a small case-study for my MA dissertation (Bowman, 2010) with the aim of identifying the appropriateness of the instructional approaches suggested for these learners in the literature. My research findings highlighted that practitioners advocated the use of two specific instructional approaches, namely: a positivistic, discrete phonics model that focuses on letters and words, and a constructivist whole-language approach that focuses on meaning and whole texts. Generally, each professed to be the better approach.

These research findings raised an interesting debate in my workplace, mainly about whether adhering to either one of these unidimensional views of literacy would suffice to improve our learners' literacy lives and about whether having classes that focused exclusively on these skills would help our students. To answer these questions, the college agreed to provide the funding for basic ESOL literacy classes, a four-step programme which would allow LESLLA learners the opportunity to develop basic reading, writing and study skills without the added pressure of exams.

While teaching these classes, I met Razia and the other participants in this research: Refiat, Roxanna, Sadia, Sanam, Sara and Sarbgit (pseudonyms), all migrant women spouses from India and Pakistan who have settled in the East Midlands. As I continued to teach them, I noticed that some women made some progress whereas others made minimal improvement in their linguistic, communicative and literacy competencies, regardless of the instructional approach used. Tutorial sessions revealed the women had high aspirations and valuable knowledge but were faced with barriers that restricted their ability to learn the English language, acquire literacy and realise their aspirations. One of these barriers, for example, was undergoing further testing to obtain their desired legal status – testing they were unable to pass due to their emerging literacy skills and limited formal schooling, an example of their 'language-ideological disqualification' (Bloomaert et. al., 2006).

As an ESOL teacher, migrant and spouse of a British national, these tests resonated strongly with me, particularly because I am aware of how being a fluent speaker of English enables me to reside in the UK permanently, while other migrant spouses are denied this opportunity due to their emerging English linguistic capital. To me, it became clear that language and literacy have a powerful role in shaping not only our material conditions, but also our hopes for the future. Furthermore, in an era of increasing globalization, it is important for practitioners to examine how language is connected to and influenced by questions of identity, power, belonging and exclusion. As Luke (2003: 135) points out,

> In the face of the new social facts of diversity and difference […] in countries like the United States, United Kingdom and Australia (each with over a quarter of their population of non-English speaking background) literacy and language education continues to routinely categorise the multilingual subject as 'Other', as afterthought, exception, anomaly and 'lack'.

1.4. Significance of the Study

There has been limited research on the lives of female LESLLA learners, their educational experiences, knowledge, aspirations and they ways in which language and literacy are threaded through the social, material, and symbolic realities of their lives. In an overview of research on Second Language Acquisition of Pre-Literate and Low Literate Adult and Adolescent Learners, Tarone and Bigelow (2011) identified five gaps in knowledge. These gaps included a need to further understand: the metalinguistic awareness[4] that emergent readers use when acquiring second language (L2) linguistic forms; the longitudinal development of LESLLA learners' interlanguage[5]; the impact of different forms of corrective feedback[6] on acquiring spoken and literacy skills; the impact of social contexts on the educational journeys of these learners and how learning occurs in whole-class, small-group, and individual instruction.

This thesis addresses the social-context gap identified by Tarone and Bigelow (ibid.) with a focus on gender. Although gender is not identified by these authors, it is for me fundamental that we study the lives, learning journeys and educational aspirations of LESLLA female learners, not only because of the sparse research in the literature, but also because from a feminist perspective (see Chapter 3), there is intrinsic value in conducting research on, for and about women (Hesse-Biber, 2012).

In addition, investigating the experiences of married Pakistani and Indian female LESLLA learners can help us understand what it means for these spouses to navigate and negotiate the various contexts that surround them, contexts that are permeated not only by their marriage migrant status, but also by their gender, educational experiences, English language proficiency levels, and literacy skills (Kouritzin, 2000). Indeed, Love and Kotai (2015:37), amongst others (see Wallace, 2007; Gonzalves, 2011), argue that LESLLA gender-specific research is important since 'the meaning of both literacy and gender are inherently tied to ever-shifting power dynamics constructed culturally, socially and politically' and, moreover, 'literacy is practiced and experienced by women and men in different ways, often with important legal, socioeconomic, and cultural implications and consequences.'

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[4] Tunmer et. al (1988: 136) define metalinguistic awareness as 'the ability to reflect on and manipulate the structural features of spoken language'.

[5] Selinker (1972) defined the term interlanguage (IL) as the type of language produced by adult second language learners when they try to use the target language (TL) in unrehearsed communication.

[6] In SLA, corrective feedback constitutes one type of negative feedback, where the tutor responds to a learner utterance containing a linguistic error by either correcting the target language or indicating that an error has been committed (Ellis, 2009).

Ethnic minority transnational marriages, particularly those where one of the spouses is from Pakistan, India, or Bangladesh, continue to receive intense media, policy, and public scrutiny in the UK (Charsley et al., 2020). According to the Casey Review (Casey, 2016: 6):

> Over the last two decades, total immigration to the UK has doubled. Significant immigration from Asia and other non-European countries has continued year-on-year over the last four or five decades, with much of this characterised by permanent settlement through marriage and family ties. Rates of integration in some communities may have been undermined by high levels of transnational marriage— with subsequent generations being joined by a foreign-born partner, creating a 'first generation in every generation' phenomenon…

These marriages have been framed as migration's main challenge to a cohesive society. The continual 'first generation in every generation phenomenon' (Casey, 2016; Goodhart, 2013) is argued to be detrimental to processes of integration as the old-fashioned values from traditional South Asian families (Qureshi et al., 2014) are perceived to be in conflict with those of modern Britain. According to Casey (2006: 108), some of the issues stemming from South Asian transnational marriages include 'patriarchal control or uneven balances of power in a relationship; the acceptance of 'home country' norms in terms of both domestic abuse and a woman's role in the home; or insular communities that deal with problems internally and, as such, are less likely to [integrate]' (p. 108).

This gendered study is in part a response to Tarone and Bigelow's (2011) call for more socio-cultural research with, for and by LESLLA learners, in part a way to make the voices of these female transnational spouses visible and in part a way to achieve ‘equity from below’ (Unterhalter, 2009) in ESOL, that is,

> acceptance of a space of negotiation in which particular concerns of groups or individuals on say curriculum content or the form of assessment […] are negotiated not on the basis of majority rule, or the intensity of one person’s view with regard to another, but through a process of reasonableness and reflection that considers each person participating in the discussion has a valuable opinion (p. 417).

1.5. Research Focus

Situated epistemologically within feminist perspectives, and carried out with the help of a female research mediator, this cross-linguistic and cross-cultural narrative inquiry draws on several narrative research tools, including: (1) semi-structured interviews; (2) house visits and photographs of artifacts; (3) Photovoice stories and class discussions; and (4) research diary extracts and fieldnotes to examine the lives, educational experiences and aspirations of seven emerging-bilingual and emerging-literate female migrant spouses from India and Pakistan (hereafter known as ‘the women’), who, between March 2015 and July 2016, attended ESOL classes at a large Further Education (FE) college in the East Midlands.

This thesis contributes to knowledge by giving visibility to their voices in an effort to challenge overgeneralization and stereotyping of this group of learners. A theoretical fusion of the Community Cultural Wealth framework (Yosso, 2005) and the Capability Approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000) is used to examine the role education plays in the women’s lives, highlight their knowledge and assets, and identify the complex ways in which their lives, educational experiences and aspirations are shaped by broader social, cultural, and institutional contexts (see discussion of the theoretical framework in Chapter 2).

The research questions and sub-questions underpinning this research study are:

1. What were the experiences of the women before migrating to the UK (in terms of their childhoods, education and marriages)?
    a. What cultural wealths did they draw on?
    b. What structural conditions enabled or constrained these experiences?
2. What have the experiences of the women been since settling in the UK (in terms of their perceptions of the country, access to local services and formal education and English language and literacy use)?
    a. What cultural wealths do they draw on?
    b. What structural conditions enable or constrain these experiences?
3. What aspirations do the women have for their futures? What capabilities and functionings do the women value?
4. How can the women’s accounts of their own lives and what they value be used to inform LESLLA teaching and learning?
5. How effective are innovative practices, such as Photovoice and Translanguaging, in nurturing the women’s capabilities and uncovering their cultural wealths?

1.5. My researcher role: subjectivities, emotions, and power

Feminist studies rely on relationships of trust between the ‘inquirer’ and the ‘inquired into’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). As such, it is important that I discuss what my role as a researcher was in relation to the women in the study. Throughout this dissertation, I engaged in a continuous process of reflection. Reflexivity was imperative because I was ‘implicated in the construction of knowledge’ in this study due to my various positionalities (Bryman, 2008). My position was determined by several key aspects of my identity (Hesse-Biber and

Leavy, 2006; Hewitt, 2007), including: (1) my multiple identities as an migrant, woman, mother and spouse; (2) my Ecuadorian and, at the time, my indefinite leave to remain (ILR) status; (3) my social position as a middle-class working professional; (4) my race, ethnicity and religion: white, Hispanic and Catholic; and (5) my English language proficiency level (fluent), knowledge of other languages (Spanish speaker), and educational level (doctoral student).

Throughout the research process, I had dual positions as an 'insider/outsider', 'teacher/researcher' and 'confidant/advocate'. Although presented as binaries, these positionings were not fixed, but rather fluid and in constant negotiation. There were similarities in my life history to that of the women. I was considered an 'insider' by the women because I am a multilingual migrant spouse with children, but there were also stark intersectional identity differences due to my race, ethnicity, religion, social position, English language fluency, knowledge of other languages, and educational level, meaning 'I [was] simultaneously an insider, outsider, both and neither' (Sultana, 2007: 377).

Peshkin (1988) stresses the importance of being aware of our subjective selves and the role that this subjective self plays in research, since being aware is preferable to assuming there is no subjectivity in the research being carried out. In order to 'undermine the myth of the invisible omniscient author' (Chase, 2005: 666), I explained the origins of this study in section 1.3.

My lens is, clearly, partially subjective. Here, I acknowledge that I brought preconceived notions and biases to the study, including:

1. A preconceived notion that I knew enough about Asian culture, immigration and LESLLA students to understand the women's experiences;
2. An assumption that all women would have experienced racism in the UK and that I, as an immigrant, would understand their experience of being constructed as 'Other';

3. A preconceived notion that the research mediator and I would remain 'objective' during the research study; and,
4. A belief that by interviewing LESLLA women, I was giving them a voice.

In addition to these, I must highlight the unequal power dynamics present in this study. Wolf (1996) argues that there are three aspects of power that must be taken into consideration in a research study:

> (1) Power differences stemming from different positionalities of the researcher and the researched (race, class, nationality, life changes, urban-rural background); (2) power exerted during the research process, such as defining the research relationship, unequal exchange, and exploitation; and (3) power exerted during the post fieldwork period – writing and representing (p.2).

Although I strove to have a collaborative relationship with the women, it would be disingenuous to claim there were equal power dynamics. Issues of power were evident, for example, during and after fieldwork. As the researcher and writer of this thesis, I held a privileged position of power by deciding the research questions and by selecting, organising, and interpreting the data (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). What is more, I chose which themes to explore further and presented my interpretation of the women's lives and ideas. Similar to Edwards (2000: 23),

> The [participants] whose ideas I borrow theorize from what they know. They link different arenas of social life, drawing on one to explain another. My theorizing has also meant making analogies, but they are not always, or necessarily, the same ones my co-conversationalists would make. Mine are models of their models. The [participants] whose theories I explore will, I think, agree with some, and disagree with other of my interpretations.

In other words, I, as a researcher, maintained control throughout the study. The women had limited input into how they have been represented through the thesis. Although it would have been beneficial for the women to read how their accounts were interpreted, they did not take this opportunity. These issues of representation demanded that I question and examine my assumptions and beliefs to ensure I do not contribute to the stereotypical misrepresentation of this group of students. In order to do so, I have strived to honour the women's trust by representing their accounts fairly. As O'Reilly (2005: 47) describes, when writing the thesis

> I [asked] myself questions such as, was the participant able to argue with me if [she] want to, could they expand or interject where necessary, did I allow them to ask questions and to think things through and change their minds?

In this section, I have briefly addressed my positionalities, subjectivities and power (see also Widdowfield, 2000; Hubbard et. al., 2001; Campbell, 2002) as part of my own reflexivity (Stanko, 1997; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006; Liamputtong, 2007). I have acknowledged the core intersectional aspects of my identity, the different positions I occupied throughout the research, and the differences in power between the women and myself to allow the reader to evaluate how knowledge was produced in the context of my subjectivities.

1.6. Thesis Structure

This thesis is organised into eight chapters. Following the introductory chapter, in chapter two explore the issues that have an impact on the women's lives, educational experiences and aspirations at the macrolevel and microlevel. I also present the theoretical framework that is used to explore the women's narratives: a theoretical fusion of the Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) framework and the Capability Approach.

In chapter three, I explore the epistemological lenses, methodologies, and methods used in this study and present a rationale for their selection. I also consider how feminism, feminist standpoint theory and narrative inquiry underpin this research and discuss the complex process of conducting a study cross-linguistically and cross-culturally.

In chapters four and five, I present the findings that relate to the women's pre- and post-migration experiences, including: (1) their childhoods, (2) education in India and Pakistan, (3) arranged marriages, (4) perceptions of the country, (4) experiences of racism and abuse, (5) difficulties accessing services in the UK, (6) language learning experiences and progress, and (7) language use and literacy practices outside college. I discuss how a range of structural factors, institutions, choices and opportunities assist or limit their capabilities and highlight the cultural wealths the women draw on to persist in education. I also explore the extent to which the women were able to and can use their individual agency to convert resources into capabilities and functionings.

In chapter six, I explore the women's aspirations for their futures, in particular those that relate to their own education, their children's future and their desired employment. I also consider the values the women place on education and the factors that enable and constrain their ability to pursue their desired achievements and live the lives they value.

In chapter seven, I extrapolate a list of basic capabilities that can inform provision for female LESLLA learners and evaluate two innovative practices, Translanguaging and Photovoice, practices that can help women, and other students, demonstrate and develop their capital wealths and capabilities. I also present and discuss the women's Photovoice stories and two extracts from classroom discussions.

Finally, in chapter eight, I present a summary of the study's findings, outline these with reference to the main research questions and detail the thesis's contribution to knowledge. I also put forward an agenda for further research in the field of LESLLA teaching and learning and make recommendations for policy and practice.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Learning how to read and write are the most important things in my life. I could not read or spell my name before, but since starting college, I have learnt to do both. Now, I know which letters are addressed to me and I can ask for help. I feel so proud of what I've achieved so far, but if you can, can you please arrange more classes? We will come – we want to learn.

(Refiat)

2.1. Introduction

This chapter acts as the framework for the rest of the dissertation. Following Love and Kotai (2015: 37), I explore the issues that have an impact on the women's lives, educational experiences and aspirations at the macrolevel and microlevel. I begin this chapter with a focus on the macrolevel. I discuss the current political immigration rhetoric, media and public discourses, linguistic ideologies and immigration policies that shape the women's lives. Then, I examine adult second language education in the UK, in particular the politicization of ESOL, positioning of LESLLA learners within ESOL policy discourse and the resulting inadequate educational provision that exists for this group of students. I move on to discuss the microlevel, that is, the characteristics, needs and strengths of female LESLLA learners before presenting and justifying the theoretical framework used in the thesis.

2.2. A focus on the macrolevel

2.2.1. Immigration in the United Kingdom and immigration discourses

Immigrating to a new place is never an easy decision. Leaving one's homeland can be related to several reasons, including geopolitical considerations, better economic employment possibilities, familial, personal and ideological circumstances and escaping persecution, war or natural disasters (Sonn and Fisher, 2005). Migrants are given different statuses in the receiving country depending on their reasons to migrate, including being considered a migrant worker, a marriage migrant, a family dependent, a refugee, asylum seeker or illegal migrant - statuses which imply different legal and economic eligibilities, as well as having different psychological and social consequences (Berger, 2004).

Worldwide, there are 272 million migrants and over 25.9 million refugees (The United Nations, 2020) who have sought asylum or settled in a country different to their own. In the UK, the number of foreign-born people has increased dramatically from 3.8 million in 1993 to over 9.5 million in 2019 (Rienzo and Vargas-Silva, 2020), comprising over fourteen percent of the total British population. Given this increasing influx of migrants, it is perhaps unsurprising that immigration has been one of the most important issues facing the nation in recent decades. A poll carried out by IPSOS MORI (2011), for instance, found out that three-quarters of the British public supported overall reductions to immigration levels, in particular of asylum seekers and extended family members, migrants who are often seen as not bringing needed skills to the country. In addition, a poll carried out by Searchlight Educational Trust (2010) found out that a large proportion of the British public viewed migration as harmful to Britain, with 69% of respondents asserting that it had had a negative impact on the supply of public services and 88% of adults stating that migrants who are unable to speak the language create discomfort and disjointedness in British communities.

Media headlines have undoubtedly helped form these negative, and sometimes hostile, prejudiced and xenophobic attitudes towards immigration (Blackledge, 2005; Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008; Cooke and Simpson, 2009; Clayton, 2010). Migrants, as well as second, third and fourth generation descendants, for example, have been represented by the press as invading the country, refusing to integrate, oppressive to women and children, unclean, unprincipled, criminal, illegal, responsible for unemployment and abusing the welfare system.

Musolff et. al. (2014), provide examples of these ideas in the headlines below (p. 208-211):

(1) New wave of immigration blamed for doubling of hepatitis B cases (*The Times*, 21 November 2007)
(2) Riding the migrant crime wave (*The Guardian*, 16 April 2008)
(3) Migration figures explode claims of East European invasion (*The Guardian*, 22 May 2007)
(4) Are you a winner or a loser in the immigration battle? (*The Times*, 8 June 2010)

Research also demonstrates that the representation of Muslims in the UK's news media is limited, stereotypical and predominantly negative (Poole and Williamson, 2021). Muslims have been portrayed as a group of immigrants who, in addition to being a drain on resources, have brought with them different cultural and religious values and practices which are in conflict with liberal Britain (Poole, 2011). Muslims have been portrayed as responsible for the various events that have happened since 2000, including 9/11, the July 2005 London bombings, the 2011 London riots, and in 2013, the murder of a British soldier in the streets of London. These incidents ignited fears of 'Islamic terrorism', 'fundamentalism', and 'clash of civilizations' in the country (Ahmad, 2003: 47), with women, in particular Muslim women who wear the veil, symbolically embodying 'the enemy within' (Meetoo and Mirza, 2013). These racial constructions equate Islam with evil and ignore the rich religious, cultural and political diversity in Muslim populations and societies. Not only do these Islamophobic discourses demonise and vilify Muslims *en masse*, they also portray Muslim women, as culturally oppressed – victims of barbaric customs and cultures (Ahmad, 2003; Said, 1985).

Links between language, immigration and various ills in British society have also been repeatedly drawn. The poor language skills of spouses from Southeast Asia and lack of common values with British nationals, for instance, have been cited as the main causes for lack of cohesion in British towns and cities. These assertions initially gained prominence following the race riots in Northern English cities and towns between young British Asian Muslim men, young white British men, and the police (Home Office, 2001a). Cantle (2002) concluded that social segregation and the inability and refusal of some Asian residents to speak English were major background factors in the violence observed (Ousely, 2001; Home Office, 2001b; Rosenberg, 2007). Further reasons for the involvement of young British Asian men in the civil unrest in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford were given by Ann Cryer, Labour Member of Parliament (MP) for Keighley, in a speech in the House of Commons (Blackledge, 2006:100-102):

> We need to examine why those young Asian men were so keen to join in the criminal activity [...] Let us consider the causes. There is little point in blaming the situation simply on racism and Islamophobia. We must instead consider in detail what causes the [disenfranchisement] that I have mentioned. The main cause is the lack of a good level of English, which stems directly from the established tradition of bringing wives and husbands from the sub-continent who have often had no education and have no English. As a result, the vast majority of Keighley households have only one parent with any English and children go to school speaking only Punjabi or Bangla. That frequently gets children off to a slow start, which can damage their progress and mean that they leave school with few, if any, qualifications. Many cannot get paid work or find only poorly paid jobs.

According to Blackledge (2006: 103-104), in this speech Ann Cryer regards Asian people as responsible for the disorder in the streets, outlining several causes for the rioting including a lack of a good level of English; the established tradition within Pakistani and Bangladeshi cultures of bringing wives and husbands from the subcontinent; having only one parent that speaks English and going to school speaking only Punjabi or Bangla. Later in her speech, Cryer proposed an English language requirement for husbands and wives who seek permanent settlement in the UK as one of the 'remedies' needed to prevent any future violence on the streets (Blackledge, 2006: 115). A similar suggestion was offered by the Cantle Report (Home Office, 2001b), which argued that there should be new legislation ensuring the use of the English language and its universal acceptance by spouses and other applicants for citizenship. This discourse indicates an assimilationist ideology mainly targeted at the Asian spouses Cryer refers to, a group of migrant spouses which include the women in this study. The ideological orientation of these illiberal proposals is one of monolingualism, where spouses are seen as 'others' who should use English, and not their home language, in order to integrate and be good British citizens.

The Cantle report also argued for the promotion of new values and the agreement on what elements constitute 'nationhood'. This rhetoric was observed in a plethora of other governmental documents (Cheong et al, 2007), including a report entitled Building Cohesive Communities (Home Office, 2001b: 19-20), which endorsed the need to promote 'a uniting identity and shared values [...] to give people a common sense of belonging, particularly in the light of increased community tensions following the terrorist attacks in the United States in September 2001'.

In a similar vein, in 2005, the Prime Minister Tony Blair linked speaking English with social cohesion when he stated that '[t]here are people who are isolated in their own communities who have been here for 20 years and still do not speak English. That worries me because there is a separateness that may be unhealthy' (Simpson, 2019: 32). David Cameron also blamed poor English language skills and not having shared values for the rise in terrorism. In a speech given at a security conference in Munich, he stated that (Number 10, 2011):

> In the UK, some young men find it hard to identify with the traditional Islam practiced at home by their parents, whose customs can seem staid when transplanted to modern Western countries. But these young men also find it hard to identify with Britain too, because we have allowed the weakening of our collective identity. [...] There are practical things that we can do. That includes making sure that immigrants speak the language of their new home and ensuring that people are educated in the elements of a common culture and curriculum.

Here immigration from Muslim countries symbolises a security risk. The rising xenophobia, anxiety and paranoia about race and religion amongst the British population (Cheong et al, 2007; Joppke, 2007, Harindtanath, 2007) undoubtedly played a role in the outcome of the Brexit vote, an outcome which according to Burnett (2016), was interpreted as permission to express hatred towards the migrant 'Other'. Barbara Drozdowicz, director of the East European Advice Centre in London, described the issue and its impacts on its victims, thus:

> Poles and other Eastern Europeans have been victims of racially-motivated harassment at work and in schools for the last 10 years at least. Symbolic linguistic violence, for example singling Polish workers out to ban them from using the Polish language during breaks, has been so deeply normalised that many of us treat it as a deal we have to accept when moving to the UK. Linguistic responses follow: many Eastern Europeans refusing to use their mother tongue among friends on public transport, or changing first names to make them sound more British. The post-referendum wave of hate speech acts only as a reminder that migrant and BME communities are always vulnerable to tensions lurking under the cover of political correctness and words hurt as much as slap in the face. (cited in Simpson, 2019: 65)

This rhetoric has encouraged the creation of a perceived danger that migrants and their children pose, positioning them as less than welcome. Clearly, media and political discourses in the past two decades have positioned migrants negatively, associating their lack of competence in English with social unrest and extremism. It is within these discourses that the women in this study construct their lives.

2.2.2. Monolingualism and bilingualism

Behind the political discourse discussed in the previous section are larger debates about assimilation, social cohesion, ‘Britishness’, English as the common language of Britain and the war on terror (Blackledge, 2009; Cooke and Simpson, 2009). This discourse reflects a dominant monolingual ideology whereby English, in its standard variety, is seen as the only way to communicate, truly become a citizen and increase a migrant’s educational, employment and social mobility.

Blackledge and Wright (2010) state that ‘one nation one language‘ ideologies are deeply entrenched in nation building states, such as the UK. Nations, which according to Billig (1995) are ideological creations, use language policies as ‘a means of social control which allow nation-states to define ‘who is in’ and ‘who is out’’ (Blackledge, 2005: 42). This territorialist epistemology has been seen as a convergent trend away from multiculturalism in various Western countries, including Australia, Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the USA (Joppke and Morawska, 2003; Joppke, 2007), where ‘[t]he control of entry [has become] one of the few domains in which states can still be strong, ‘renationalizing’ immigration policies as an antidote to the ‘denationalizing’ logic of globalization’ (Joppke, 1998:4).

Although 'elite discourses'[7] (van Dijk, 2006) often characterise the UK as a multicultural society, the ideology of monolingualism prevails, despite the linguistic heterogeneity of Britain and the multilingual practices of its population. For instance, political arguments towards the linguistic resources of migrant spouses present English as the language that would allow all individuals ‘to engage as active citizens in economic, social and political life’ (Home Office, 2002). Educational policies emphasise English as the only language to be employed in the public school system (Shohamy, 2006) and learning ‘modern foreign languages' is privileged over learning the languages of the ethnic minority populations in the UK (Cooke and Simpson, 2009). Monolingualism is also seen as necessary to ensure that the costs incurred due to linguistic diversity by health and education public institutions are spent on more deserving public services (ibid).

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[7] van Dijk (2006) characterises this type of discourse as one that is evident in 'political debates, news and opinion articles, TV programs, textbooks and scholarly works' elites and compares it to 'popular discourse' (see van Dijk, 1993).

Bilingualism and multilingualism, in particular of non-European, non-English speaking migrants, are associated with negative factors, whereby migrants are seen as unstable, disadvantaged, unwilling to learn English and integrate, choosing to live in enclaves and leading parallel lives (Blackledge, 2005). Cooke and Simpson (2009), argue that '[monolingualism] does not take into account the linguistic and cultural resources held by migrants - resources which in fact may well help, not hinder, their integration into many multicultural neighbourhoods'. Similarly Beardsmore (2003:23) states that '[monolingual ideologies] put the cart before the horse since [they] imply that language is key to integration, when in fact integration is key to language acquisition.'

However, various academics have argued that there is not enough evidence to confirm the notion that not speaking English leads to a breakdown in social cohesion (Cooke and Simpson, 2009). Young (2002), for example, states that the Asian youth who rioted back in 2001 were second generation migrants who had no problem communicating in English and had economic and political aspirations similar to those of young white men. Similarly, Cooke and Simpson (2008) point out that the perpetrators of the London bombings were native speakers of English, born in the UK.

Worley (2005) notes that although the term 'social cohesion' continues to be poorly defined, there are clear reference points in commissions, investigations and legislation regarding what is considered to be the destructive nature of Asian minorities, including female spouses from India and Pakistan, who lead parallel lives and are part of fractured and segregated ghettos. Peach (2009), however, rejects any claims of ghettoisation in Britain and states that the segregation of minority ethnic communities in Britain is decreasing.

Furthermore, Amin (2008) states that the notion of parallel lives has become a proxy for most minority ethnic communities when, in reality, it only occurs in a small number of neighbourhoods in Britain.

Hudson et al. (2007) studied the relationships between new and established communities in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods in Manchester and London and found there were several factors that hinder social cohesion other than language. Correspondingly, Cooke and Simpson (2009:7-8) state that a breakdown in social cohesion 'is more likely to lie at the door of a lack of affordable housing, the economic downturn in certain industries and social inequality', none of which are caused by an inability to speak English.

Suggesting that gaining basic proficiency in English will lead to acceptance by the host community is simplistic at best (Blackledge, 2005). According to Cheong et al (2007: 42), immigration policies in the UK 'fail to address the realities of an increasingly multicultural society that needs to develop forms of identity and belonging that respect both individual rights and the identities of particular groups and communities.' Learning English does not eliminate racism and as stated above, xenophobic ideologies are a reality in the UK. Appearance, dress, cultural practice, religion, age, gender and accent are all factors that may have an impact on the integration and sense of belonging of female marriage migrants from India and Pakistan.

2.2.3. Immigration, language and securitisation

As a response to the hostile tone framing the immigration debate in the UK, governments have introduced various draconian reforms to the immigration system in the last two decades. In 2004, for instance, the government introduced a language requirement for citizenship applicants set as 'ESOL Entry 3', or intermediate level, and then again in 2005, the requirement to show 'Knowledge of life in the United Kingdom' was introduced to ensure social and economic participation of permanent migrants (Home Office, 2002; Home Office, 2003; Ryan, 2010). Changes since May 2010, in order to reduce net migration ‘from hundreds of thousands to tens of thousands’, include: (1) limiting the number of non-EEA migrants admitted to work in the UK (2) increasing the level of competency in English language for those coming to study at undergraduate level and above, (3) introducing additional requirements for non-EAA migrants joining family in the UK including providing evidence of their basic command of English and providing evidence of a minimum gross annual income of £18,600, (4) requiring applicants for settlement or naturalization as British citizens to pass the revised ‘Life in the UK’ test and have a speaking and listening qualification at an intermediate level (B1 level in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) and (5) requiring private landlords to check the immigration status of tenants in order to prevent those with no right to live in the UK from accessing private rented housing (Home Office, 2010; 2012). British political discourse and policy responses towards immigration have clearly ‘become a counter-narrative to the discourse of a borderless world that props up Western neoliberalism’ (Fitzgerald, 2009: 128).

These legislative changes have material and symbolic consequences for migrants in this country. Of particular importance to female LESLLA learners are the language proficiency testing required of spouses since 2010 (Home Office, 2010; 2012). Although it is not unreasonable for governments to impose conditions on immigrants wishing to settle or become citizens, these tests act as a gate-keeping mechanism to prevent spouses with emerging English language and emerging literacy from realising their entitlement in practice, thus keeping women like Razia (see chapter 1) in ‘an anxious liminal space of exclusion and non-citizenship: tolerated but not rewarded with the coveted status of citizenship’ (Morrice, 2017: 606).

2.2.4. English Language Learning

English language classes are considered to be one of the answers to community cohesion. Historically, ESOL, adult literacy and numeracy provision were neglected in policy circles (Simpson and Whiteside, 2012). Not only was provision ad hoc, voluntary, and under-funded, but qualifications for ESOL students, for instance, did not exist (Rosenberg, 2007). Formal provision dates back to the 1970s but it was not until the 2000s, that adult ESOL was brought under centralized control. Due to findings from the Moser Report (DfEE, 1999) and recommendations put forward in the 'Breaking the Language Barriers' report (DfEE, 2000), ESOL was made a part of a national agenda to reduce the number of adults with low levels of basic skills. This strategy included the creation of the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum (DfES, 2000), materials, a teacher training framework and 'direct access to a marketable qualification with national currency' (Rosenberg, 2007: 228).

Although the Skills for Life policy has invested heavily into ESOL during the past decade, its centralization, regulation and bureaucratization is responsible for current tensions in the field between practitioners and government agencies (Simpson, 2007). As Callaghan (2006) argues:

> Whilst government initiatives have brought in welcome resources, they have … laid a heavy bureaucratic burden on teachers, one which many see as being driven by auditing purposes and economic motives related to global competitiveness rather than the facilitation of language learning or the meeting of learners' needs. (in Simpson, 2007)

In order to meet the demands of economic productivity and political rhetoric with regards to immigration, community cohesion, national security and responsible citizenship, ESOL classes have focused on competence-based, survival, work and citizenship content (Cooke and Simpson 2009; Simpson, 2007; Ward, 2008). Despite various criticisms put forward over the years , the 'three 'challenging agendas' of skills, employability and social cohesion' (Cooke and Simpson 2009:19) continue to shape ESOL provision. This narrow focus has an impact on learners as it affects funding, access, the curriculum and wider educational opportunities for learners. In terms of funding, in 2011 the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) cut the financial support for ESOL learners on non-employment benefits, focusing 'public funds for ESOL on active jobseekers (JSA or ESA WRAG) by fully funding formal training where English language skills form a barrier to finding work' (BIS, 2010:05). This cut in funding affected women disproportionally, with the Association of Colleges (AoC) estimating that 74% of ESOL students on inactive benefits were women. This division of learners into *active* and *inactive* mirrors the *deserving* and *undeserving* categorisation used by the right-wing MP Frank Field in 2011 when discussing sanctions for job seekers. Whilst the government altered their position on funding that same year, funding regulations continued to position ESOL learners as deficient individuals in need of employment-led skills (SFA, 2011: 21):

> The Agency recognises that there are unemployed individuals who are in receipt of a state benefit (other than JSA or ESA (WRAG)), who want to enter employment and need skills training to do so. For 2011/12, at the discretion of the provider, they will be eligible for full funding for units and other learning aims that will help them enter employment.

This discursive positioning of learners, including women who are emerging-English speakers and emerging-literate, into *inactive* or *undeserving* pathologises ESOL students, placing the onus on each individual rather than considering the structural inequalities that prevent women, like those who participated in this study, from gaining employment if that is what they value.

In terms of access based on legal status, ESOL provision has been based firmly on notions of permanent settlement since 2010. For instance, non-EU spouses who enter the UK are ineligible for fee remission for three years and are considered as overseas students in terms of fees. Also, as mentioned before, changes to immigration rules have introduced further language and citizenship tests for applicants for settlement and citizenship. These tests privilege test-takers with high levels of formal literacy and formal schooling, significantly disadvantaging LESLLA test-takers who find themselves not only unable to pass the test but also unable to access any citizenship preparation classes due to the overwhelming reliance on reading and writing. Morrice (2017: 606) argues that there is a cultural bias in these requirements as LESLLA test-takers may not have had any educational opportunities in their countries and their 'social and cultural background has not prepared them for the cultural-specific nature of the test and the rote learning of written texts'. She further argues that:

> alongside this cultural bias, the regime has a largely unacknowledged gender bias which makes women particularly vulnerable to exclusion because they not only have the lowest literacy levels, but tend to occupy the most vulnerable migrant statuses, are less likely to be able to access ESOL classes, have fewer financial resources and are more likely to be engaged in unrecognised and unacknowledged citizenship practices. (ibid.)

2.3. A focus on the microlevel

2.3.1. Female migrants, LESLLA Learners and limited print literacy

Limited print literacy is a complex global phenomenon. Demographic, economic and social factors all contribute to the high number of low-literate adults (aged 16 to 64) in the world. According to statistics from The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2013), there are 796 million adults in the world who do not have the necessary basic skills to understand, read or write a short, simple statement on their everyday life. The number of these migrants arriving in post-industrialized countries, whether because of economic and social incentives, family reasons or political strife in their homeland, continues to grow (van de Craats et. al., 2005) with statistics from several European countries revealing that more than half of the adult migrants from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Somalia, for example, have an educational level of primary school or less. Of this total, the majority of low-literate adults are women from Sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia (UNESCO, 2013). With regards to the UK, there are 5.2 million adults, that is 16% of the total UK population, who have low-literacy skills. Out of this total almost half a million people are from homes where a language other than English is spoken (DfES, 2003).

The reasons for migrants' lack of print literacy include political circumstances, poverty and cultural expectations. Political circumstances such as war, internal conflict, genocide and famine cause displacement and forced migration and thus, interrupted schooling. Poverty, on the other hand, forces families to keep children out of school to work or help at home. This is a more common occurrence for girls due to cultural expectations, which do not deem their schooling as a priority, as a mother from rural Laos expressed, ‘all the things we need for use in our daily lives are dependent in our fields. Even if we don’t study literacy, we can still eat rice’ (Guttal, 1993: I-3). In addition to these, ethnic oppression and social disadvantage might be reasons why migrants are not able to read or write in their first language or in English. Also, some migrants come from societies where their predominant language has no written form or its written form is rare (Bigelow and Schwarz, 2010; Burt et. al., 2003; Tranza and Sunderland, 2009).

There are a number of factors identified in the literature which complicate the instruction of female LESLLA learners, including their prior schooling and limited familiarity with print literacy. LESLLA learners also differ in the extent to which they are able to express themselves orally in English, with some students having strong oral communication skills, and others, often new arrivals, having no knowledge of the language. And like other refugees and asylum seekers, it is worth noting that these learners may be traumatized by years of armed conflict in their home countries or may live in constant fear of being deported. Also, some students may have vision or hearing problems and yet others may have learning difficulties such as dyslexia (Wrigley and Guth, 1992; Sunderland et al., 1997).

In terms of life in the host country, female migrants do not encounter the same social conditions in their countries of destination as their male counterparts, mainly because of the complex combination of being migrants, women and of minority status (Berger, 2004) as ‘the interface of gender, ethnic, and immigration discourses often causes migrant women to find themselves affected simultaneously by racism, sexism and class inequality’ (p.19). These experiences can include lower social status, higher rate of dependence on the welfare system and their partners, traumatized immigration (pre- or post-)

experience, multiple family and work responsibilities, as well as barriers to health services, social services, and education. Ward (2008) explains that:

> Gender is significant. Women often experience additional discrimination, and have particular difficulties that are often overlooked ... Gender oppression, family opposition, lack of independence or other gender related cultural factors can restrict opportunities to take up learning (p.3).

Here, I would like to move away from the deficit discourse prevalent in discussions of female LESLLA learners and acknowledge that they bring several strengths to education programs too, including oral knowledge, cultural diversity, plurilingualism and life experience. Researchers, working alongside schoolteachers, have investigated the intellectual and vocational resources that exist among migrant families to propose alternative pedagogical practices to facilitate these learners' development of 'capital', both 'social' and 'cultural' (Bourdieu, 1986). These studies, called 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et. al., 1992), present this population of learners as individuals with important life skills. Olmedo (1997), for example, describes the several skills an extended Puerto Rican family used to support each other first in Puerto Rico and later in New York City. This qualitative case study, an oral history inquiry, highlights the fact that despite the participants' limited formal schooling, they were able to draw on each others' life skills (e.g. sewing, cooking, cabinetry, babysitting) for financial, family and social support.

In another case study with Latin American families, Espinoza-Herold (2007) describes how the cultural sayings '*dichos*' used by a Mexican migrant mother with limited formal schooling provided a motivational path to guide her daughter toward strategies to resist marginalization and achieve educational success. This study reveals that parents' traditions, folklore and advice can constitute a great force behind migrant children's success at school. In addition to students' 'funds of knowledge', ESOL literacy learners are likely to be multilingual and be able to use various spoken genres in their native languages, knowledge which should inform ESOL literacy pedagogy. This conclusion was reached by Perry (2007) and Bigelow (2010) who found the use of personal stories, folktales, poems and proverbs in the learners' L1 effective in promoting L2 adult ESOL literacy in ethnographic research carried out with Sudanese and Somali refugees respectively. Clearly, as August and Shanahan (2006) noted, 'when it comes to literacy development, English-language learners are best conceptualized as having a reservoir of knowledge, skills and abilities that serve second-language learning and use' (p. 172).

From the research studies I have reviewed in this section, it is clear that much can be learnt about the lives of female LESLLA learners when focusing on their assets, rather than deficits. My aim here is not to deny the challenges or needs of this group of students, but rather like Shapiro and MacDonald (2017) recognise that a deficit narrative may lead to missed educational opportunities (Bigelow, 2010; Roy and Roxas, 2011, cited in Shapiro and MacDonald, 2017:4),

> For if educational disparities are attributed entirely to deficiencies in students and families (e.g. psychological trauma, limited formal schooling, "preliteracy"), then school administrators and policy makers may be less inclined to invest in family outreach and school reform, since those elements are not seen as the locus of the problem.

This picture, however, is incomplete without a fuller understanding of the importance of education, language learning and literacy in the lives of female LESLLA learners (Kouritzin 2000).

2.3.2 Literacy Discourse and Ideologies

Literacy is a complex and contested term without a universally accepted definition, and with competing ideologies about its essential purpose. In its simplest form, literacy in an additional language has been defined as being able to read and write a short simple text, that is, having the oral language skills, metalinguistic skills and literacy knowledge (conceptual and procedural) to be able to decode and encode a text. Cooke and Simpson (2008), however, complicate this definition, by asking:

> [Literacy?] Is [it] principally a cognitive, a linguistic, or a social activity? Is it best understood as a set of reading and writing skills which can be taught, learnt, measured and assessed? Or is it better thought of dynamically, as something that is done or performed in social contexts? How does its teaching relate to students' lives outside classrooms and beyond ESOL? How are educational policies shaped by ideas about literacy? And how does politics impinge on literacy teaching? (p. 91)

Cooke and Simpson's questions above relate to the various discourses of literacy represented in the literature and the ideological forces that shape adult literacy policy and practice in the UK, which I explore below using the 'autonomous' and 'ideological' models of literacy put forward by Street (1984). In the 'autonomous model', literacy is conceptualized as a universal set of discrete cognitive skills, a mechanical, technical commodity which exists and can be taught and learned independent of culture, context or purpose (Street, 1984). In terms of ESOL literacy this is evident in the revised 'Adult ESOL Core Curriculum' (DfES, 2009) which lists the sub-skills ESOL learners need to acquire in order to learn to read and write in a second language. Tett (2007) describes lists of skills, such as the ones provided by 'Adult ESOL Core Curriculum', as a ladder that has to be climbed, where people are ranked from top to bottom with the emphasis on the skills they cannot perform, rather than those that they are able to demonstrate. This view leads to a deficit model, where 'illiterate' learners are 'filled' with the information they lack by experts, and in which being literate is a desirable personal attribute, one which leads to intellectual development and socioeconomic mobility. In this ideology, 'lack' of literacy is linked with unemployment, low economic mobility and self-exclusion. This deficit discourse can be seen in the 'Skills for Life' policy extract below where learners with low levels of literacy are constructed as 'agents of their own misery' (Hamilton and Pitt, 2011:11):

> People with poor literacy, numeracy and language skills tend to be on lower incomes or unemployed, and they are more prone to ill health and social exclusion. [...] Of course, people with these poor literacy and numeracy skills get by, usually by relying on others for help or by avoiding situations where they need to read, write or calculate. But, because they lack literacy and numeracy skills, they and their families may well exclude themselves from advantages that others take for granted. (DfES, 2003)

Another example relevant to this study is the conceptualization of LESLLA learners in SLA and ELT literature. Burt et al. (2003), amongst others, for example, define learners according to their formal schooling and functional abilities, categorizing them as: 'preliterate', 'non-literate', 'semiliterate' and 'functionally literate', ignoring ESOL literacy learners' multilingual achievements, knowledge and life experience and instead attributing their 'lack' of L2 literacy to cognitive and linguistic deficit.

In contrast with the 'autonomous view of literacy', the 'ideological model' conceptualizes literacy as a process constructed and influenced by social, cultural, political and economic factors (Street, 1984). In this pluralist view of literacy, reading and writing are not only rooted in people's cognitive skills and knowledge, but in their identities, own being and experiences, and arise from social and cultural needs, expectations and practices. Proponents of this social model of literacy (Street, 1984; Gee, 1992; Barton et al., 2000, whose work is often referred to as 'The New Literacy Studies') argue that those who are labelled as 'illiterate' within an 'autonomous model' do actually make significant use of literacy practices for specific purposes and within specific contexts.

Examples of 'New Literacy Studies' include Street's (1984) ethnographic research in Islamic villages in Iran – work that informed the 'autonomous/ideological models - where he observed his participants engaged in three types of literacy namely school literacy, literacy based on the Qur'an and financial literacy; Scriber and Cole's (1981) study of formal and informal literacies among the Vai of West Africa; Barton and Padmore's (1991) narratives of community literacies in the north of England; Saxena's (1994) research into the literacy practices of members of a Punjabi family in London and Reder's work (1994) with Innuit, Hmong and Hispanic communities in the USA.

These studies share a theory of literacy as social practice which, according to Hodge (2003:5), 'conceptualizes the link between reading and writing and the social institutional structures in which they are embedded and which they also shape.' As Street (1984) found in his work in Iran, there is not a single literacy, but rather many different literacies, each associated with particular aspects of life, and embedded in relations of power and social and cultural values (Street, 1984; 1993; 2001). Whilst I agree with the notion of literacy as a social practice, I disagree with the 'New Literacy Studies' relativist stance which promotes the view that 'the only appropriate criteria of ethical goodness are local ones, internal to the traditions and practices of each local society or group that asks itself questions of the good' (Nussbaum, 1993: 243). In my view, illiteracy and formal schooling are a form of deprivation and agree with Sen (2003) who argues that

> illiteracy and innumeracy are forms of insecurity in themselves. Not to be able to read or write or count or communicate is itself a tremendous deprivation. And if a person is thus reduced by illiteracy and innumeracy, we can not only see that the person is insecure to whom something terrible could happen, but more immediately, that to him or her something terrible has actually happened. (p. 22)

Illiteracy can be characterised as social injustice on a global scale (Nussbaum, 2006) as can be seen in the statistics discussed in this chapter. It is not sufficient to acknowledge the existence of a plurality of 'literacies' or examine the social context that shapes these practices (Street, 1993): we must acknowledge the importance of literacy in female LESLLA learners' lives, who on entering the UK, are confronted with a society with radically different expectations. Their emerging literacy skills or formal schooling is often a barrier that prevents them from obtaining important information. These difficulties are illustrated in Miller's (2009, cited in Bigelow and Schwarz, 2010) short story of a Somali immigrant woman:

> Ilhan Mohamed is 19 and illiterate. Although she speaks rapid-fire English, her lack of literacy has been an obstacle to finding a job to support herself and her young son. Illiteracy permeates Ilhan's life. She memorizes phone numbers, sometimes writing them down, but is unable to remember whose number is whose. She cannot fill out a job application on her own, or decipher a medicine label. She is suspicious of signing anything for fear someone will take her son. Ilhan is embarrassed by everything she cannot do. Still, she has big goals for her life—getting her GED and starting a center for abused Somali women. Ilhan has asserted that if she concentrated, she

> could learn to read and write in a month, maybe two. But when Ilhan enrolls in adult ESL classes, she is placed with other adults who have had formal schooling and can read and write in their native language. They don't speak English as well as she does, but they have a much easier time with the tasks the teacher asks them to do. (p. 4)

Ilhan's story illustrates how the barriers and difficulties she faces motivate her to break the wall of illiteracy. It can be argued that for many LESLLA learners, such as Ilhan, Razia and Refiat, their educational, vocational, and, ultimately, long-term settlement achievements will be dependent on literacy attainment as this is seen as 'their passport to greater personal and economic fulfillment [...] as a way to enter a world that holds the promise of change' (Cooke and Simpson, 2008:94). The disadvantages of having emerging-literacy skills and/or formal limited schooling in a hyper-literate society, such as the UK, cannot be underestimated.

2.4. Theoretical framework

A theoretical fusion of the Capability Approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000) and Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005) was adopted to provide a 'balance of stories' (Achebe, 2003) of the women's complex lives, educational trajectories, and future aspirations. In the next sections, I discuss both theoretical approaches and explain how their theoretical fusion can enrich and advance education for LESLLA learners.

2.4.1. The Capability Approach

The Capability Approach is a normative, evaluative framework that directs us to consider questions of fairness, equality, and social justice. It was pioneered by the economist Sen (1992) as an alternative to previous measures of human development, such as the Gross Domestic National Product (GDNP), which focus only on income and wealth. Instead of evaluating development as only being economically productive, Sen proposed that well-being should be determined by not only by the commodities one possesses, but also by the opportunities and freedom individuals have 'to choose the lives they value and have reason to value' (p. 81). While ESOL has an instrumental economic role in the education of migrant women, it should also be an empowering resource that contributes to the students' individual 'well-being' and 'human flourishing' (Sen, 1992; Dreze and Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 1997, 2006). Indeed, Nussbaum (2000: 58) stresses that each person is a 'source of agency and worth, with their own plans to make and their own lives to live.'

According to Robeyns (2020) the capability approach entails two normative claims: (1) that the freedom to achieve well-being is of primary moral importance, and (2) that well-being and quality of life should be assessed in terms of the extent to which a person is able to be and do what they have reason to value being and doing (Sen, 1999). As such, capability theorists' focus is 'on the ground effects of injustice, and how to evaluate the impact on individuals' abilities to do and to be, in order to make the world less unjust' (p. 1). In this section, I will discuss four of the key constructs in the capability approach, namely functionings, capabilities, agency, and conversion factors. Other constructs are used and defined throughout the thesis, including aspirations, adaptive preferences, unfreedoms and deprivations.

A key feature of the capability approach is the distinction between functionings and capabilities. In capabilities language, the combinations of beings and doings are known as 'functionings' and vary in complexity from 'being well-nourished' to 'being happy'. In contrast, 'capability' refers to the real opportunity individuals have to accomplish what they value (Sen, 1992). In other words, the difference between a capability and functioning is one between 'an opportunity to achieve and the actual achievement, between potential and outcome' (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007: 21).

Although there seems to be agreement on the definitions of capabilities and functionings, Sen's (1999) and Nussbaum's perspectives on how capabilities should be operationalised differ. Nussbaum argues that women across the world 'lack support for fundamental functions of a human life' (2011: 5), therefore capabilities should constitute 'the core of an account of minimal social justice and constitutional law' (ibid., p. 71). These 'basic constitutional principles' (ibid., p. 5) are outlined in her list of central human capabilities:

1. *Life*: being able to live life to a normal length;
2. *Bodily health*: being able to have good health; being adequately nourished; having adequate shelter;
3. *Bodily integrity*: having sexual and reproductive rights, moving freely from place to place without fear of violence; being secure against sexual assault and domestic violence;
4. *Senses, imagination and thought*: freedom of speech and expression and having opportunities to develop these through education;
5. *Emotions*: being able to have attachments to things and persons without fear, anxiety or harm;
6. *Practical reasoning*: being able to form a conception of the good; being able to reflect about one's life plans;
7. *Affiliation*: being able to associate with people different from oneself and to empathise with their circumstances; not being humiliated or degraded on account of one's race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or national origin;
8. *Other species*: being able to have a relationship with and enjoy the natural world, and to care for other species;
9. *Play*: being able to enjoy recreation and recreational resources;
10. *Control over one's environment*: having political freedom; having the right to hold property and access employment without discrimination.

While the development of capabilities lists is contested (Walker, 2006), Nussbaum's (2000) list of basic capabilities, alongside other lists of capabilities (Robeyns, 2003; Terzi, 2007; Walker, 2007), are used in this thesis not only to interpret the women's valued beings and doings, but also to interrogate the choices available to them and the freedom they have to do and be what they have reason to value (Unterhalter, 2007).

With regards to education, in the capability approach, education is considered essential - a basic capability needed for freedom, valuable to people in five different ways (Dreze and Sen, 2002: 38-40):

1. It is of intrinsic importance, as a valuable achievement in itself.
2. It is of instrumental importance, supporting people in achieving valuable functionings.
3. It plays an instrumental social role, enabling people to participate in public reasoning.
4. It plays an instrumental process role, bringing people together, thus broadening their horizons; and
5. It plays an empowering and distributive role, enabling the knowledge and skills needed for people to challenge oppression, organise politically, and widen opportunities.

In addition to considering functionings and capabilities, Walker and Unterhalter, (2007: 21) argue that

> The capability approach requires that we [...] evaluate [...] the real freedom or opportunities each student had available to choose and to achieve what she valued. Our evaluation of equality must then take account of freedom in opportunities as much as observed choices.

'Agency', therefore, is also central to the capability approach. Sen (1985: 203) employs this term to denote 'what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important' and defines 'agency achievement' as 'the realisation of goals and values [a person] has reasons to pursue, whether or not they are connected with her own well-being' (Sen, 1992: 56). Agency is characterised, therefore, as both self-regarding, and other-regarding (Crocker and Robeyns, 2009). Individual choices, however, are dependant on the opportunities available to people. As Sen (1999: xi–xii) explains

> The freedom of agency that we individually have is inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political and economic opportunities that are available to us. There is a deep complementarity between individual agency and social arrangements. It is important to give simultaneous recognition to the centrality of individual freedom and to the force of social influences on the extent and reach of individual freedom.

The factors that influence the development of capabilities and functionings are known as 'conversion factors'. Conversion factors translate an individual's resources into valued functionings (Sen, 1992). Robeyns (2017) argues that every individual has a unique profile of these factors, which can be enabling or constraining. They are generally categorised into three groups (2017: 46), namely (1) *personal factors* (e.g. age, motivation, literacy level) (2) *social factors* (e.g. gender norms) and (3) *environmental factors* (e.g. provision of public goods). However, they may also refer to skills, attitudes and abilities (Walker, 2006). Of particular importance in this thesis are the conversion factors that enable the women to succeed in education. In order to understand these factors further, I turn to the Community Cultural Wealth (2005) framework.

2.4.2. The Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) Framework

The Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) framework was originated by Yosso (2005) as a challenge to deficit views of communities of colour in the USA. This perspective presents a reconceptualization of the concept of 'cultural capital' developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1986). Bourdieu's theory suggests that the economic, political and cultural elite use particular kinds of knowledge, skills and languages to navigate society - cultural capital which is intrinsically valued within society's major institutions, including schools. Whilst intended as a critique of schooling,

> Bourdieu's concept has been coopted by deficit theorists to explain why some groups in society are more equipped with cultural capital to succeed academically and why other groups should attempt to mimic, adopt or gain such capital. (Gonzalez, 2012: 126).

Yosso (2005: 76) argues that this narrow interpretation of cultural capital is bound in notions of class and hegemony that serve to 'other' students from diverse backgrounds by asserting 'that some communities are culturally wealthy while others are culturally poor'. This cultural deficit thinking attributes low performance to students and/or their families, ignoring the deep structural inequities that exist in education and educational institutions.

To counter this deficit thinking, Yosso (2005: 77) proposes a framework that demonstrates the 'array of knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro- forms of oppression' (Yosso, 2005: 77). This perspective, termed Community Cultural Wealth (CCW), extends understanding of cultural capital to include six forms of 'cultural wealths' which are illustrated below in Figure 2.1.

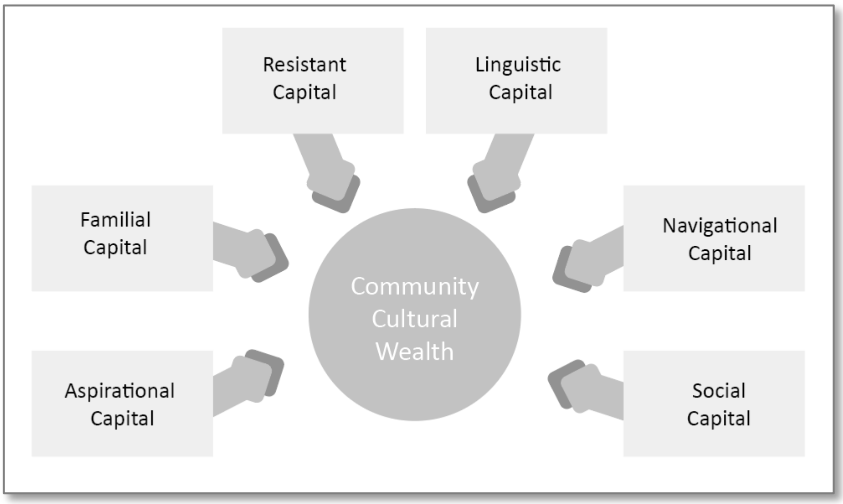
Resistant Capital
Linguistic Capital
Familial Capital
Navigational Capital
Community Cultural Wealth
Aspirational Capital
Social Capital

Figure 2.1. Community Cultural Wealth Framework (Yosso, 2005)

According to Yosso (2005:41-48) the six capitals that communities of colour possess and are:

1. Aspirational capital is 'the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future even in the face of barriers' (Yosso, 2005: 41).
2. Linguistic capital is the 'intellectual and social skills learned through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style' (Yosso, 2005: 43).
3. Social capital is 'those networks of people and community resources' (Yosso, 2005: 45).

4. ‘Familial capital’ is ‘those cultural knowledges nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition’ (Yosso, 2005: 48).
5. ‘Resistant capital’ refers to ‘those knowledges and skills cultivated through behavior that challenges inequality’ (Yosso, 2005: 48).
6. ‘Navigational capital’ is ‘the skills of maneuvering through social institutions’ (Yosso, 2005: 44).

The Community Cultural Wealth Framework has been developed since Yosso's (2005) contributions. Scholars have named further forms of wealths as 'capitals', including 'spiritual capital' (Huber, 2009), 'informational capital' (Liou, Antrop-González and Cooper, 2016) and 'institutionalised literacy capital' (Compton-Lilly and Naya, 2016). Yosso (2005) theorizes that capitals are 'not mutually exclusive or static, but . . . dynamic processes that build on one another ' (p. 77) and which can be mobilised to benefit Communities of Color. This mobilisation is of particular relevance in this study as it helps us understand how a student's cultural wealth can help them succeed in education.

2.4.2. Theoretical Fusion

In order to provide a ‘balance of stories’ (Achebe, 2003), a theoretical fusion approach was adopted as the conceptual framework in this study: a fusion of the Capability Approach and the Community Cultural Wealth (CWW) framework. The capability approach (Sen, 1992; Nussbaum, 2000) provided me with the theoretical tools to examine what the women value, interrogate the freedoms the women have to achieve their valued beings and doings, and investigate the extent to which their language learning and literacy acquisition are supported in UK government policy and ESOL provision.

In this thesis I also use the capability approach to examine the importance education has for the women and investigate the extent to which education has an impact on their wellbeing, what they have reason to value and what they aspire to be and do. Another significant aspect of the capability approach, which is of relevance to this study, is its potential to address inequality in education. Focusing on gender constraints, including the inequalities the women experience in their homes, the labour market, and society in general, interrogating the 'socio-economic and political circumstances that affect or facilitate conversion factors for capability achievement' (Cin and Walker, 2016: 138).

The Community Cultural Wealth framework (Yosso, 2005) was used to counter deficit thinking by highlighting the cultural wealths the women draw on to navigate their lives. It was also used to understand the personal conversion factors that enable the women to persist and succeed in education and, which enhance their educational aspirations despite the several unfreedoms they have experienced. Examining the women's agentic behaviour and the conversion factors that enable success is crucial to understanding how LESLLA teachers can build educational spaces where 'human flourishing' (Sen, 1992) is enabled and where there is equality of educational capability for all learners, not just those with the 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1986) Yosso (2005) argues is most often recognised, acknowledged, and valued in educational institutions.

2.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the broader political, public and educational contexts that shape the women's lived experiences. I have also provided a background of the needs, challenges and assets that LESLLA female learners bring to education and have discussed the importance of literacy in their lives. The theoretical grounding of this study was also discussed, namely a theoretical fusion of the Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) and the Capability Approach (CA).

Chapter 3

Doing Research with LESLLA Female Learners

Today I found myself rushing out of class to talk to Sadia. I entered the interview room to find her and the research mediator speaking rapidly in Pahari. Sadia was clearly agitated and worried. It took a few minutes for her to calm down but once she did, I learnt that Sadia's family had asked her not to participate in the research project. She wanted to be interviewed, though - she wanted others to know that she was happy to have been given the opportunity to study for the first time in her life. The problem, however, was that she did not know how to say any of this without appearing to be challenging her husband and his family's authority. With tears in her eyes, she asked me to call her husband. In her view, only he could give her the consent she needed to be part of the research. I felt conflicted. I did not want to Sadia to be upset but I did not feel I needed to seek her husband's permission. Had I been anticipating partnership of equality between the women and their husbands? Should I not have been? Did Sadia want to participate because I was her teacher and the one carrying out the research? Did she think she would not be able to continue studying if she did not take part in the project?

(extract from research diary – March 2015)

3.1. Introduction

I spent fifteen months, between March 2015 and June 2016, carrying out a narrative inquiry with five female LESLLA learners from Pakistan, two female LESLLA learners from India and a female research mediator who acted as an interpreter and cultural broker. In this chapter, I provide a detailed account of the methodology and research design adopted for this study. Drawing from excerpts in my research diary, like the one above, I show how collecting the data for this project involved negotiating not only differences of nationality, language, education levels and religion, but also issues of patriarchy, autonomy, and power.

3.2. Research Design

In line with other feminist scholars, I use a feminist definition of epistemological lenses, methodologies, and methods in this thesis (Harding, 1987; Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). Epistemologies are those theories of knowledge which delineate a set of assumptions about who can be agents of knowledge, what can be known, what counts as legitimate knowledge and the relationship between knowledge and being. Research methodologies are broad theoretical frameworks of how research should proceed, traditionally dichotomised as either quantitative or qualitative. Finally, methods are defined as 'techniques and procedures used for exploring social reality and producing evidence' (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002: 11). These interconnections are illustrated below in figure 3.1.

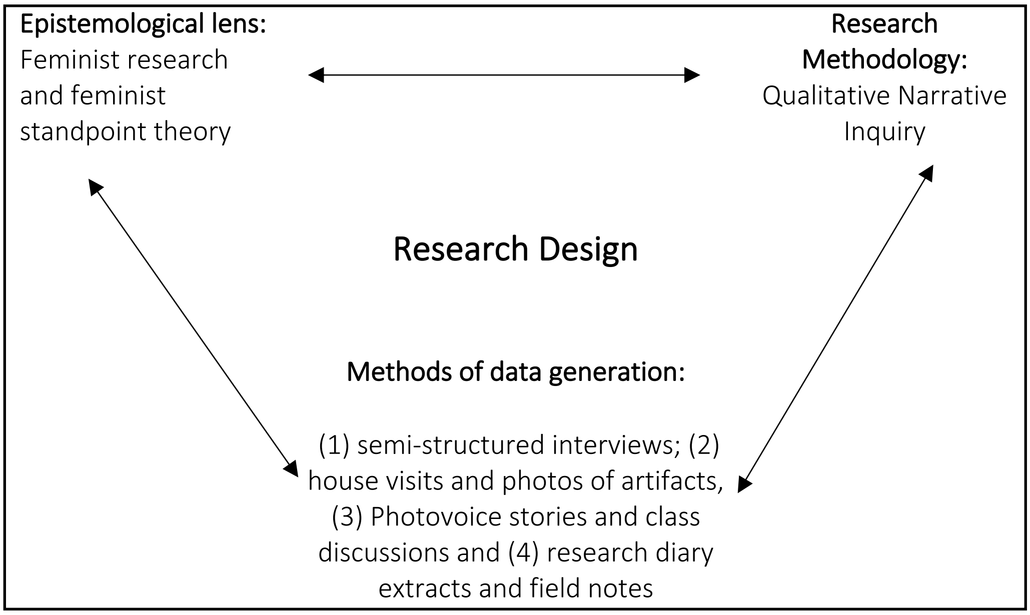
Epistemological lens:
Feminist research and feminist standpoint theory
Research Methodology:
Qualitative Narrative Inquiry
Research Design
Methods of data generation:
(1) semi-structured interviews; (2) house visits and photos of artifacts, (3) Photovoice stories and class discussions and (4) research diary extracts and field notes

Figure 3.1: Research design (adopted from Creswell and Creswell, 2018: 5)

3.2.1. Feminist research and feminist standpoint theory

This study is firmly rooted in feminism and uses feminist standpoint theory (Harding, 1987; Harding, 2004) to situate the women's lived experiences and challenge the silencing of their voices. Feminism is a complex research approach to define as it 'consists of no single set of agreed upon research guidelines or methods' (Maguire, 1987: 74). However, a common view is that feminist research moves away from positivistic, malestream sociology and towards research that documents women's lives, experiences and concerns for their benefit and advancement (McHugh, 2014). Specifically, feminist research examines the gendered context of women’s lives, exposes gender inequalities, empowers women and advocates for social change (Cosgrove and McHugh, 2000).

Feminist standpoint theories[8] propose that ‘starting off thought’ from the everyday lived experiences of women will generate less partial and less distorted accounts of society (Harding, 2004). To achieve this perspective:

> One must engage in the intellectual and political struggle necessary to see natural and social life from the point of view of that disdained activity which produces social experiences instead of from the partial and perverse perspective available from the 'ruling gender' experience of men. (Harding, 1987: 185)

In other words, women, due to their personal and social experiences as females, can offer a more accurate and objective account of their own reality. This claim rejects the view that all knowledge is equally valid (relativism) and instead argues that knowledge is situated and perspectival (Hesse-Biber, 2014). Women are not only aware of the 'dominant worldview of the society' but are also tuned into 'their own minority perspective' (Nielsen, 1990: 10). As such, they can draw on their 'double consciousness' and can see and understand 'certain features of reality from which others are obscured' (Jaggar, 2004: 60).

Feminist standpoint theory also aims to challenge power relations. Brooks and Hesse-Biber (2007: 4) argue that standpoint theory aims to 'illuminate gender-based stereotypes and biases, unearth women's subjugated knowledge, and challenge the basic structures and ideologies which oppress them’ (Brooks and Hesse-Biber, 2007: 4). In feminist standpoint theory, the relationship between knowledge and politics is central and grounding knowledge in women’s daily lives can have liberatory value (McHugh, 2014). Harding (2004) explains this proposition thus:

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[8] Feminist standpoint theory is one of three epistemological perspectives identified by Harding (1987), the other two being feminist empiricism and feminist postmodernism.

> To the extent that an oppressed group's situation is different from that of the dominant group, its dominated situation enables the production of distinctive kinds of knowledge [...] Each oppressed group can learn to identify its distinctive opportunities to turn an oppressive feature of the group's conditions into a source of critical insight about how the dominant society thinks and is structured. Thus, standpoint theories map how a social and political disadvantage can be turned into an epistemological, scientific, and political advantage (p. 7-8).

This research study is based on the tenets of feminist standpoint theory discussed above: (1) knowledge is socially and politically situated; (2) women, as minority or oppressed individuals, have a unique perspective on their own experience; and, (3) research focused on power and power relations must begin with the lives of the oppressed. This research raises important questions about how knowledge is produced: by whom, for whom, and about whom. Also, by placing the women’s subjective experiences at the centre of the inquiry, I aim to explore not only the meaning and interpretation they attach to their experiences, but also the macro-level processes that surround their lives. These include, but are not limited to, migration, citizenship, belonging, integration and access to education, processes which produce and reproduce inequalities with gendered specific implications. Finally, although critics have argued that feminist standpoint theory denies differences between women and essentialises the notion of ‘womanhood’, I argue that individuals develop knowledge that is grounded in gender, racial, ethnic, and social class differences as well as in specific contexts (Bilic, 2012).

3.2.2 A qualitative narrative inquiry

Qualitative research can be characterised as a way of knowing in which the researcher aims to gain in-depth understanding of the meanings and interpretations of its participants, rather than to produce quantitative measurements of their characteristics or behaviour (Silverman, 2016). A generic definition often found in the literature states that:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2017: 10)

As Denzin and Lincoln indicate above, qualitative research enables situatedness and contextualization, two crucial aspects for a research study that cannot be divorced from its actual social context (Barton, 1994; Street et al., 1993; Lankshear and McLaren., 1993). With regards to the experiences of the women, qualitative data has specific strengths that contribute to the research design of a study:

> Qualitative data often provides a holistic view of women's experiences. These sources have been better able to reveal the different spatio-temporal dimensions of female migration, the multiplicity of causes for their moves and the often overlapping strategies used by women migrants. It provides a flavour of the heterogeneity of migration, the range of age at which people migrate, the varying skills they bring with them, the different reasons for moving, and for staying or moving again, the social relations that facilitate migration and the regime that influence migrant trajectories. They also highlight the significance of gender as a key variable in the experience of migration. (Kofman, 2000: 14)

This research study aims to explore and provide rich descriptions of the women's lives, educational experiences and aspirations. As such, it employs a qualitative methodology, an appropriate framework for developing an in-depth understanding of their narratives (Merriam, 1998). In conducting qualitative research, I accept the underlying principle that reality, knowledge and meaning are produced, mediated and co-constructed through lived experiences (Gray, 2003) and through the interaction between the 'inquirer' and 'the inquired into' (Guba and Lincoln, 1989).

Within its qualitative nature, this research study employs a narrative approach. Like feminist and qualitative research, however, narratives and narrative inquiry do not have a single or uncontested definition. The definitions draw on various philosophical perspectives and method, such that narratives are considered ‘multivocal, ambivalent [and] contradictory’ (Trahar, 2011: 30). Despite this diversity, a fundamental tenet of narrative research is its aim to explore and understand the meanings that participants assign to stories about their lived experiences (Trahar, 2009).

3.3. Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling was used to recruit and select the seven participants in this study. Having been in contact with female LESLLA learners for many years in my role as an ESOL lecturer at a local Further Education college, I identified potential participants from among the population of migrant women with limited schooling that I knew. Gay et.al. (2006: 113) define this sampling technique as 'the process of selecting a sample that is believed to be representative of a given population'. One critical issue to take into consideration when using purposive sampling, however, is the establishment of specific criteria for the identification and selection of participants. For this feminist research study, the main criteria influencing the identification and selection of participants was seven-fold: (1) migrant, (2) women, (3) spouses, (4) with limited formal schooling, (5) learning to read and write in English, (6) currently enrolled in ESOL classes and (7) living in the East Midlands.

I acknowledge I recruited women from the classes I was teaching at the time. Permission was sought from the management team and the principal to conduct this research on their premises and with their students. After completing a risk assessment and a request form, the project was formally approved. The women did not receive any monetary incentive for taking part in the study, but to thank the women for their time and help, I taught a free Saturday reading and writing class each week (from 9 am to 12 am) for the duration of the fieldwork. Where appropriate, I reimbursed the women's bus travel cost.

Recruiting participants who are well-known to the researcher brings various benefits to qualitative studies including existing trust and confidence (Soobrayan, 2003) as well as 'insights that would otherwise not have been possible' (Craig and Huber, 2007: 255) due to knowing the context in which participants' narratives take place. This selection and recruitment technique, however, raises issues of power, coercion and exclusion. To overcome the first two ethical issues, the women were recruited from non-accredited classes, that is from classes which did not lead to an exam or had a pass/fail component. I took this decision to ensure the women did not feel coerced to participate as I had no power to give them a higher grade. Furthermore, to ensure participation was voluntary and there was no undue influence, the offer of a free lesson was only given after the women had agreed to take part in the study. It is also worth noting that during the research, the women were given repeated opportunities to qualify and negotiate their involvement in the project in order to offer them a greater degree of empowerment and minimise the hierarchical nature of my dual role of teacher/researcher.

To mitigate any sense of exclusion non-participant students may have felt, the research project was explained to all the students. In addition, non-participant students were asked to take part in the Photovoice stories and were reminded that 1-1 discussions and support were available to them in my role as their teacher.

3.4. The Women

The women who took part in this study are from Southeast Asia. The names used in this dissertation are pseudonyms and were chosen by the women to help protect their anonymity: Razia, Sanam, Refiat, Sadia, Roxanna, Sara and Sarbgit. They are first-generation migrant spouses from India and Pakistan who have settled in the East Midlands and who have lived in the UK for more than three years. Two women were from India and five were from Pakistan. Their ages ranged from thirty to fifty-seven years old and six of them had children. They are all legally married and three of them have British citizenship. They are multilingual speakers and six of them have limited fluency in spoken English. All the women have limited formal schooling and are not in paid employment. Their demographic characteristics are summarised in Table 3.1. below.

Table 3.1. – The women's demographic characteristics

Name	Age	Place of Birth	Languages Spoken (in alphabetical order)	Religion	Marital Status	Number of Children	Number of Years in the UK	Legal Status
Razia	50 years old	Kotli, Pakistan	Pahari Punjabi Urdu	Muslim	Married	Three	4 years	Family reunion visa
Sanam	45 years old	Sonmiani, Pakistan	Pahari Punjabi Urdu	Muslim	Married	Two	8 years	British citizenship
Refiat	56 years old	Gujrat, Pakistan	Punjabi Urdu	Muslim	Married	Two	12 years	British citizenship
Sadia	30 years old	Kashmir, Pakistan	Pahari	Muslim	Married	None	3 years	Indefinite Leave to Remain
Roxanna	50 years old	Islamabad, Pakistan	Punjabi Urdu	Muslim	Married	Two	12 years	Indefinite Leave to Remain
Sara	57 years old	Rajasthan, India	English Hindi Punjabi Urdu	Christian	Married	Eight	43 years	British citizenship
Sarbgit	38 years old	Jolanda, India	Hindi Punjabi	Sikh	Married	Two	7 years	Indefinite Leave to Remain

3.5. Researching cross-linguistically and cross-culturally

The women's basic command of spoken English presented a dilemma because I am not conversant in their home languages. Thus, I decided to engage in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural research by hiring a young multilingual Pakistani female graduate, known in this dissertation as 'the research mediator', to help me carry out the research.

However, conducting research with participants who speak a language different to that of the researcher's is complex and has limitations that must be acknowledged (see Temple and Young, 2004; Squires, 2008). Firstly, scholars have pointed out that representing the participants' voices with trustworthiness is difficult if a research mediator is employed. Secondly, cultural nuances may be lost in multiple processes of translation, narrowing to a certain extent the cultural diversity of the narratives. Thirdly, when research mediators report back what learners say, their interpretations may be filtered through their own lenses, thus not necessarily being bias-free. Finally, research carried out by first-language speakers may produce more in-depth data. Nevertheless, as this study centres on exploring the voices of female LESLLA learners, gaining their perspectives, even in mediated form, was deemed more important than absolute credibility. Moreover, I agree with Temple and Young (2004) who argue that linguistic barriers should not inhibit the development of knowledge or continue to disadvantage previously neglected groups.

The research mediator for this study was one of my former ESOL students, a person not known to the women. I chose to work with her not only because she spoke the same languages as the women and understood their culture, but also because of her own migration trajectory as the spouse of a British citizen. Other salient reasons were the established relationship the research mediator and I already had and her interest in improving the lives of women from Southeast Asia, an interest that arose when she worked as a literacy teacher in Karachi.

During the length of the study, the research mediator took on the following roles: (1) translated questions and answers during the interviews with the women; (2) accompanied me to the home visits, providing translations and contextual information when needed; (3) acted as a teaching assistant and interpreter during the Photovoice sessions and free Friday and Saturday classes; (4) acted as a cultural broker, helping me negotiate cultural and contextual barriers; and, (5) provided useful insights throughout the data generation phase.

Before starting data generation, the research mediator and I met several times to discuss the rationale and methodology of the research study. We also discussed at length how to conduct a semi-structured interview, how to elicit further information and her role in the research process. She was also required to adhere to the ethical principles required by the University stipulations (see Appendix 4), with particular emphasis on maintaining confidentiality, obtaining true informed consent, and ensuring non-maleficence. These ethical principles, which also apply to me as a researcher, are discussed in the next sections.

3.6. Researching ethically

Four feminist ethical practices acted as guiding principles in this study (see Rice, 2009). These are: (1) researcher responsibility (Merrick, 1999), (2) researcher reflexivity (Reger, 2001), (3) researcher accountability (Cosgrove and McHugh, 2000), and (4) researcher advocacy (Jain, 2017). Throughout the research process, I adhered to these tenets of feminist research by:

1. establishing collaborative and non-exploitative relationships with the women (Creswell, 2007);
2. immersing myself in the experiences, worldviews and challenges the women faced and respecting their ‘truths’ (Lather, 1991);
3. interrogating the way in which my emotions, identity and positionality affected the research process and shaped the knowledge produced (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002);

4. checking my interpretations with the women and grounding knowledge on their lived experiences (Harding, 2004); and,
5. developing knowledge that can be useful in advocacy and which may provide the basis for system change (Jain, 2017)

Moreover, throughout this research, I adhered to the ethical guidelines outlined by the University of Nottingham Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics (The University of Nottingham, 2013) and the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011). These broadly encompass four ethical considerations: (1) informed consent, (2) voluntary nature of participation, (3) respect for anonymity and confidentiality, and (4) protection from harm. I adhered to these ethical guidelines in the following ways:

- To ensure that the women were fully informed about the overall purpose of the research, its design and procedure, as well as any potential risks or benefits, consent forms were translated into Urdu and Hindi and were explained to the women orally and in their home languages (see Appendices 2 and 3 for the English versions of these forms).
- The voluntary nature of participation and the individual's right to withdraw at any time were communicated to each participant in person and in the documentation provided. Written consent from each was gained before embarking on the data generation and further consent was gained for the interviews and house visits to be recorded. I also implemented the concept of processual consent, negotiating participation throughout the course of the research study.
- Confidentiality was achieved by ensuring that any private information obtained during the research process was not reported. Anonymity, on the other hand, was guaranteed by concealing the identity of the women in all documents resulting from the research by using pseudonyms. Also, all electronic records pertaining to fieldwork documents, transcripts and recording were kept in password-protected computer files to ensure they were inaccessible.

- To protect the women from harm, especially distress that may occur when recalling instances of migration or memories of the women's home countries, a college counsellor was available to assist learners that may need help. What is more, I was always vigilant for any signs of stress or discomfort during the interviews and house visits to ensure that no harm came to the women (Ellis, 2007).

3.7. Emotions and unequal power dynamics

As discussed in Chapter 1, throughout the research process, I had dual positions as an 'insider/outsider', 'teacher/researcher' and 'confidant/advocate'. Being considered an insider researcher can hold many advantages (Shah, 2004), including ease of access, establishing rapport, and increasing trust. However, it can also raise ethical dilemmas for the researcher. During data generation, for example, the women in this study disclosed intimate details about their lives and asked for personal advice about their marriages, legal status and how to leave the country and retain their citizenship (see also Liamputtong, 2007). Discussing personal and sensitive information was emotional for the women and, in many cases, something they "*had not told anyone else before*." Given this context, and drawing on my experience as an ESOL teacher, I found that providing a relaxed atmosphere for women to disclose personal and sensitive information and talk about their emotions was important. I also directed the women to free and confidential services of emotional and legal support, such as the city's Law Advice Clinic, Rights of Women[9] and Womankind[10], when appropriate.

Although I was glad the women and I had established a trusting relationship, I was not always comfortable with being placed in the role of confidant and was upset at not being able to make any referrals for the women to access immediate support as the college Student Counselling Advice Service only had one member of staff working part-time. I must also acknowledge I felt angry at the lack of information the women had about their legal status, and life in general, abandoning the research process on more than one occasion if there was a pressing concern that needed immediate action. The extract from my research diary below illustrates this:

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[9] http://rightsofwomen.org.uk/
[10] https://www.womankind.org.uk/

> *I felt obliged to say something a few minutes into the interview. You cannot not have any form of ID. I stopped the interview and asked the research mediator to help me talk to Roxanna about what to do. I enlisted the help of the Learning Coach and together we listed the steps she had to follow to get a new Pakistani passport and a new residence card. We called her husband and explained the situation to him. I was surprised to hear him say she did not need either document. In his view, what she needed was a British passport - the others were just a waste of money. She was not going anywhere or doing anything until she got one, he said. I acknowledged his opinion but argued that without the other forms of ID, it was impossible to apply for a British passport or even continue studying at the college. When it seemed nothing was going to change his point of view, and it was imperative that he was supportive of her application monetarily and with his signature, I mentioned that changes in the welfare system may mean he could no longer claim for any benefits on her behalf. This swayed his views. I was more advocate than researcher (or teacher!) today*.
>
> (extract from research diary – June 2015)

Throughout the fieldwork I also felt conscious of the need to negotiate and maintain boundaries (Hewitt, 2007), which was difficult as in the above example. During this period, various situations made me reflect on my role as a researcher, my own perceptions and ideas, and the expectations women had of my doctoral study and our relationship, as evident in the research diary extract at the beginning of this Chapter. Another example is illustrated in the extract below:

> *I was surprised when I saw Sara outside my classroom. I was not expecting her until Wednesday. She was frantic. She wanted me to drop everything and go with her to her daughter's house immediately. Her daughter had called her the previous night and told her she wanted to kill herself. She wanted to go and check that she was OK but since her daughter had had a massive fight with everyone in the family, nobody wanted to accompany her. I was honoured that she considered me a friend and a trustworthy person, but I could not go with her. I was her teacher, not a family friend. This was a family matter and an urgent one. I advised her to call the police and ensure her daughter was well. She was really disappointed. I hope she understood my position. (extract from research diary - September 2015)*

This extract clearly illustrates how important Sara found our bond. Whilst it is clear I had established rapport and trust, I found myself under immense personal pressure. I was concerned about Sara's daughter's safety, and about Sara's emotional distress, but I did not feel I could do what Sara wanted. I remained anxious about my response for quite some time and worried I had not done enough to help Sara or her daughter, although the advice given to researchers is to signpost to relevant agencies (Parker and Ulrich, 1990).

This extract also illustrates the first and second aspects of power identified by Wolf (1996) and discussed in Chapter 1, that is, (1) the power differences stemming from the positionalities of the researcher and the researched, and (2) the power I exerted during the research process. It is clear I defined the research relationship - I created the boundaries of my relationship with Sara and determined what was acceptable and what was not. This led to an asymmetry of expectation. Although I would describe our relationship as one of teacher/student and researcher/participant, during the research study these boundaries were inadvertently blurred, and Sara's expectations were raised. In an attempt to carry out a feminist research study that was caring, I gave Sara the impression that she could take the boundary further: she saw me as an advocate and a friend. While it could be argued that, generally, wrong impressions do not work out worse for one person or another, Sara did not get the benefit she was expecting, that is, a friend's support during a difficult family matter or the support of an advocate in navigating the health and police system.

Gaining an 'emotional connection' (Blakely, 2007) with Sara helped me understand her unique perspective but the extract from my research diary illustrates how this was not a relationship of complete equality. I must stress, however, that participants are not powerless in a research study. Sara could have withdrawn her goodwill by leaving the study, but she did not. In my view, although there were clear issues of power in this instance, this did not affect the research findings.

3.8. Methods of data generation

Four narrative research tools, including: (1) semi-structured interviews; (2) house visits and photographs of artifacts; (3) Photovoice stories and class discussions; and (4) research diary extracts and fieldnotes were used in this study. Overall, the data collected consists of eight hours of home visits, twelve hours of transcribed interviews, three Photovoice stories and over 120 photographs taken by the women, as well as several photographs of artifacts, field notes, and research diary entries documenting insights and questions that emerged from conducting this project. Table 3.2. summarises the level of participation of the women in the study and Table 3.3. shows how the different methods of data generation were used to answer the research questions. In the next sections, I discuss these narrative tools.

Table 3.2. – The women's level of participation in the study

Name	Interviews	House visits and photographs of artifacts	Photovoice stories	Class discussions
Razia	Y	Y	Y	Y
Sanam	Y	Y	Y	Y
Refiat	Y	N	N	N
Sadia	Y	N	N	N
Roxanna	Y	Y	N	Y
Sara	Y	Y	N	Y
Sarbgit	Y	Y	Y	Y

Table 3.3. – How methods of data generation were used to answer the research questions and sub-questions

Research questions and sub-questions	Interviews	House visits and photos of artifacts	Photovoice stories and class discussions	Diary extracts and field notes
1. What were the experiences of the women before migrating to the UK (in terms of their childhoods, education and marriages)? a. What cultural wealths did they draw on? b. What structural conditions enabled or constrained these experiences?	Y	N	N	Y
2. What have the experiences of the women been since settling in the UK (in terms of their perceptions of the country, access to formal education, family life and English language and literacy use)? a. What cultural wealths do they draw on? b. What structural conditions enable or constrain these experiences?	Y	Y	N	Y
3. What aspirations do the women have for their futures? a. What capabilities and functionings do the women value? b. What cultural wealth can the women draw on to achieve what they value? c. What structural conditions might enable or constrain the women's freedom to achieve what they value?	Y	N	N	Y
4. How can the women's accounts of their own lives and what they value be used to inform my teaching practice and LESLLA teaching and learning?	Y	Y	N	Y
5. How effective are innovative practices, such as Photovoice and Translanguaging, in nurturing the women's capabilities and uncovering their cultural wealths?	N	N	Y	Y

3.8.1. Interviews

Interviews can be defined as construction sites of knowledge in which the outcome is a co-production between the interviewer and the interviewee (Reinharz, 1992). Another useful way of understanding them is in terms of a continuum between structured and unstructured types. The interviews used in this study were semi-structured and in this type of interview, an interview schedule consisting of a list of topics without fixed wording or ordering is prepared in advance and used as a checklist. According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000), using semi-structured interviews has several advantages, namely (1) eliciting further discussion using open-ended questions; (2) allowing opportunities for clarification; and (3) offering researchers access to people's ideas, thoughts and memories in their own words, rather than in the words of the researcher. Semi-structured interviews, however, are not without criticisms and various weaknesses have been cited in educational literature, including: (1) not permitting the interviewer to pursue topics or issues of interest that were not anticipated when the interview guide was elaborated; (2) obtaining different responses from the same group of participants and (3) difficulty in analyzing the depth of the responses (Reinharz, 1992).

This study employed semi-structured interviews to explore the women’s pre- and post- migration lives as well as their future aspirations by talking about their lived experiences as migrant spouses. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and audio recorded with the expressed and voluntary consent of the women. They lasted between 40 and 90 minutes and all women were interviewed more than once. The women were asked to respond to several questions related to their lives in general, their previous educational experiences, their migration trajectories, language use and literacy practices at home and outside of college, their lives in the UK and their hopes and dreams for the future. The interview schedule (see Appendix 1) was translated into Urdu and Hindi and piloted with an Entry 1 learner. The pilot semi-structured interview was a success, which is why the response to one of the questions in the first interview we carried out was unexpected:

> *It was evident by the time we had to simplify the question about her dreams and aspirations growing up that I had not considered Roxanna's level of formal schooling and her life experience in enough depth. The research mediator tried her best to provide the participant with further clarification in Pahari and Urdu to no avail. Roxanna struggled to understand that dreams were something other than thoughts you had during your sleep and the concepts of aspirations and hopes for the future seemed foreign to her. In the end, we provided Roxanna with some examples, but I wonder if her answer was just an attempt to satisfy us. I do not think that what we encountered today was just a significant difference in levels of education. No, this is more akin to what Watson (2002) refers to as an 'abyss between ways of living and knowing'*
>
> (extract from research diary – April 2015)

Following the difficulty Roxanna had understanding the questions she was being asked, the research mediator and I worked on simplifying, inserting and combining questions to ensure the women understood the questions and were able to express their ideas, thoughts, and memories. I acknowledge I did not consider my own capitalist views when designing the interview schedule, i.e. dreams and hopes about the future being equivalent to progress, change and personal achievement. Since the women were ESOL learners known to me, I was able to keep the right pace of English depending on their level. Sara, Sarbgit, Sanam and Refiat answered several questions in English and switched to their mother tongue when they felt they could not express their thoughts accurately in English.

The use of semi-structured interviews offered me some control over how the questions were constructed. On several occasions, I formed new questions throughout the interview and in others, the women decided to raise topics important to them. I had decided early in the research to let them speak about any topics they were passionate about or those they did not understand and had questions about. Even though I took this stance, I was not prepared for some of the issues the women raised and the emotional impact they had on me:

> *We knew Sadia did not have any children, so we had not expected to discuss this topic. For her, however, this was a salient issue. She communicated her grief and pain at knowing she could never have any children due to her husbands' severe disability and her feelings of loneliness, guilt, and failure at not being a 'normal woman'. We stopped the interview as Sadia was visibly distressed, comforted her and waited until she felt better to continue. For the rest of the interview, I had to hold back the tears, though. Sadia did not know about her husband's severe disability until her wedding day… she was brought here basically to be his personal nurse. The interview was enormously distressing for me - I burst into tears in the car. The unfairness of it all and her desire to be a mother… I cannot stop thinking about her life.*
>
> *(extract from research diary – March 2015)*

3.8.2. Home visits, fieldnotes and photographs of artifacts

Home visits were carried out as part of the narrative tools used in this study. They are a form of participant observation, which Alkinson and Hammersley (1998) describe as a systematic description of events, behaviours, and/or artifacts in a chosen social setting. The aim of visiting the women's home was to learn more about their cultural wealths (see Chapter 2). Carrying out the home visits, looking at their reading and writing texts and listening to their stories brought a greater understanding of how the women's capitals and capabilities were being promoted or constrained outside college.

I only completed five home visits as Sadia and Refiat decided not to participate in this part of the study. When explaining the home visits to the women, I asked to observe everyday interactions. However, the women did not accept this request - they invited the research mediator and me into their homes for a meal and to meet their families. During the home visits, I asked the women to show me what they read and write and the place where they do so. I made notes of what they consider to be appropriate and accessible reading material, what their everyday literacy routine entails and the kinds of texts they write. I also made notes of how texts in their mother tongue were used within the home space and asked the women to provide further information about them. The spatial distribution of reading and writing materials and equipment was also of importance. I noted the location of literacy supplies such as pencils, books, and writing paper and of computers and iPads and made notes of the texts that were displayed on the walls of their homes and of text that was found in their neighbourhoods. I also photographed texts available to the women including religious texts, children's books, letters, leaflets, worksheets and writing samples to document language and literacy learning.

3.8.3 Research diary extracts

I wrote several research diary entries throughout the research study. Most of these notes and recordings were not made in situ. Instead, I documented and reflected on the research at the end of the day. These research diary entries describe my interactions with the women, conversations I had with the research mediator, 'critical incidents' that happened during the home visits and my own reactions and assumptions.

3.8.4. Photovoice Stories

Photovoice was used to provide the women with an opportunity to document their individual realities (Wang and Burris, 1997) and share their stories. An additional aim of adopting this pedagogical practice was the use of digital resources to improve print literacy and linguistic skills (Strawn and Monama, 2012). I used an adapted version of Photovoice, a participatory photography research method anchored in feminist theory and critical pedagogy. Photovoice, which was developed by Wang and Burris (1997), is 'a process by which people can identify, represent and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique' (p. 369). Its main aims are empowering participants through critical analysis of social problems and collective action, following the Freirian literacy empowerment model (Freire, 1970) and increasing awareness of issues through public displays. Photovoice has been adopted with participants with a migrant background as a teaching, advocacy and research tool, by, for example, eliciting their perspectives, identifying their concerns, fostering their agency, reframing identity and enhancing learning (Lypka, 2020).

Only Razia, Sarbgit and Sanam took part in the participatory photographic element of the study. After they had confirmed their interest, the research mediator and I invited them to attend several Photovoice meetings. Overall, we facilitated eight meetings of one hour each over eight weeks. Initial meetings included an information session where the cameras were distributed, instructions given on camera use, and a discussion of ethics and safety.

Razia, Sarbgit and Sanam were asked to take between 10 and 20 photographs using Kodak disposable cameras with film, equipment chosen due to its low cost and ease of use. The women were asked to take photographs of objects that illustrated aspects of their educational experiences, language use and literacy practices. However, Razia, Sarbgit and Sanam asked if they could take photographs of their families instead. I explained to them that this was not part of the study, but Razia emphasised that their families were an essential part of their lives, and as such, ought to be photographed. Following Wang and Redwood-Jones (2001), I decided to stop trying to influence or attempt to pre-select the content of their photos. Instead, it was agreed the women could take photographs of both people and objects. The women's desire to photograph their loved ones was also experienced by the participants in Strawn and Monama's study (2012, p. 544):

> I expected the learners to come back with an array of photographs following a single theme subject to collective interpretation in the Freirian tradition. That did not happen: give a woman a camera and she will take pictures of her babies and grandbabies. I set my agenda aside. They were supposed to be taking pictures of what was important in their lives, and clearly, family is of central importance! They were also gaining experience as photographers.

To ensure the Photovoice aspect of the research study was conducted ethically, I instructed the women to ask for permission before they photographed any family members, friends, or acquaintances. The women gave the people they had photographed information sheets and consent forms, but not everyone was able to understand these. Therefore, I sought verbal consent in English or in other languages (with the help of the research mediator and an Arabic speaker) on the phone. I also asked the women to sign a consent form for their children to be photographed. Some concerns remain, though, particularly concerns related to the 'practice of power' (Prins, 2010, p. 435) between me and the women's friends and acquaintances, which include other students at the college who were not part of the study. Harley (2012: 334), for instance, asks, 'Is getting consent really enough? To what extent can the subjects of the photographs taken in [a] project really be said to be in a position to exercise full choice in the matter?' In the thesis I include photos of the women and their families, as well as objects which are important to them, because these make the women's lives and accounts more vivid for the reader.

With regards to operating the cameras, Sarbgit knew how to use this technology and Razia and Sanam learned the basic skills in a short space of time. The disposable cameras were collected during the third Photovoice meeting and were developed at a local business. Photos were printed, and digital copies were made for data storage; however, several photos lacked clarity, so the women asked for an opportunity to produce better pictures. This was agreed and the women were given new disposable cameras. The research mediator and I explained how to take better pictures before the women's second attempt: we highlighted the importance of good lighting, taught the women how to make sure photographs are not out of focus, and reminded them not to place their fingers over the lens. Overall, the project resulted in over 120 photographs, a small selection of which are included in Chapter 7.

3.9. Translation and transcriptions

Following Patton's (2002) recommendation, the interviews and house visits were recorded using a digital audio-recorder. These were carried out in English, with the research mediator providing translations from Pahari, Punjabi and Urdu, where necessary. These translations were, at times, summaries of what was actually said, and at times what the research mediator asked was not what I had asked. In order to ensure the women's voices were captured as accurately as possible, and to mitigate any issues of misrepresentation, the researcher mediator and I met after each interview and house visit for a 'translation and debriefing' session in which we would listen to the recordings in order to find gaps in the interviews, identify any questions that needed to be asked again, write follow-up questions and add our insights about the sessions. These conversations were recorded, too. I transcribed the first interview, but this process proved to be too long given that the information from the 'translation and debriefing' sessions needed to be transcribed too, and added to the transcripts before the translations could be confirmed. Therefore, I employed a professional transcription service, which undertook a non-disclosure agreement (see Appendix 6), to transcribe the interviews and house visits. These transcripts were checked closely by me before I added a second layer of transcript from the 'translation and debriefing' sessions. An example of this process can be seen in tables 3.4 to 3.7 on the next pages:

Table 3.4 - Example 1: Wrong question asked (highlighted in yellow)

	Information given in English	Information given in Pahari (translated to English during the 'translation and debriefing' sessions)
Alicia:	What is your immigration status at the moment?	
Research Mediator:		What is your status here?
Sadia:	My husband, marriage sponsor	
Alicia:	Is that… you've got a spouse visa?	
Sadia:	Yes, spouse visa.	
Alicia:	And, mm… is that… do you have indefinite leave to remain or limited leave to remain?	
Research Mediator:		Do you want to live here forever?
Sadia:	Mm… yes…	
Alicia:	Yes, to which question?	
Sadia:	Yes	

Table 3.5 - Example 2: Information not translated during the interview (highlighted in yellow)

Information given in English		Information given in Pahari (translated to English during the 'translation and debriefing' sessions)
Alicia:	Sadia, I want to ask you some questions about your childhood. Tell me about your childhood. Where did you live when you were a child?	
Research Mediator:		When you were a child, where did you live?
Sadia:		In the same place where my parents are at the moment, Kotli, Kashmir.
Research Mediator:	In the same place where there are still her parents… her parents are…	
Alicia:	And what is your fondest memory of those years?	
Sadia:		What is she saying?
Research Mediator:		What is your fondest memory of those years?
Sadia:		Plenty of things, plenty of memories from my childhood. How I was… I haven't forgotten anything from my childhood… All of those times I spent with my parents and brothers and sisters. And the poverty in my past. I will never forget it.
Research Mediator:	Thank, thank you.	
Research Mediator:	She's saying she has lots of memories about those years and especially the time when she spent with her parents and her brother and sisters.	

Table 3.6 - Example 3: Summary provided during interview (highlighted in yellow)

	Information given in English	Information given in Pahari (translated to English during the 'translation and debriefing' sessions)
Alicia:	When you were little, what were your dreams and aspirations growing up?	
Research Mediator:		What was your dream when you were a little girl? What did you want to do when you grew up?
Sadia:		I wanted to look after my parents. I never wanted to come here but when I came here, I didn't want to break my relationship. I am committed to him. I don't want to break my relationship. Before I came here, I didn't know my in-laws. Family is not good.
Research Mediator:		Alright.
Sadia:		But I am still committed to him. I don't want to let my parents down. I don't want to hear from my parents: why are you breaking your relationship? That's why I am trying to continue with this relationship. Hopefully.
Research Mediator:	She wants to help her parents. That's her dream. And she doesn't want to come here. Never. And umm… but umm… she's here, unfortunately or fortunately.	

Table 3.7 - Example 4: Additional question asked by the research mediator but not translated during the interview (highlighted in yellow)

	Information given in English	Information given in Pahari (translated to English during the 'translation and debriefing' sessions)
Alicia:	Does she support them financially?	
Research Mediator:		Who supports them financially?
Sadia:		Me. I support them.
Research Mediator:		Where's your brother? What does he do?
Sadia:		My brothers are doing some casual jobs in Pakistan.
Research Mediator:	She financially supports them.	

The accuracy of the translations was confirmed by a work colleague who speaks the three languages (hereby known as 'the independent translator'), who was also required to adhere to the ethical principles required by the University stipulations (see Appendix 5). While back-translation is suggested in the literature as the best way to ensure trustworthiness, Squires (2008) suggests that translations cannot be performed objectively and therefore, should be critically reviewed for conceptual equivalence instead. All interviews and house visits were critically evaluated, and final transcripts (after the 'debriefing and translation' information was added) were compared to the interview recordings to determine the accuracy of the translation. Because of the difference in English proficiency between the research mediator and the independent translator, some differences were found. However, the most relevant meaning was clear from the translations provided by the research mediator, so no changes were made to the final transcripts.

3.10. Data analysis

Analysis of narrative data starts immediately as an iterative part of data collection. In the thesis, I used Thompson's (2012) three stage process: analysis, interpretation, and theorization. I employed a 'thematic analysis' (Riessman, 2008) or 'analysis of narratives' (Polkinghorne, 1995, cited in Creswell, 2007), paying attention to 'what' was said, focusing on the 'told' rather than on the 'telling' (Riessman, 2008). This was not a linear process – there were multiple iterations of coding, analysis, and rewriting, where several themes and codes emerged from the raw data.

In line with my feminist stance, it was important that the codes were drawn from the women's narratives, so the first stage of coding involved reading the transcripts and identifying key themes. Table 3.8 shows the codes that arose from the first iteration of coding the women's childhood memories:

Table 3.8 – Women's childhood memories: first iteration of coding

Childhood memories		
Emotional response to questions	Poverty	Family relationships
- happiness (loved my childhood) - sadness (memories of poverty) - longing (miss my family) - distress / anxiety (there was nothing to eat)	- hunger / malnutrition - excessive work - working in the fields despite gender norms	- good relationship with parents - hardworking parents - parental love - friendships

The second stage of coding involved using the Community Cultural Wealth and Capability Approach to identify cultural wealths, capabilities (or lack thereof) and other relevant concepts (e.g. conversion factors, adaptive preferences, agency). Table 3.9 shows the codes that arose from the second iteration of coding the women's childhood memories:

Table 3.9 – Women's childhood memories: second iteration of coding

Childhood memories		
Theoretical framework	Codes	Notes
Cultural wealths	Familial capital	Parental love in all transcripts Razia – Talking and cooking with mum
	Resistant capital	Sara – Mother selling fruit despite gendered norms – agency? Refiat – Working in the field despite gendered norms
	Navigational capital	Sara – Mother selling fruit outside the school where she knew she would have customers
Capabilities	Capability Deprivation	Poverty experienced by all the women
	Not being adequately nourished	Razia and Sadia had nothing to eat some days
	Not being able to have good health / having mental well-being	Hunger / being malnourished / poverty had an effect on their wellbeing e.g. no stress when there was food
	Not having time-autonomy	Refiat and her family worked in the fields all day long to have something to eat
	Affiliation / Emotional attachments	Evidence of parental love in all transcripts

The transcripts were then condensed into short narrative extracts. These are presented in the thesis without any grammatical or vocabulary errors to reflect the women's fluency in their home languages. If answers were given by the women in English, these are presented verbatim without correction. Table 3.10 provides an example of coding a transcript and the narrative that emerged from this section:

Table 3.10 – Example of a transcript extract that has been coded and its corresponding narrative extract.

Extract from Refiat's interview transcript (after debriefing and verification)		
Alicia:	Refiat, tell us about your childhood.	Memories of past experiences
Research mediator:	She's saying: when we were small, me and my brother and sisters, we were poor, my parents were poor. They worked on a field all day long. They had some cattle as well.	Poverty Capability deprivation Excessive work needed to survive / not having time autonomy / impact of excessive work on physical and mental health
Alicia:	What is your fondest memory of those years?	
Research mediator:	She's saying: although we were poor, but still we had enough food to eat because our parents raised our own crops like rice, wheat and some of the vegetables as well, so although we're poor but still we're happy.	Resistant capital Familial capital
Alicia:	Did you also harvest some of the crops, did you work in the field?	
Refiat:	Yes. I liked it. My mum used to work in the fields as well, she loved it.	Despite gender norms/cultural expectations
Research mediator:	I was happy with my family, I liked to pick the melon from field and bring home and cut it and eat together.	
When we were small, my brother, five sisters and I, were poor. My parents were poor - they worked in the field all day long. They had some cattle as well. Everyone in the village was poor but we worked hard. We had enough food to eat because our parents raised our own crops like rice, wheat, and some vegetables. I worked in the field and my mum used to work in the fields, too. We both enjoyed harvesting the crops. I was happy working with my family. I liked to pick the melon from the field, bring it home and cut it and eat it together. (Refiat)		

3.11. Markers of Goodness

Several qualitative researchers have proposed criteria to counteract positivists' assertions that qualitative inquiry is a 'soft science', one in which 'researchers have no way to verify their truth statements' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 8), including concepts such as transferability, generalizability, ontological authenticity, and reflexivity (e.g. Creswell, 2002; Lincoln, 1995; Patton, 2002; Spencer et. al., 2003). In this research study, two markers of goodness (Tracy, 2010) were used to validate its findings, namely credibility and ethical considerations.

According to Tracy (2010: 842), to achieve credibility or trustworthiness, three practices must be adhered to: thick description, triangulation and member reflections. Methodological triangulation, which involves using multiple data sources and methods to corroborate findings (Lather, 1986), was achieved through the use of several narrative tools, including: (1) semi-structured interviews, (2) house visits and photos of artifacts, (3) Photovoice stories and class discussions, and (4) research diary extracts and field notes. Triangulation, whether methodological or not, is necessary to explore the different facets of a complex phenomenon and add richness, breadth and depth to an inquiry, but also, in terms of feminist research, to uncover subjugated knowledge by identifying the 'dissonant gap' in the findings (Hesse-Biber, 2012).

The second practice needed to achieve credibility involves member reflections. According to Lindolf and Taylor (2002: 242), member reflections 'takes findings back to the field in order to determine whether the participants recognize them as true or accurate'. This practice not only seeks to demonstrate a correspondence between the researcher's findings and the understanding of the participants, but in term of feminist research, it also allows for an opportunity for collaboration and further reflection. I knew that I ran the risk of misrepresenting the women's voices because of my own preconceived notions and biases (see discussion in Chapter 1). To mitigate this risk, I shared their narratives with them for feedback, read in their home languages by the research mediator, and asked whether or not I had honoured their voices and captured their ‘truths’, in a process which Clandinin and Connelly (2000) refer to as ‘back and forthing’.

Ethics, the second marker of goodness to be employed in this research study, refers to the ‘moral deliberations, choices and accountability on the part of researchers throughout the research process’ (Edwards and Mauthner, 2002: 14).

3.12. Research limitations

This study is limited by the small number of women that took part. This restriction in the study’s scope means that the findings cannot be extended to male LESLLA learners, more advanced ESOL students or the broader population of migrant women with emerging English language and literacy skills in the United Kingdom. Moreover, this study was limited to students attending ESOL classes in the East Midlands. As such, it cannot make a claim for the generalizability or transferability found in positivist-oriented research. Instead, this study seeks to draw strength from providing a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the women’s lives, capabilities, capital wealths, agency and well-being, stressing that each situation is unique, every journey is different, and each narrative reflects the women’s personal and contextual background as well as their specific circumstances in this country.

A second limitation of this study is the use of interpreters to understand female LESLLA learners who only have a very basic command of spoken English. Dominelli (2004: 517) notes that language is ‘a means of communication, a way of structuring our understanding of our role in the world or situations, the social relations that we are positioned within and the power relations elaborated in and through our interaction with each other.’ This conceptualization highlights the complexities and limitations of conducting research with participants who speak a language different to that of the researcher's, in particular, representing the participants' voices with trustworthiness. As the research was carried out in the women's home languages and this thesis was written in English, certain cultural nuances were lost, thus narrowing to a certain extent the cultural diversity of the narratives. Also, when the research mediator reported back what the women said, her interpretations were filtered through her own lenses, thus not necessarily being bias-free. Nevertheless, as this study is centered on exploring the voices of a small group of Indian and Pakistani female LESLLA learners, gaining their perspectives, even in mediated form, was more important than absolute credibility.

3.13. Conclusion

I started this chapter by presenting my epistemological lenses and discussing how feminist research, feminist standpoint theory and narrative inquiry underpin this study. Next, I discussed how the women were recruited before I examined the methods of data collection. I also explored how the data was analysed and how I strove to achieve trustworthiness. Then, I considered the complex process of conducting feminist narrative research as a teacher/researcher who is both an insider and an outsider and problematised the role of the research mediator. Finally, I outlined the limitations of this small-scale inquiry.

Chapter 4

Life Before the UK

My life has been really hard. We will talk about it today… I will tell you about my childhood, my dreams and being here – being British. It's a big story but I want to tell it.

(Sara)

4.1. Introduction

Because 'woman is a category which is classed and raced and produced through power relations and through struggle across different sites in space and time', Skeggs (1997: 27) highlights the importance of understanding how women experience their lives. The three chapters interpreting the participants' accounts are organised chronologically. Chapter 4 presents details of experiences prior to immigration to the UK; Chapter 5 explores the women's lives from immigration to the time of this study; and Chapter 6 details the participants' future aspirations.

In this Chapter, I will explore the lived experiences of the seven women in this study – as defined by Sara above – from "*childhood*" to "*being here*", by focusing on their childhoods, education and arranged marriages. I will explore the aspects of the women's lives in India and Pakistan which have contributed to their cultural wealths and have influenced their investment in education and future aspirations. I will also discuss the unfreedoms the women experienced in their home countries and identify the factors which played a detrimental role in their capability to be educated. Finally, I will focus on the women's level of agency in the context of their arranged marriages.

The questions that lead the analysis for this chapter are: *What were the experiences of the women before migrating to the UK? What cultural wealths did they draw on? What structural conditions enabled or constrained these experiences?*

4.2. Memories of past experiences

Chamberlain and Leydesdorff (2004: 228) argue – rightly in my view - that:

> 'Migrants, perhaps more than many people, are made by their memories of their birthplace, their homeland, those left behind – interruptions in their life narratives that require resequencing, remodelling and reinterpreting as the newcomers incorporate and surpass their pasts.'

And yet, 'resequencing, remodelling and reinterpreting' one's memories and 'surpassing [one's] past' can be painful and emotional. Thus, for some of the women in the study, some memories were too difficult to discuss, and they preferred to remain silent, strongly declining to discuss certain issues or choosing to start with their lives in the UK:

Alicia:	*Can you tell me about your life in Pakistan?*
Sanam:	*No…I don't want to talk about that. I don't want to say. We are here now – it does not matter.*

Strong emotions were not only attached to Sanam's experiences in Pakistan. Discussing their childhoods evoked tears of happiness, sadness, and longing from all the women.

Alicia:	*I want to ask you a few questions about your childhood. Can you tell me about your childhood?... Sorry, are you OK?*
Research mediator:	*She's a bit emotional. She lived in the… Sorry, Alicia, she cannot continue – she misses it too much.*

Time, memories, feelings, and past experiences are undoubtedly interrelated in migration processes. The women's recollections of their lives in India and Pakistan, conceived whilst living in the UK, make up an important part of how they live and experience their transnational homes. Whether the past evokes nostalgia or painful memories, such strong feelings can have a profound influence on the women's identities, sense of belonging, engagement with British society and future aspirations. While a longer relationship with the participants might have allowed for further development of their 'narrative capital' (Watts, 2008 – see discussion Chapter 7) - since not telling a story that contains or produces pain or suffering is not a permanent, unchangeable state – accepting their disinclination to answer my questions was an ethical imperative (see Chapter 3). Therefore, in the next sections, I discuss the aspects of the women's stories they chose to share with me, illustrating the complexity of their experience and the tensions they encountered and negotiated in their homelands.

4.3. Childhood memories: poverty and happiness

Life in Pakistan was portrayed by Refiat, Sadia and Razia as one of poverty, though not of unhappiness:

> *When we were small, my brother, five sisters and I, were poor. My parents were poor - they worked in the field all day long. They had some cattle as well. Everyone in the village was poor but we worked hard. We had enough food to eat because our parents raised our own crops like rice, wheat, and some vegetables. I worked in the field and my mum used to work in the fields, too. We both enjoyed harvesting the crops. I was happy working with my family. I liked to pick the melon from the field, bring it home and cut it and eat it together.*
>
> *(Refiat)*

> *I have a lot of happy memories about my childhood, especially the time I spent with my parents, brothers, and sisters. But the poverty in my past, I will never forget it. Some days we had nothing to eat.*
>
> *(Sadia)*

> *My childhood was very, very nice. My friend, toys... I used to play with dolls and other toys, a very nice childhood. My mum was very nice. She cooked food for me. I am happy with my childhood. I had one friend and she was there, so everything was happy. My happiest memory is all the playing time there, talking with my Mum and cooking with my Mum. With happiness, there was no stress. But sometimes there was no money. Sometimes there was nothing to eat.*
>
> *(Razia)*

Refiat, Sadia and Razia's description of their childhood provides insight into their lived experience of poverty. They describe being poor as being unable to meet their basic needs: Sadia and Razia talk about the hunger that their families experienced, and Refiat about the excessive work her family had to do to survive. Poverty is multi-dimensional and as Sen (1992: 109) argues, does not only involve deprivation of monetary resources – it is deprivation of basic capabilities: 'from such elementary physical ones as being well nourished, being adequately clothed and sheltered, avoiding preventable morbidity, and so forth, to more complex social achievements such as taking part in the life of the community, being able to appear in public without shame, and so on' (Sen, 1995: 15). Whilst the women did not talk about experiencing a sense of exclusion or shame in these extracts, they allude to these feelings when discussing their post-migration experiences (see Chapter 5).

The women's experiences of poverty resonate with those of the participants in the '*Voices of the Poor'* study (Narayan et al., 1999) who also described poverty in terms of hunger, fear of hunger, and suffering from seeing their children go hungry. Other participants in the study, particularly women, talked about the constant exhaustion of overwork and not having time to rest and restore themselves for work, which children may not see because their mothers protect them from it. Not 'being adequately nourished', 'being able to have good health' (Nussbaum, 2001: 78), 'having time-autonomy', 'being able to take care of themselves and others' or 'having mental well-being' (Robeyns, 2003: 72) had negative consequences for Refiat, Sadia and Razia. Refiat's double burden of work inside and outside her home, for instance, affected her well-being and her ability to expand her capabilities and access education (see next section). On the other hand, Razia and Sadia's experience of malnutrition impacted their physical and psychological well-being, in addition to affecting their access to schooling (see next section). Periods of hunger were described by the women as "*painful experiences*", and these recollections still cause Razia and Sadia distress and anxiety. This highlights the women's mixed experience of childhood moments – moments of happiness but also times of distress.

Drawing on the educational literature, it seems clear that that socio-cultural, political, and religious views of gender in a patriarchal society, such as Pakistan, played a significant role in the inequalities experienced by these women. For instance, Okin (2003: 305) argues that women and girls – not men and boys - 'still do the vast majority of the unpaid family work, whether growing food, minding children, tending the sick, cooking, cleaning, or often the extremely onerous and time-consuming tasks of fetching fuel and water', while Barret and Lentz (2010) highlight that food insecurity and vulnerability in Southeast Asia is gendered: when men do not provide women with food, they are left economically and socially vulnerable.

Despite these 'unfreedoms', the women talked about happy childhood memories, framing their childhoods in the context of their family relationships and friendships. Refiat, Sadia and Razia enjoyed the love and care of their families and interacted and played with their siblings and mothers - Razia with a friend, too. According to Nussbaum (2011: 33) the capability to 'experience emotions' and 'have emotional attachments' to others is one of the most basic dimensions of human well-being, and should not be understated. As Kaukko and Wilkinson (2020: 1184) argue, 'learning particular emotions as practices, such as loving one's family in times of adversity, is crucial in relation to building necessary relatings of trusting and caring.' Although Refiat, Sadia and Razia's families did not have much 'economic capital' (Bourdieu, 1986), they were born into families that provided them with familial, aspirational, resistant and navigational capitals (Yosso, 2005:79), cultural wealth which influenced their 'emotional, moral, educational and occupational consciousness' and which contributed to their resilience to overcome challenges and barriers in their 'new' lives in the UK (see discussion in the next Chapter).

Growing up in India, Sara and Sarbgit, also experienced poverty and hardship, and like Refiat, Sadia and Razia, stressed how their childhood happiness was tied to the parental love they experienced:

> *My life has been really hard, but I had a good childhood. My father was a very, very loving father. He wanted to have a daughter because he had nine sons, and he begged God to give him a daughter. When I was born, my father was so happy he was dancing. My mother was scared because in Indian families you need a boy to carry on the family name, but my dad loved me.*
>
> *(Sara)*

> *I was very naughty when I was a child. I used to go to my friend's house and play with small pebbles and with sand – we used to put the sand on each other's heads. One of my happiest memories is when I was little. I always slept with my mum, and I used to put my leg on her at night. Many times, she said to me, "When I am not here, how will you sleep?"*
>
> *(Sarbgit)*

Jamal (2016) argues that traditional Indian culture regards having a son as a necessity, whereas having a daughter is a liability in families, a notion Sara alludes to when she refers to her mother's fear about carrying on the family name. Sara and Sarbgit's accounts contradict this assertion. They were not 'unwanted children' destined to be deprived from 'womb to tomb' (Shijith and Sekher, 2017: 58) they had strong bonds with their parents, bonds which they now strive to have with their own children (see discussion in Chapter 6).

It is important to note, however, that Refiat, Razia and Sarbgit mention their mothers, and not their fathers, in their childhood accounts. This emphasis on the relationship with their mothers might be explained by traditional early socialisation and upbringing in India and Pakistan (Shaw, 2006), which are significantly informed by notions of 'purdah' (gender segregation). The extract from Refiat's interview, however, shows that she was allowed to go out and, in fact, worked in the fields with her family. Klein and Nestvogel (1992, cited in Little and Leach, 2013) argue that the observance of purdah in Pakistan 'is bound up with social class and status, particularly in the rural areas' (p. 37), which means that people from a lower socioeconomic background cannot afford for women to be secluded because they are needed as unpaid workers.

Gendered expectations were also salient in Sara's account of life after her father's death. She recalled:

> *After my dad died, when I was older, sometimes we didn't eat for, like, two days. Sometimes we didn't eat for one day. Whenever God provided us with food we ate, you know? My mum used to say, "My sons have gone, nobody's left here to look after us, so I have to do something." So, she'd get up and she'd buy the fruit in the morning from a big market, and she'd sell it right outside our house door. The school was around the corner, and during break times, my mum would sell the fruit. We'd eat lots of fruit and*

> *lots of vegetables. This is the way my mum made money, you know? My mum was the best mum, I don't think that any mum can love like this, I mean, love the children like this. She didn't even bother eating herself, she'd give it to the children. She was careful of things, like she didn't let us go to the shop and she didn't let us sit down where she sold the fruit. We had to stay in. All the girls came to my house, and we did the sewing, and things like that. We enjoyed our garden and that. When it was teatime they all went home, had their tea and whatever they wanted to eat. But it was only the girls. We had to be careful not to bring shame to the family.*
>
> *(Sara)*

This extract highlights how Sara was expected to display 'appropriate femininities' (Dwyer, 1999: 140), conforming to cultural, religious and patriarchal rules. These include displaying respectful behaviours through obedience to her mother, fulfilling the gendered expectation of 'purdah' (segregation), engaging in feminine activities (having tea) and maintaining family and social 'izzat' (honour) through remaining respectable and chaste (Shaw, 2000). However, Sara's quote also highlights her mother's agency and determination to provide for her family by selling fruit outside her door and the school around the corner. Sara's mother's contestation of patriarchal expectations of 'acceptable behaviours' for an Indian widow were not restricted to selling fruit. Sara described her mother as a "*fight*er", who "*would do anything for her children*", including going hungry so her children could eat. Sara's mother thus displayed active agency, challenging decisions, expectations, and socially defined roles. Yosso (2005) argues that these oppositional behaviours have helped people of colour acquire resistant capital through verbal and nonverbal lessons, and so learning self-reliance. This 'resistant capital' is evident in Sara's life decisions after migration, which are discussed in the next chapter. Now, I turn to the women's educational experiences in India and Pakistan.

4.4. Educational experiences

Sen characterises 'doing and being educated' as capability or freedom to enjoy 'the social opportunities that people have to improve the quality of their lives' (Dreze and Sen, 2002: 6). Similarly, Terzi (2007) argues that the 'capability to be educated' (p. 25) is a fundamental capability, a capability that plays a significant role in the expansion of other capabilities[11], the lack of which can disadvantage individuals. Despite the importance of education to well-being, lack of access to schooling, in particular for girls, has long been an issue in India and Pakistan (Little and Leach, 2013). When compared to boys, girls in India and Pakistan are less likely to be enrolled in school. Of the approximately 23 percent of school-age children in Pakistan and 15 percent of school-age children in India without access to schools today, most are girls (Saeed and Aslam, 2019). The root causes of these disparities are multifaceted and complex, and reflect broader social, political, cultural, and economic issues (Unterhalter, 2012), including poverty, women's lower social status, religious ideologies, early marriage, and security (Jamal, 2016).

All the women in this study had limited or no formal schooling. The women's educational functionings (educational achievements) before they migrated to the UK can be seen in Table 4.1. below.

Table 4.1: Women's pre-migration educational functionings

Name	Attended school	Number of years at school	Completed primary schooling
Razia	No	0 years	No
Sanam	No	0 years	No
Refiat	No	0 years	No
Sadia	No	0 years	No
Roxanna	Yes	5 years	No
Sara	No	0 years	No
Sarbgit	Yes	5 years	No

---

[11] Vaughan (2007: 119) provides several examples of the valued functionings and capabilities that can be achieved through education, including employment, valued level of health, political engagement, and better family life.

The constraints the women identified on their capability to participate in formal education, or complete their primary schooling, and expand their freedoms were three-fold: poverty and lack of economic capital, poor accessibility to schools, and gendered cultural expectations.

A key obstacle for Refiat was poverty and lack of economic capital, which she discussed in terms of the peripheral costs of schooling such as uniforms, textbooks, school bags and stationery:

> *I didn't go to school because we could not afford it. In Pakistan, if you have money, you can study, if you don't, you can't. I mean… education is free, but you must pay for some things. You must buy your own books, your own uniform. There's no transportation, you have to pay for that. Accommodation, you have to pay for that. The school is free, but you have to pay for the rest. Lessons are free, so you can't say that you have to pay for everything. But it's not really free. The government just gives you a building, nothing else, and the teacher.*
>
> *(Refiat)*

Alif Ailaan (2015) explains that the cost of sending one child to a primary public school in Pakistan for one year is 31,000 rupees, which is equivalent to 20% of GDP per capita. This increases to 50,000 rupees, or 33% of GDP per capita, for a child who attends a secondary public school for a year. Considering the average number of children in Southeast Asian families, it is not surprising that parents had, and continue to have, to choose who, if anyone, to send to school. Moreover, families facing severe financial difficulties must decide whether girls are needed at home to help with farming and domestic work (Singh and Mukherjee, 2018; DeJaeghere, 2018), an issue discussed in the previous section. Clearly, a lack of economic resources confined Refiat to the household and the fields, depriving her of the opportunity to attend school and develop other capabilities.

Sadia also talked about her family's lack of economic resources when discussing her educational experiences in Pakistan, and how she had had to take on some of her mothers' and sisters' responsibilities, so that her younger siblings could complete school:

> *I have never been able to read or write because I did not go to school. I asked my father, but he couldn't afford it. Only two of my six sisters can read and write. When it was my turn to go to school, my father was not employed so I couldn't go. I can sign my name, but I can't read and write. My parents cannot read and write either but one of my younger sisters passed her GCSE exam and she's married now. And the other one's married as well and is a teacher. They taught me how to sign my name… Other people's children went to school as well and their parents could read and write. But the children went to school because their parents could afford it. My parents couldn't afford to send me to school. I stayed at home and helped my mum and sisters so they could go to school.*
>
> *(Sadia)*

Although the practice of favouring sons in household expenditure is well-documented in India and Pakistan (Azam and Kingdon, 2013), as is the tradition of overlooking girls in decisions about education (Hamza and Wadhawa, 2019: 41), Sadia's account suggests that some parents encourage and enable their children to go to school when financially possible, regardless of gender.

Roxanna and Sanam also had female relatives who had gone to school and who had, in fact, achieved a high level of education:

> *Two of my nieces completed their Master's degrees and now they are teaching in Karachi. The other children in the village went to school, too. I regret not going to school because all the rest of my family are educated: my sisters-in-law are teachers – they run a sewing school as well.*
>
> *(Roxanna)*

> *I did not go to school and neither did my older brother or sisters. At that time, there wasn't enough money. I went to Islamic school to learn to read the Quor'an but my younger siblings went to the local school. They got to GCSE level!*
>
> *(Sanam)*

Clearly, the families had positive dispositions towards schooling, but acting on these dispositions was highly limited by poverty and economic instability. The literature suggests that tradition and cultural norms become more flexible, 'when girls' schooling is perceived as a family asset, through providing skills needed in the family, reading letters for example, or contributing income, or raising family status' (Little and Leach, 2013: 230). In this view, education represents a duty to fulfil obligations, rather than for individual self-actualisation or social mobility.

Another theme that emerged from the women's interviews was the poor accessibility to schools. Razia, Sanam and Sarbgit explained:

> *I wish I had gone to school when I was a child. There was no school in my village. My mother wanted to send me to the nearest school, but I didn't want to travel too far. My brother and younger sisters went to school, though. My brother could go because he was a boy, but I was a little girl. Girls were not allowed to travel that far on their own. My younger sisters went to school, too, but there is a big age gap between us. There is a school in the village now so there were no issues going there on their own.*
>
> *(Razia)*

> *There wasn't a school in the village. There was one in another village, but it was a very long distance – a two- and half-hour walking distance to get there. So, nobody sent their girls to school in my village.*
>
> *(Sanam)*

> *There was only one school in my village – a primary school. My parents sent me there, but I had to stop after primary school because there wasn't a secondary school. There was, but not really- well, it wasn't really for… people with disabilities. So, I couldn't go there because I couldn't ride a bicycle.*
>
> *(Sarbgit)*

The distance of the schools from Razia, Sanam and Sarbgit's homes was a crucial factor in their parents' decision to not send them to school. Their parents' concerns could have reflected their cultural and religious views about the space girls should occupy being restricted to home and the neighbourhood, but may also have related to concerns about their safety, and about the cost, availability and, in Sarbgit's case, suitability of transport. McCutcheon (2007), for example, argues that 'for the average girl [in rural Pakistan], school is too far, too expensive or not safe enough for her parents to allow her to attend even if she wanted to go. Distance is particularly a problem where parents often fear rape and abduction.'

It is worth noting, however, that according to Razia's account, her mother wanted to give her an education, despite how far away the school was, because she had not had an opportunity to study herself:

> Alicia: *What about your mum and dad, did they go to school?*
> Research mediator: *No, they didn't. But she says her mum always wanted her to go to school and learn to read and write.*

Notably, Razia highlights the intergenerational aspect of wanting to go to school. For three generations, education has been desired, but poverty has prevented it. This intergenerational capability deprivation has undoubtedly contributed to Razia's aspirational, familial and resistant capitals (Yosso, 2005).

Sara, also talks about her mother encouraging her to study:

> *Because I didn't know how to read and write in Punjabi; and neither did my friends, my mum brought a religious teacher to teach us. We were a group of four or five girls. We used to make jokes and did not listen to the teacher at all, so he left. My mum shouted at me, "Is this what you're going to do? You're not going to learn how to read and write?" My mum wanted me to study, but I used to think 'I am going to get married soon, I don't need to know this'.*
>
> *(Sara)*

Both Yosso (2005) and Modood (2004) argue that migrant parents encourage their children to pursue education as a means of helping them achieve a brighter future and, in fact, the women in this research themselves all have aspirational capital and high educational ambitions for their children (see Chapter 6). Sara's account is, however, an example of gender socialisation and the defined roles that women are expected to assume. In other words, men need to study to gain employment, whereas women do not require basic education to get married.

Availability and access to education and literacy in her village might have also contributed to Sara's views. Sara, Refiat and Sanam recalled:

> *At that time in India, you know, in my village, not many people went to school. Some men read the newspapers, but many ladies didn't know how to read and write… their mothers and fathers didn't send them to school. Some people could. Out of 10 people, maybe 2 could read and write, and they were the ones that wrote the letters for others and read the letters for them. People helped each other in my village.*
>
> *(Sara)*

> *There wasn't a school in my village when I was a child, there wasn't a library or a bookshop… so none of my siblings went to school. We didn't learn Urdu, but I picked up a little bit from the people I met when I was older… you know?*
>
> *(Refiat)*

> *In my village, people rarely went to school. My father only went to school for two or three years and my mother never did. There weren't any newspapers, or phonebooks, or magazines. There wasn't a library or a school. But they all helped each other.*
>
> *(Sanam)*

Sara, Refiat and Sanam's accounts demonstrate they had few opportunities, if any, to learn to read and write in other spaces in the community, including their own homes, as these were not 'literacy-generating spaces' (Kalman, 2005). Written language was not a part of their immediate experience but was accessible through social networks. As Fingeret (1993) notably argued: people with low literacy levels use their social networks to access written texts; or as Sanam said: "*they all helped each other*." In the women's villages, literacy was a clearly a 'communal resource' (Barton, 2009) and Sara, Refiat and Sanam's families were able to access dominant literacies and discourses by engaging in 'literacy mediation', i.e. relying on their social networks (family, friends and neighbours) to cope with literacy demands (Papen, 2015). These 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et. al., 1992), learnt from their parents, became a highly valuable form of navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) in the women's lives in the UK (see discussion in the next Chapter). Alongside this, it is worth highlighting the informal learning and literacies present in the women's narratives: Sadia’s ability to sign her name, Sanam’s religious literacy, and Refiat’s acquisition of some spoken Urdu.

Sarbgit and Roxanna went to primary school and so participated in literacy events but had to stop studying due to gendered cultural expectations:

> *When I finished my primary education, one of my cousins said to my parents, “Let her come with me and I will take her home and send her to school.” She took me to her home, and she let me go to school, but I couldn’t concentrate on my studies, because my cousin didn’t let me… She used to say to me, “Do the housework.” “Do this job. That job.” And I couldn’t concentrate on studying. That’s why I didn’t learn. I lived in my cousin’s house for three years. And I didn’t pass Year 7 and then I… stopped. I wish I hadn’t stopped.*
>
> *(Sarbgit)*

> *I was really good at school when I was little. I was a very bright student, and my teachers were very good, and they were all very lovely. But then, I had to change school and when I went to the other school, they put me back a school year. I was very upset… I wanted to complete at least 10 years of schooling. When my mother got ill, I stopped going to school. I just helped in the house and now regret it.*
>
> *(Roxanna)*

In Indian and Pakistani societies, traditional perceptions of a woman's time and space are limited by their roles within the home, as caretakers of the house, men, children and extended family. This can be seen in both accounts: Sarbgit had to take care of her cousin’s home before focusing on her studies and Roxanna had to stop studying to take care of her mother when she fell ill. According to Karmi (1996), sacrifice and obligation to kin are part of the rules and customs women in patriarchal societies, such as India and Pakistan, have to follow. Sacrificing their own hopes and dreams to fulfil obligations and responsibilities as a dutiful cousin and daughter was expected of Sarbgit and Roxanna; not adhering to these roles, rules and customs would have had implications for the family’s honour (izzat).

Another experience that has shaped the women’s lives is marriage, which I discuss in the next section.

4.5. Marriage and dreams of a better future

The women in the study lived by gendered expectations congruent with the available model of successful womanhood in rural India and Pakistan: marriage. Razia referred to marriage as the dream of every girl in the village:

> *I didn't have any specific dream, but in a village, girls don't have that many dreams. All dreams are that when we grow up, we will get married and live with our husbands. This is what we do – what is expected.*
>
> *(Razia)*

According to Johnson-Hanks (2002), marriage is a key life-course event, a 'vital conjuncture' where lives are transformed (p. 871). Marriage has certainly played a central role in structuring and transforming the lives of the women in the study, but according to Razia, marriage in Pakistan is more than a 'vital conjuncture' - it is an unavoidable stage in Pakistani women's lives. Razia's assertion that village girls "*don't have that many dreams*" suggests that girls have limited 'aspirational maps', which limits their 'capacity to aspire' (Appadurai, 2004: 76). This limited information can be the result of several factors, including poverty and the gendered cultural expectation that girls have to marry to have a good life.

All seven women were married in their home countries, and all entered arranged marriages – the cultural norm in India and Pakistan. According to Zaidi and Shuraydi (2002: 495) an arranged marriage is a 'contractual agreement, written or unwritten, between two families, rather than individuals.' The ideology that underpins these types of marriages 'is that obligations to one's immediate and more extended family have priority over personal self-interest', as opposed to being 'an expression of a fundamental liberty' (Shaw, 2001: 323). She identifies two basic types of South Asian arranged marriages. In 'conventional arranged marriages', families take a proactive role in finding 'a good match' for their children, based on the prospective spouse's caste/ethnicity (India), relationship to the extended family (Pakistan), religion, economic factors, social standing, and family reputation (Allendorf and Ghimire, 2013). In these arranged marriages, prospective spouses have no influence. The second type of arranged marriages, are those which appear to have been conventionally arranged, but in which the bride, groom, or couple have had some influence in the decisions.

Sarbgit, Roxanna and Sara entered the second type of arranged marriages. The three women asked their parents to seek matrimonial alliances but with British nationals. They told me:

> *Since I was child, I wanted to come to the UK - I wanted to marry a British man. British people came to our village to visit their families and we would look at them and say, "they wear nice clothes and have make-up on, they look nice." So, I married my husband, who is a British man.*
>
> *(Sarbgit)*

> *I meet my husband through another person. A lot of other people were interested in marrying me. First, I was not really interested to marry anybody but when my father passed away and then a lot of pressure from all the relatives, how you have to get married. My husband was arranged marriage. I married in 2001 and in 2003 I arrived in the UK. I didn't know anything about England, and I didn't speak any English, but I wanted to come to England. When all family members go back to our country, they used to give us lots of presents and somethings like that. I got married at the age of 37 years because I really wanted to get married to someone who lived in the UK.*
>
> *(Roxanna)*

> *When I was growing up, I would say to my mum, "Please, I want to go to England," the people who come from England always wear nice clothes, they always look nice, look healthy and everything, "I want to go to England. I don't want to get married in this country." I had never seen pictures of England, but I met a lady who said, "Do you know, in England the road is made with glass," and we believed it, we believed it. These things make me laugh now, I said, "Wow, such beautiful roads with glass on."*
>
> *(Sara)*

Sarbgit, Roxanna and Sara were able to exercise some choice and some agency through negotiation with their families. The wish to marry a British national stemmed from what the women thought of, and were told by, Indian and Pakistani women who had migrated to the UK and who went back to their homelands on holiday. Carling and Schewel (2018) argue that in rural areas, wealth becomes visible to others, creating a sense of 'relative deprivation', a sense that one has less than others in one's social group. Sarbgit, Roxanna and Sara aspired to migrate to the UK because they knew people whose lives had improved because of migration: they were wealthier, had better clothes and money for presents. Migration to the UK was thus symbolic of not only a higher economic status, but what the women could 'become' (Collins, 2018: 974). Through the visible changes migration to the UK made to the lives of other women and their families, marriage migration became a pathway in Sarbgit, Roxanna and Sara's 'imagined futures' (Henderson, Stevenson and Bathmaker, 2019).

Sanam also exercised some level of choice and agency when she decided to marry her British Pakistani cousin[12], who already had a wife and children. She said:

> *In the beginning when he proposed to me through my parents and relatives, I wasn't happy because I knew that he had another wife and children as well. Then my husband talked to me directly, and when we talked, I told him I would get married, but I didn't want to be in the same village where I was living. I wanted to leave.*
>
> *(Sanam)*

Sanam's account highlights two important issues: (1) the existence of religiously and legally sanctioned pluralism in Islamic marriages and (2) her aspiration to move. Charsley (2006) argues that polygyny is not an uncommon practice in the older generations, and that it is not uncommon for migrant men to have a wife in both the UK and Pakistan. Despite how common the practice may or may not have been, Sanam was clearly not happy about the idea of entering a polygynous marriage. The marriage, however, offered her the opportunity to escape her village and go to the city - it offered her the capability to leave, an opportunity to do what she wanted (Sen 1999; De Haas, 2021). Whether Sanam's aspiration to leave arose from economic or social ambitions, or from personal reasons, was not discussed during the interview.

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[12] According to Shaw (2006) and Charsley and Shaw (2006), consanguineous marriages (marriages among close blood relatives such as cousins) is a prevailing practice in several communities in Pakistan.

After living in the city for a decade, Sanam finally migrated to the UK. Her immigration process did not start after her wedding as her husband needed to get a divorce from his British wife. After the divorce, several applications were refused by the Home Office. Sanam recalled:

> *We got married in Pakistan, but my husband had his first wife in the UK and he got six daughters from her. We were married but I had to spend 10 years in Pakistan after marriage because of the divorce and the visa. My husband applied for UK visas for us, but my visa was rejected. My children's visas were accepted. My son was nearly four years when he came here. My daughter and me we stayed in Pakistan. For three years we applied. We applied again and again several times. I was really upset because my son was so little and then my daughter's visa was accepted, too, but I said, "No, she will stay with me, I don't want to stay without her." It was really difficult.*
> *(Sanam)*

Sanam's family life was clearly impacted by suspicions regarding the legitimacy of her marriage and the cause of what Horton (2009: 40) has referred to as 'embodied distress' i.e. 'an emotional response of guilt, regret, sadness, and incompleteness' that transnational mothers feel when they are no longer the physical caretakers of their children'. Sanam's inability to join her son in England stems from the increasing use of the 'technology of governmentality'[13] (Foucault, 2007; Yuval-Davis, 2012) to regulate marriage migration. As mentioned in Chapter two, in the UK, arranged marriages are framed negatively according to several dominant discourses, including marriage fraud, forced marriages and suspicion of bigamy, all of which are illegal in the UK. To root out potential cases of fraud and establish whether a marriage is valid or not, spouses are asked to provide material proof of love (e.g. through photographs and correspondence), attend several interviews and, since 2010, demonstrate the ability to support a spouse by having a minimum income of £18,600 per annum (Wemyss, Yuval-Davis and Cassidy, 2018).

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[13] According to D'Aoust (2013) this concept refers to the practices aimed at managing populations to minimize the risks associated with their circulation.

Immigration regulations governing spousal migration also affected Razia, the only participant who did not have a transnational arranged marriage. Razia married in the village where she grew up and had a happy marriage. She married her cousin and thought *"they were a good match"* and she *"did not want to want another husband"*, suggesting some level of choice and agency. After 14 years together in Pakistan, Razia's husband came to the UK to work. It was a decade later before Razia was allowed to join him. She told me:

> *I got married twenty-four years ago. My husband, he's been here 10 years. His friend called him from there to here, he sent out permit, visa, something like that. He's my relative. How do you say? He's my cousin. We grew up in the same village and we knew each other. We were a good match. He came to work and wanted me to come sooner, but the visa, the permit, it was not possible. I went to talk to the men. I asked and it was not possible.*
> *(Razia)*

Like other male labour migrants from Southeast Asia (Charsley and Shaw, 2006), Razia's husband came to the UK to take up employment and send money to his family. Whether England was initially seen as a temporary residence or not is not clear from Razia's account. The extract above, however, captures the role of the British state in shaping her transnational movement and eventual settlement in England. As mentioned previously, family-related migration has been at the centre of ongoing public and policy debates, with family reunification from the subcontinent being viewed as a barrier to integration, social cohesion and belonging (Blinder, 2011; Alexander, 2013), and consequently a target for more restrictive immigration law (Wemyss, Youval-Davis and Cassidy, 2018).

In contrast to the experiences of Sarbgit, Roxanna, Sara, Sanam and Razia, who exercised some level of choice and agency in their arranged marriages, Refiat and Sadia's accounts illustrate limited agency when choosing their spouse:

> *I came to the UK because of marriage… because of my family. They arranged it but I did not know anyone here, I did not know my husband, and I did not know any English. I had no choice. I was very afraid.*
> *(Refiat).*

> *Before I got married, I thought married life would be very nice, like every other woman thinks. But it is not the same. My husband is a disabled person and I didn't know about it before marriage. My marriage was arranged by my mum and my husband's parents. I only saw him in photographs and when everything was fixed, like the date and day, then he came to my house and at that time I couldn't say no because everything is arranged. My parents knew he was disabled but not that much. The reality is something else. He married me so I could look after him. Do everything like prepare breakfast, dinner and do cooking and washing, all the housework. Do the shopping. Give him a bath and give him his medicine. He's not able to bear children. And we didn't know before. My parents didn't know.*
>
> *(Sadia)*

Refiat and Sadia's accounts indicate that they did not know their prospective spouses before the wedding and had limited choice in their arranged marriages. Sadia, for instance, lacked basic information regarding her husband's disability, despite having seen him in photographs. In the extract above she describes her marriage as a deception perpetuated by her husband's family – a deception she was powerless to refuse since *"everything [was] arranged".* Similarly, Refiat was unable to stay in Pakistan - she had to follow her husband to England after the wedding, despite being afraid. Seemingly, the women lacked freedom to 'control [their] environment[s]' (Nussbaum, 2000) and make their own decisions. However, according to the research mediator, the women opted to stay silent to avoid hurting the feelings of their families and betraying their families' honour (izzat). A failed marriage, or marriage arrangement, would have caused personal shame and blame and would have damaged the reputation of both families (see also Anitha, 2011). This explanation resonates with Sahu, Jeffery and Nakkeeran (2016)'s argument that agency in arranged marriages should be examined through the specific contexts that affect the realistic choices that women can make in patriarchal societies. In this instance, the women's acceptance of their families' choice of husbands (i.e. their complicit agency) 'does not reflect an absence of agency because agential capacity also includes those acts which enable the status quo to persist'. Whilst I acknowledge that non-decisions can be decisions and therefore acts of agency (Lukes, 1993), I question whether the women *could* have acted differently.

4.6. Conclusion

In this chapter I explored the role of the past and its impact on the women’s present and future. I examined the women’s childhood memories and educational experiences, focusing on their socially-defined roles and positions before arriving in the UK. Following this, I turned to the women’s marriages and migration paths. I also explored the process of their transnational marriage arrangements and their hopes, fears, and imaginings of life in the UK. In doing so, I pave the way towards understanding how the women construct their lives after migrating and the crucial role their earlier experiences have on their ‘investment’ in learning English and acquiring literacy (Norton, 1995). I also discussed the ‘cultural wealths’ (Yosso, 2005) the women were able to access in India and Pakistan and explored how their past experiences informed the capitals they drew on. Finally, I assessed the extent to which the women were able to use their individual agency to convert resources into capabilities and ‘fertile functionings’ (Sen, 2002) and considered how a range of structural factors, institutions, choices, and opportunities in the women’s lives enabled or constrained their capability development (Sen, 1999).

I would like to finish this chapter by providing a reflection on the third aspect of power identified by Wolf (1996), that is, the power exerted by the researcher during writing and representing the women's narratives (see discussion in Chapter 1), by discussing my interpretations of the women's accounts.

I acknowledge that the relationship between poverty, gender and education is complex. However, in this thesis I adopted gender discourses from the Global North when interpreting the women's experiences before arriving in the UK. These discourses traditionally position rural families in the Global South as disadvantaged and portray them as oppressed by patriarchal traditions (Arnot and Fennell, 2008). By adopting these discourses, I recognise I have neglected other social forces and power relations which shape access to schooling (Arnot and Naveed, 2014). Had I asked different questions during the research study, interrogated the women's experiences using a different lens, or adopted different discourse, the data I might have obtained would have possibly been different to the one presented in this thesis.

Other inequalities that intersect and have not been considered in this study include social class, caste, ethnicity, religion, and rurality. If I had taken a social class lens, for example, I might have found that the reason the women did not attend school was that their parents were unable to obtain the official documents required to be enrolled in school. According to Tsujita (2013), children from rural areas in India may not be enrolled in school because they lack a birth certificate, a mandatory document for admission to government schools. Obtaining identification documents to access schooling or food support in India and Pakistan is mired by bureaucratic procedures and practices which Gupta (2012, cited in Chan, 2022: 104) argue are 'enacted on the poor as a form of structural violence which normalises their oppression'. Chan (2022) explains that without having political connections to help families obtain relevant documentation, 'the poor can remain stuck in poverty and powerlessness' (p. 104), unable to have the resources that would allow them to expand their children's capabilities and improve their lives.

Chapter 5

Life in the UK

> *I wasn't happy when I arrived in the UK. All I wanted to do was go back to my own country - I couldn't see how I could stay here. But then, I met other Pakistani and Indian ladies and I met some nice British people. And my husband helped me and I learnt where the schools were, where the shopping centre was, how to pay. When I started going to college, I met more people and made good friends. Now, I am learning how to read and write and that has helped me so much already. I don't want to go back to Pakistan anymore. The UK is my home.*
>
> *(Sanam)*

5.1. Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapters, transnational spouses from Southeast Asia have tended to be portrayed negatively in British political and policy circles, the media, and the public sphere (Palriwala and Uberoi, 2008). Racialised and gendered representations have been used to present female migrant spouses from Southeast Asia in a variety of deficient ways, including as migrants who refuse and are unable to speak English, women who have failed to integrate into British society, and members of communities that represent a security threat to the British nation. This deficit discourse fails to acknowledge the challenges migrant women experience when settling in a new country.

In this chapter, I explore the women's lives in the UK as exemplified in Sanam's quote, by focusing on their experiences in the country, access to formal education and English language and literacy use. I start by considering their initial perceptions of the UK and highlight how these acted as conversion factors that enhanced or impeded their capabilities and functionings. Next, I explore the challenges the women have faced since settling in the country, including the deprivations and unfreedoms that some of them have suffered and the difficulties they have experienced due to their emerging English language skills. Within this discussion, I explore the role of their cultural wealths in helping them lead the life they value and highlight the conversion factors that constrain their capability to access education. I also discuss the women's emerging skills by focusing on their learning progress and language and literacy use. Here, I contrast their institutionalised literacy capital, which is deemed as limited, with their achieved freedoms, capabilities and functionings. I also identify the forms of capital that support their emerging language and literacy skills at home and highlight the importance women place on English language fluency to achieve their valued doings and beings. Finally, I explore the women's sense of belonging to the country and explore how they qualify their Britishness as these are central to their investment in education and future aspirations.

The questions that lead the analysis for this chapter are: *What have the experiences of the women been since settling in the UK? What cultural wealths do they draw on? What structural conditions enable or constrain these experiences?*

5.2. Initial perceptions

Immigration has several emotional, social and cultural consequences for all migrants, whether male or female. One of the main challenges of the immigration process is changing one’s cultural referent and adapting to the values, traditions and language(s) of the receiving country (Suarez-Orozco et.al., 2009). Sonn and Fisher (2005: 305) argue that immigration ‘entails the severing of community ties, the loss of social networks, resources and familiar bonds and of course, the loss of taken-for-granted systems of meaning [as well as] negotiating, integrating and developing ties with the new country.’ As such, it is clear immigration can be demanding, disorientating, stressful and for some migrants, even traumatic. Without navigational capital (Yosso, 2005), Razia, Sanam, Sara and Roxanna, for instance, experienced a sense of negative dislocation shortly after arriving in the country. In the extracts below, they discuss their initial impressions of England and the feelings that arose after seeing the country for the first time:

> *When I arrived here, I was upset. The doors were closed, the houses were closed. House are not really big - they are small. In Pakistan, houses are big and wide and there are no closed doors. I was very upset.*
>
> *(Razia)*

> *I wasn't happy at all when I first arrived in the East Midlands. I used to live in a big house in Pakistan, so when I saw all the small houses, I started crying and said, "I want to go back to my own country, I can't live here."*
>
> *(Sanam)*

> *When I arrived in the UK, it was snowing and it was cold. I was looking around, especially when the plane was landing, and I was a bit scared. Then my husband and mother-in-law came to get us from Heathrow, you know. We had lots of nice moments in India and here my husband wasn't speaking to me at all, talking with his mother and walking with his mother. Everything was different. The houses were so different, and he was being different with me. I was very upset.*
>
> *(Sara)*

> *I wasn't happy when I got to England. I liked it very much, but it was different and so cold. For the first whole year, I did not come out of the house because I felt too cold.*
>
> *(Roxanna)*

In contrast to their high pre-immigration hopes (see previous chapter), migrating brought about feelings of sadness, loss, separation and longing for Razia and Sara, and a visceral flight or fight response in Sanam, because of the differences between houses in England and those in their home countries. Powell and Rishbeth (2012: 81) argue that 'the experiential context of neighbourhood frames perceptions of the new country for migrants as something permeable or impenetrable, legible or disorientating.' Indeed, their accounts of arrival feature expressions of 'shock and disappointment' (Rishbeth, 2004) at the architecture of houses and streetscapes, which they perceived as closed and small, perhaps because these may preclude social contact (Gardner, 1999: 72) or perhaps because they felt their lives were better in this respect in India and Pakistan. Another 'culture shock' moment (Oberg, 1960) experienced by the women was the marked difference in weather, a factor which prevented Roxanna from leaving the house for a whole year. Sara, on the other hand, experienced a sense of confusion about her personal relationship with her husband, a relationship which changed for the worse initially. Suárez-Orozco and Qin (2006) argue that migration often redefines the position of women within the family. For some women migration can open up new possibilities, leading to greater independence (Gardner and Osella, 2003), whereas for other women, including Sara, migration leads to greater uncertainty and isolation (de Hann, 2003).

Not all the women had negative experiences, however. Refiat and Sarbgit had more positive initial perceptions of the country:

> *I saw images of England on TV in Pakistan, but when I arrived here, I finally saw it with my own eyes and I was really happy. I liked everything because I knew there were lots of facilities here. Medicine is free and education is free. In Pakistan, you can only go to the doctor if you have money.*
> *(Refiat)*

> *When I arrived, I was really happy. I said, "It's really beautiful where I am now. Look at the buildings!" I was pregnant and the next month I gave birth to a baby. I was happy to be in the UK where there was a hospital.*
> *(Sarbgit)*

The social and economic benefits of migration seemed to have played an influential role on Refiat and Sarbgit's initial perceptions and feelings about the country. This might be because of the considerable hardship and poverty they experienced in their homelands or because of their aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005) – their desire and eventual decision to 'move to a positively evaluated social setting with scope for self-enhancement' (Jaspal, 2015: 84). Indeed, both women characterised England as a vehicle to an improved life, a place with two crucial facilities: access to education and medical assistance.

The women's narratives of their arrival in the UK reveal 'encounters with an unexpected world full of differences that could never have been imagined or anticipated' in rural Pakistan or India (Ahmed, 2016: 73). Whether this 'unexpected world' prevented them from forming a sense of belonging in the UK in those first years could not be ascertained. It is clear, however, that throughout these years the women have tried to 'sustain their home culture away from home' (Ahmed, 2016: 59) through their clothing, food, daily activities, rituals and the cultural and religious artefacts they have at home, some of which they showed us during the home visits.

5.3. Challenges faced in the UK

In the previous section I discussed the nostalgic longing for life in India and Pakistan some of the women expressed when asked to recall their first impressions of England. In this section, I discuss the difficult challenges the women have faced since resettling in the UK and the strategies they have used to overcome them. These difficulties included, but are not limited to, experiencing emotional abuse and controlling behaviour, dealing with racist and xenophobic behaviour, understanding a new language and accessing language classes.

5.3.1. Emotional abuse

Abuse is defined in this thesis as any type of violence the women may have experienced by their husbands, in-laws or extended family members, a serious form of unfreedom and ‘a hidden social and cultural problem of pandemic proportions’ (Goodchild, 2016: 245). Although there is a risk of ‘reinforcing cultural essentialism’ by drawing attention to the instances of abuse the women have experienced, ‘there is a specificity in the forms and patterns of violence, [which] can be attributed to the imbalance of power between the perpetrators and the women’ (Anitha, 2011: 1278). What is more, by acknowledging the systems of oppression and the abuse experienced by Sadia, Sanam and Sara, I aim to highlight their continued efforts ‘to resist, negotiate and modify gender norms’ (Ennser-Kananen and Pettitt’s, 2017: 599).

In the extracts below, Sadia, Sanam and Sara recall some of the verbal abuse the experienced from their female-in-laws:

> *When I was living in my father-in-law’s house, my sister-in-law and my mother-in-law were a bit jealous because my husband was looking after me*

> *now, they made my husband have an argument with me, filling his ears. One my day my mother-in-law said to me when I was watching TV "You know that English girl, talking now, I'm going to marry my oldest son to her. I'm going to bring him a British girl like her. She would be a better wife than you."*
>
> *(Sara)*

> *When I came to the UK, I did not have any problems outside the house – my problems were inside. My mother-in-law and sister-in-law were always saying things to make me feel inferior: "You think you are clever." or "My son will never listen to you." or "You are a liar."*
>
> *(Sadia)*

> *I have had many problems with my husband's relatives. When we arrived, my children did not speak English fluently. The women in my husband's family said, 'You're all black. Look at how you speak English'. I asked them "Why do you say my children are black? You're from Pakistan as well." These weren't the only bad things they said about me.*
>
> *(Sanam)*

These accounts demonstrate that Sara, Sadia and Sanam were belittled because they were from the subcontinent: Sara was not a British woman, Sadia was not seen as good enough for her husband and Sanam and her children did not speak the language well. Unfortunately, Sara's, Sadia's and Sanam's accounts are not uncommon (Hague et al., 2010). In a study of the domestic abuse experienced by 30 female migrant spouses from Southeast Asia, Anitha (2011) found that threats of imprisonment and denial to access of income, property and schooling were commonly used to control the women who took part of her study. Anitha (2011: 1274), argues that these accounts 'indicate the internalized racism that families who reside in the United Kingdom exhibit toward recent migrants from the subcontinent, [a behaviour which] perpetrators use […] to erode women's self-esteem and make them question their ability to function socially.'

Whether the aim of the abuse experienced by Sara, Sadia and Sanam was to ensure they upheld the family's honour (izzat) by being subservient or whether this behaviour can be attributed to the intersection of gender, culture, class, race, ethnicity and generational hierarchy is unknown. What is certain is that this constitutes domestic violence and that domestic violence 'in whatever form – physical or psychological – undermines a woman's capability to function and lead the life she values' (Agarwal and Panda, 2007: 382).

This psychological abuse has had a profound effect on Sara, Sadia and Sanam, reconstructing their identities and contributing to their resilient selves. The extract below demonstrates Sara and Sadia's resourcefulness in using their aspirational and resistant capitals (Yosso, 2015) to negotiate their ethnic and gendered positionings:

> *One day my sisters-in-law said in English… "Shall I…?" And I didn't understand because they were speaking in English, but they were looking at the bedroom door - they wanted to lock me in! I realised that, and I said to myself, "Okay, do not forget this day. You need to learn English and they will not treat you like this." And I did. I had to convince my husband, but that is a whole other story."*
>
> *(Sara)*

> *In the beginning, I did not have enough money. I didn't even have credit to call my parents. My mother-in-law used to give me £5 or £10 a month. And then, my brother-in-law took my jewellery. I told everyone in the house, but they did not believe me. My sister-in-law said, "No, you are lying. Our brother is not like that." But he was and he took my passport, too! They thought that if I had any money I would leave. But I didn't and I don't want to leave my husband. I cannot live like this anymore, though, so I have told him, "either we find a separate home, or I go."*
>
> *(Sadia)*

Sara and Sadia's choices, and the rejection of the choices others made for them, reflect how they developed agency during this period of their lives, countering hegemonic representations of traditional Pakistani and Indian women as passive and tradition bound (Hague et al., 2010). By engaging in negotiation with their spouses, Sara was finally able to learn English and Sadia's husband decided to look for new accommodation. However, it is essential I highlight the fact that although Sara and Sadia were eventually able to exert their agentic capacities, not all migrant wives who are being abused physically or mentally are able to influence their own conditions as 'ethnicity, language differences, cultural norms and racism experienced at an individual and structural level [may] combine to deter abused women from seeking help, or from leaving a violent partner' (Hague et al., 2010: 33). Neither can it be assumed that all Pakistani and Indian migrant wives who have settled in the East Midlands are able to access English classes, a space that could provide them with the necessary help or advice to ensure their capability for ‘bodily integrity’, i.e. freedom from assault, domestic violence (Nussbaum, 2000) is protected. Indeed, when I visited Razia’s home, and we went for a walk around the neighbourhood, Razia highlighted that of the twenty Indian and Pakistani migrant wives known to her in the area, only four attended English classes. When I asked about this during our Saturday class, Sara explained that:

> Some husbands don’t let their wives go to college, because if their wives know English, they’re going to be clever and they might leave. Some of the people I know… their husbands are like that. They think that the women from villages, like us, are simple because we do not demand things. If we learn English and learn to read and write, then we will demand lots of things. But it’s not only that. They think wives from India are going to send money to people back home - money they think is theirs. So, it’s better to leave them at home and not let them go out at all – just like a servant in the house.

Sara frames these husbands as controlling and abusive, individuals who see their spouses as inferior and who deny them the the ‘capability to participate in education’ and the freedom to make their own choices (Nussbaum, 2000). When asked if the women ever seek help, Sara said, “*not without English and how can they complain? They don’t really have money or papers*.” Sara recognises the disadvantageous position migrant women from rural India or Pakistan can occupy due to their limited language skills, culture, and gender. Indeed, Burman and Chantler (2005) argue that there are significant structural, material and cultural barriers which prevent migrant women from seeking help, including absence of extended family support; having limited knowledge of where to seek advice; being afraid of being deported by the Home Office; having no recourse to public funds and fear of divorce.

5.3.2. Racist

incidents

Racism can be defined as hostility towards the migrant 'Other' who is seen as a threat to British norms, values and way of life because of his/her different race, religion or culture. Although Jaspal (2011) argues that most settled migrants in Britain experience racism at some point in their lives, Sara, Roxanna and Refiat stated that they have not experienced any form of racism and the racism Sadia and Sanam identified was the abuse discussed in the previous section. It is worth noting that, initially, the women did not understand what racism is. To aid their understanding, examples of racist behaviour were given to the women, including examples of verbal and physical abuse towards the migrant 'Other'. Sarbgit recognised racism in her previous experiences:

> *My husband said to me, "Go for a walk and take our daughter around the neighbourhood in the pushchair." And when I went out, two boys started throwing pebbles at me and my daughter's pushchair. So, I went back to my brother-in-law's and he called the police. When the police arrived, they talked to the boys about racism.*
>
> *(Sarbgit)*

> *I went to the University grounds with my daughter one day and we were talking in Punjabi. There were some boys there, I don't know whether they were university students or secondary school students, but they started swearing at me. And I can't tell you exactly what they said, but I read their face expressions. They were staring at my clothes and they knew I was not from here. And they were swearing and swearing at me, calling me names. And I was so frightened, I went back home. I didn't tell anybody. If I had known English, I would have responded. But I felt threatened and my daughter was scared, and when you are threatened, you just want to go home quickly and feel safe.*
>
> *(Sarbgit)*

Sarbgit's first experience of racism was before 2010. Her young neighbours thought "*it would be fun to throw rocks at the migrants*". Sarbgit's agentic behaviour in asking her brother-in-law for help, resulted in the police explaining the seriousness of their actions to the children. Indeed, Sarbgit stated that "*the boys have grown up now and every time they see me, they apologise.*

They are good, polite boys who made a mistake. They are friends with my children and sometimes even help me with the shopping bags." Here, we see the importance of tackling racism as soon as possible. By explaining the illegality of their behaviour, the police helped cultivate an environment of acceptance and understanding of the migrant 'Other' in Sarbgit's neighbourhood.

The verbal abuse Sarbgit and her daughter experienced at the University, a multicultural, international space where xenophobia might not be expected, is more recent. Underlying this instance of abuse is a clear sense of the anti-immigrant sentiments in the country in 2015 – sentiments, which became intensified after the announcement of the EU referendum result on 24 June 2016. The explosion of racism and hate that the country experienced after the leave vote (a rise of 41% of hate crimes in July 2016) has been well-documented in the literature and in the media (see Forster, 2016). The EU referendum did not create racism but fed into existing forms of racism, including anti-migrant racism and anti-Muslim racism. According to Cooke, Bryers and Winstanley (2019: 254) 'the EU referendum in June 2016 uncovered – or generated – an intensification in anti-migrant narratives, many of which relate specifically to language and speakers of languages other than English.'

Razia's account of the racism she experienced by not being allowed to board the bus (see Chapter 1) is another example of abuse and hostility. Like Sarbgit, Razia's clothes are a visible manifestation of her identity. Wearing the hijab is the most visible manifestation of being a Muslim in the public sphere. Although Razia wears the hijab because of religious piety, in the eyes of her abusers it is not an acceptable form of expression of religious identity in the UK but rather a symbol for radical Islam gender inequality, Islamist terrorism or self-segregation (Smita, 2019).

When discussing these incidents during the Saturday classes, the women expressed lack of knowledge of Brexit or any anti-immigration feelings in the UK. In their view, these were isolated incidents of hate:

> *Most British people are very nice, but a few people are just rude and hateful.*
>
> (Sarbgit)
>
> *I don't think racism is a problem that the UK has. Some people hate others, but that is because their families have not taught them to respect everyone.*
>
> (Razia)

Although Razia, Sarbgit and the other women did not see these incidents of racism as connected, the racial abuse they have experienced cannot be disassociated from the political climate preoccupying mainstream society at the time or the dominant ideologies in the country that arguably still prevail today. The women's distance from these important issues and their refusal to see racism for what it is added up to their powerlessness and vulnerability. Sarbgit, for instance, was verbally abused shortly after the referendum – this time, by two young people in the shopping centre on her way to the bus station. She was told it was time for her to "*go back to her country*" and was called a "*Paki*". Here, as Burnett (2016: 7) argues, 'the referendum result was taken […] as affirmation that the country was not only now 'theirs', but that it was theirs 'again''. Razia, on the other hand, continued to experience racism when trying to board the bus. Although I continually highlighted their right to 'bodily integrity' (Nussbaum, 2000) during the Saturday classes, i.e. their right not to be attacked verbally or physically under any circumstance, Razia and Sarbgit were reluctant to report these instances of hatred. This changed eventually as the women developed their 'civic dispositions' (McCowan and Unterhalter, 2013), resulting in Razia and Sarbgit exercising their political rights. I discuss one of these 'acts of citizenship' (Isin, 2008) in the epilogue.

5.3.3. Understanding a new language

The women faced pronounced challenges after settling in the country, many of which stemmed from not knowing the language or understanding the culture. One of these difficulties was the limited freedom they had to access local services. The women needed assistance from their husbands to 'successfully function in [their] new environment', assistance which is referred to as 'language brokering' in the literature (Kam et al., 2017: 30).

Razia, Roxanna and Sadia, for instance, explained how lacking proficiency in English had an impact on their ability to communicate at the doctor's:

> *When I wanted to register in the surgery, "I said 'sorry, I can't speak English, no English.' Then my husband had to explain my symptoms to the doctor." I thought "Oh, no, the doctor is going to know I have no education!" I was so ashamed so I asked my husband if I could have another doctor and thankfully there was a female Pakistani doctor. Now I can go to the doctor's on my own.*
>
> *(Razia)*

> *I could not go to doctor on my own, so my husband had to explain my symptoms. I was so ashamed. I did not want my husband there, so he asked the receptionist if there were any Indian or Pakistani doctors. Since that day, my doctor is the Indian lady, and we speak in Punjabi.*
>
> *(Roxanna)*

> *At first, I had to go to all medical appointments with my husband, and I could not understand what the doctors were saying. I felt ashamed he had to be there. Now I have a lady Indian doctor.*
>
> *(Sadia)*

Notably, the women talked about feeling ashamed in these extracts. Chase and Walker (2013: 740), explain that 'shame is almost always co-constructed – combining an internal judgement of one's own abilities; an anticipated assessment of how one will be judged by others; and the actual verbal or symbolic gestures of others who consider, or are deemed to consider, themselves to be socially and/or morally superior to the person sensing shame.' The women's feelings of shame stemmed not only from their own language skills assessment, but also from having to rely on their spouses to broker tasks. Although not being able to speak English placed the women in a position of powerlessness, Razia, Sadia and Roxanna mobilised their social and resistant capitals (Yosso, 2005) to expand their capabilities, thus demonstrating some level of agency. By asking their husbands to inquire whether there were any

Indian or Pakistani doctors, the women gained a much desirable freedom: the capability to communicate with their physicians independently.

Sara also faced communication difficulties with a medical professional, but being unable to mobilise any social capital (Yosso, 2005), used this experience as motivation to learn the language, an act of resistance (ibid.) to feeling "*ashamed and stupid*":

> *One time, my husband was very poorly, so my mother-in-law and father-in-law took us to hospital. But then everybody went home, and I was the only one there. The doctor started speaking to me, asking me questions about my husband. I couldn't understand anything he was saying because I didn't know any English. I cried and cried and cried. It was very upsetting. They called my in-laws and asked them the questions. I felt ashamed and stupid. I promised myself this would not happen again - I would not be made to feel like this again. So, I started studying English…but now I wonder, why didn't they call an interpreter?*
>
> *(Sara)*

Not speaking the language or understanding "*how things worked*" limited Sanam's, Sarbgit's and Refiat's mobility:

> *When I first arrived in this country, I faced lots of difficulties, especially catching the bus, because I didn't know what to say, how to buy a ticket, how things worked. If I had a return ticket, I did not know how to use it. It was very difficult. I was afraid to leave the house but then some of the Pakistani ladies showed me how to do it.*
>
> (Sanam)
>
> *Whenever I tried to catch the bus, I had problems. I did not know which bus to take or what to say. It was hard and I was afraid of getting lost so my husband drove me everywhere until I was confident enough to take the bus on my own.*
>
> (Sarbgit)
>
> *At first, I did not know how to get to town or where things were. I had to take a taxi everywhere. Afterwards, the children started reading the bus routes for me and they explained what I had to do. It was hard.*

Being able to speak the language of the host country has an impact on a migrant's wellbeing in several important ways, including enhancing an individual's freedom. This can be seen in the extracts above. Sanam, Sarbgit and Roxanna felt uncomfortable moving around the city because they did not understand how to use the buses in the city, a fear that stemmed not only from their lack of communication skills at the time but also from their emerging literacy skills. Although Sarbgit's, Sanam's and Roxanna's freedom to 'move freely from place to place' (Nussbaum, 2001: 78) was initially constrained, the women were able to enhance this capability by mobilising their familial and social capital, which in turn, enhanced their own navigational capital (Yosso, 2005).

Refiat also spoke about her limited freedom to move in the city:

> *My biggest problem when I first arrived in the country was not speaking or being able to understand English. Because I didn't understand English, I did not know where I lived, where I had to go. So, when I went out of the house, I stayed on my road, never ventured too far. I didn't go further than my road for ten years. I was scared because I didn't know where my house was – I did not know houses have numbers. So, I whenever I went out, it was always with my husband.*
>
> (Refiat)

Unlike Sarbgit, Sanam and Roxanna, Refiat was unable to mobilise her familial or social capital, leading to being isolated for a decade. Lack of communication skills and limited print literacy affected not only her capability to 'move freely', but also deprived her from developing other capabilities, including the capability to be educated. When asked why she had not tried to learn some English, Refiat said:

> *My husband thought that if learnt English, I would go out and demand more freedom. So, he did not let me go to college. One day, one of my friends came from Gujarat and asked her, "Why don't you go to the college, why you don't go out to learn something?" She explained how important it is to learn English to survive in this country. She motivated me to do something, so I talked to my husband and asked and asked and asked, until eventually he said yes.*
>
> *(Refiat)*

Undoubtedly, patriarchal beliefs had an impact on the capability deprivation Refiat suffered for a decade. Her de-powerment is clearly linked to her husband's ideological construct of a *good* Pakistani wife as one who does not have ‘freedom of choice’ (Sen, 1992) and one who subjugates to his ideas and beliefs. Refiat countered this practice of patriarchy through conscious action by repeatedly asking to be given the opportunity to access education. It is worth noting that this conscious action stemmed from Refiat accessing her social capital (Yosso, 2005) – a capital she was unable to mobilise before being isolated in her house.

The women drew on their social networks in other ways, including to help them accomplish acts of reading and writing through ‘literacy mediation’ (Papen, 2010). Baynham (1995: 39), and other New Literacy Studies (NLS) scholars (see Barton and Hamilton, 1998; Fingeret, 1993; Kalman, 2005; Papen, 2005), refer to a literacy mediator as ‘a person who makes his or her literacy skills available to others, on a formal or informal basis, for them to accomplish specific literacy purposes’ (ibid., p.39).

The literacy mediators Roxanna, Sanam and Razia used when they first arrived in the country were social workers, friends, neighbours, and distant relatives:

> *When I first arrived here, social workers came to my house to read the post. For the last year and a half, the children have been reading the letters for us after doing their homework. But we do miss some appointments. My husband recently missed two appointments because he could not read the messages on the phone. When my son checked my husband’s phone in the evening, we realised what had happened.*
>
> *(Roxanna)*

> *I used to ask my next-door neighbour for help with the letters in the post and she helped me a lot. But then, she started a full-time job and was too busy, so my husband’s niece and nephew started coming over to help me with any letters or forms. Now, the children help me with these.*
>
> (Sanam)

> *When I first arrived here, my children did not know much English so my husband’s friends, or our neighbours, used to read the letters for us. My husband knows a lot of English, but he cannot read or write.*
>
> (Razia)

These examples illustrate how crucial literacy mediators are ‘in enabling or constraining participation in development’ (Kell, 2008: 896). Without literacy mediation, Roxanna and her husband, for example, would miss more medical appointments. By drawing on literacy mediators, Roxanna, Sanam, Razia and their husbands, who also have emerging literacy skills, ‘extend their own literacy beyond the limitations of their own expertise’ (Papen, 2010: 79). Notably, as their children became fluent readers and writers, Roxanna, Sanam and Razia started relying on them for literacy mediation tasks. During the interviews, Roxanna, Sanam and Razia did not express any negative emotions regarding their children adopting these roles and it seemed they thought it reasonable to ask for their help. However, Roxanna and Sanam shared that their children thought they were over-reliant on them and often felt frustrated if they asked for their help when doing their homework. Sanam said:

> *I try to do my homework on my own, but sometimes I do not understand. I ask my children and they say “Mum, do it yourself now.” When they were little, they helped me a lot, but not now. They get quite frustrated.*
>
> *(Sanam)*

Sadia and Sarbgit drew on their husbands as literacy mediators. For example, Sadia said:

> *I cannot read any of the letters that come home – they are too difficult. My husband reads every letter that comes through the post for our appointments. He also makes appointments for me.*
>
> (Sadia)

Refiat also drew on her husband to mediate reading and writing but he did not always want to help her:

> *If something comes in the post for me, I ask my husband to help me but sometimes he doesn’t. Last Wednesday I missed my appointment because I was cooking at home. When I said to my husband, “Is it time to go now?” he said, “Appointment time is over now.” So, now I ask my son or my friends to make the appointments for me and read my letters.*
>
> (Refiat)

Refiat's husband disinclination to provide support for his wife could be attributed to the patriarchal beliefs discussed previously. However, the extract above shows that Refiat's familial and social capital (Yosso, 2005) provide her with other possibilities to access and deploy literacy for her own needs. Although Papen (2010: 79) argues that literacy mediation:

> supports the view that literacy needs to be understood as more than an individual skill but as a distributed resource or a 'distributed capacity' (Kell, 2008: 909) residing not only in the individual but in their social entourage.

I must highlight that literacy mediation is an 'adaptive preference' (Sen, 2005) for the women – it has shaped their preferences to what is possible thus far, but they aspire to become literate and be independent (see discussion of aspirations in Chapter 6).

5.4. Participating in education in the UK

The women's pre-migration accounts, which were discussed in the previous chapter, suggest that although education was in 'their radar screen' (Ray, 2006: 410), the women had limited capability to participate in education in India or Pakistan. Poverty caused a 'corrosive disadvantage' (Wolff and De-Shalit, 2007), which, in turn, caused multiple forms of disadvantage, including hunger and a lack of education. Since the gap between having the capability to participate in education and their circumstances was too large, the women resigned themselves to not going to school. Moving to the UK gave the women the opportunity to access education as adult learners. However, one's 'capability to participate in education' (Vaughan, 2007: 116 - 117), that is, one's freedom to fully participate in learning, by attending classes and engaging in learning confidently and successfully, can be enabled or inhibited by several factors. As discussed in Chapter 2, these factors can be categorised into three conversion factors (see Robeyns, 2017: 46), namely personal factors (e.g. age, motivation, literacy level), social factors (e.g. gender norms) and environmental factors (e.g. provision of public goods). These factors can also be classified into enabling and constraining conversion factors (Wilson-Strydom, 2017). The enabling conversion factors that arose from the data include the women's familial capital, high aspirational capital, spiritual capital, social capital (including teachers and friends), resistant capital and self-belief – conversion factors which I discuss throughout the thesis. The constraining conversion factors that arose from the women's narratives include cost, availability and time of classes, patriarchal and gendered norms and domestic duties. These are discussed next.

5.4.1. Cost, availability and time of classes

Although ESOL has been neglected in policy historically (Simpson and Whiteside, 2012), it has suffered from devastating cuts to funding since policy shifted to austerity in 2010 (Simpson, 2019). Central government funding for ESOL was cut from £203 million in 2009-2010 to £90 million in 2015-2016 (Martin, 2017, cited in Simpson, 2019). The precarious status of ESOL classes constrained the women's capability to participate in education as places in government-funded English classes are limited and free only for migrants on certain active benefits, those seeking work, and non-EU spouses who have been resident for a minimum of three years (Foster and Bolton, 2017).

Razia, for instance, described how the classes at her younger daughter's school were full:

> *… they offered a three weeks' course. I started there before I could come to college, but it was some months after.*

Sarbgit similarly said that:

> *My husband tried to get a class for me at college, but we had to wait a long, long time. He looked on the internet and talked to people and eventually I had an interview for classes, but then the pre-entry class I needed was full. We had to wait a bit longer, but I started classes… not as many as I wanted because I have to pay.*
>
> (Sarbgit)

The difficulties with waiting lists and cost Razia and Sarbgit experienced accessing ESOL classes is not an uncommon situation for migrants wanting to study English. Phillimore (2011) participants, for instance, recalled similar experiences with learners having to wait between six months and one year. These extracts also highlight the impact of lack of funding on specific classes for LESLLA learners in FE (Macdonald, 2019). Specific provision for this population of students has become almost non-existent, with colleges either prioritising classes that lead to accreditation and employment, classes with a larger number of students, or mixed-ability classes where LESLLA learners are placed with students with a higher level of literacy (Simpson, 2019). To meet the needs of those who cannot access mainstream provision, charities and faith-based organisations have begun teaching more Pre-Entry classes (Simpson, 2019). Despite the benefits for students, including programmes that are free and more flexible, teachers in community based ESOL may not have LESLLA training, which is especially important because evidence suggests that learners with emerging literacy skills or limited formal schooling learn a second language differently than literate ESOL learners (see Bigelow and Tarone, 2004; Bigelow and Vinogradov, 2011). This is evident in Razia's comment regarding the difficulty she experienced at the classes at her daughter's school.

Reduction in funding has also resulted in the closure of crèches and nurseries and less money available to support students with childcare costs (Simpson, 2019), further limiting women's access to classes. In addition, for those women whose children are no longer in nursery, accessing ESOL classes is only possible if the timetables are compatible with school times. These issues are not new – Sara faced similar issues twenty years earlier:

> I had young children but wanted to learn. The problem was there were no classes, and nobody would help me with the children. But my husband found a primary school where all the Pakistani ladies, Hindi ladies and Punjabi ladies were studying. Some of them spoke nice English. I was shocked, I said, "Wow, maybe one day I can speak English…" I was happy he found a place for me, but I had to stop because of childcare. When I wanted to go again the school had stopped the classes.
>
> (Sara)

5.4.2. Domestic duties and patriarchal and gender norms

Educational literature suggests that other factors can inhibit language learning and literacy acquisition, including age, motivation, domestic duties, patriarchal attitudes, gender norms, and living in adverse conditions. In Indian and Pakistani families, for instance, a woman's domestic and social duties take priority, as Sarbgit's everyday schedule indicates:

> *I do the washing - washing and pressing and cooking and cleaning and everything. I prepare the clothes for the children for the whole week, for the school uniform and my husband as well. On Friday, we have a get together, a family dinner, with my in-laws.*

While gender norms in this extract may be perceived as an obstacle to studying, Sarbgit creates opportunities to do her homework and practice her English language skills by studying alongside her daughters (see discussion of familial aspirations in Chapter 6). Similarly, whilst Sadia's day is structured by her familial duties, her free time is reserved to study and do her homework:

> *My main duty is to look after my husband. I do everything. After praying, I prepare breakfast, cook lunch and dinner. I do all the washing and all the housework. I also give my husband a bath and help him dress as he is disabled. But during my free time, I study and do my homework. My free time is mine.*

Living in adverse conditions is undoubtedly a constraining conversion factor, but according to Wilson-Strydom (2017: 394), can also enable educational opportunity by 'creating aspirations, incentives for hard work and the striving for a better life which, in turn, create conditions for the capability of resilience'. This can be seen in Refiat's account:

> *I used to ask my husband to tell me what the breaking news were. He always said, "Why don't you read them yourself? Don't you have eyes?" I would answer "If I could read, why would I ask you?" I also really wanted to write down telephone numbers, but I couldn't so I had to ask my husband "Please, can you write the phone number for me?" And he did, but it would take two or three days for him to write the phone numbers. So, I one day I promised myself I would learn, I'd work hard and be able to make calls on my own.*
>
> (Refiat)

5.5. Improving one's educational functionings

The 'capability to participate in education' (Vaughan, 2007) for migrant women with emerging literacy skills can also be constrained by their slow progress. Limited funding may restrict the number of years a student can enrol in a Pre-Entry class and a low level of literacy can render them ineligible to enrol in an accredited Speaking and Listening class where reading prompts and taking notes are an exam requirement. However, we must recognise that learning to read and write for the first time in another language is disproportionally hard for unschooled learners and achieving the level of literacy needed for LESLLA learners to comprehend and produce written texts in another language takes 'an excessive amount of time' (van de Craats, 2005).

The slow progress discussed in the literature, which could be attributed to LESLLA students' limited L1 literacy skills, low L2 proficiency, lack of formal schooling or a combination of these three factors, was evident in the level of progress the women made during the length of the study.

In terms of reading skills and subskills, at the beginning of the study all the women could recognise the letters of the alphabet and numbers 1-10, but they demonstrated limited ability to connect sound to symbols, decode words or read and understand simple sentences, questions or instructions. In addition, Razia, Sadia and Sarbgit could not recognise most written key personal words or high frequency words, including their own names. By the end of the study, the women could use some sound-symbol correspondence (i.e. initial and ending consonants, short vowel sounds and blends), albeit with limited automaticity. They were also able to read and understand words and sentences, but only if these were personally relevant and supported visually.

In terms of writing skills and subskills, at the beginning of the study the women could form the letters of the alphabet and copy from a simple model with some level of accuracy, but they were unable to spell correctly personal key words or construct a simple sentence or a basic text. By the end of the study, the women were able to fill in short forms and write simple sentences about themselves, but still struggled to spell personal key words correctly. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 present the women's initial and final formal reading assessment scores and Tables 5.3 and 5.4 present the women's initial and final formal writing assessment scores (see Appendix 7). These are given as unable (U), emerging (Em), consolidating (C) or established (Est), following the ESOL grading profile levels recommended by the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum (DfES, 2000).

These assessment scores show how the women's competences have improved minimally in terms of the functional literacy skills and subskills assessed by the college, or their 'institutionalised literacy capital' (Compton-Lilly and Naya, 2016). However, it is worth noting that these assessments only focus on narrowly oriented measures of ability, rather than on how the women apply learning in their daily lives. If we consider the women's progress in terms of their capabilities and possibilities of flourishing (Sen, 2005), a different picture emerges.

Being able to recognise letter and numbers, for instance, has given Razia and Refiat the freedom to use their phones to make phone calls independently:

> *First, I was not able to read anything, but once I started coming to classes, I learnt the letters of the alphabet. I didn't know them before. I used to wonder: 'How can I do it? How can I read these symbols? What are they?' I cannot read all the words yet, but I am able to recognise the letters, which means I can get the numbers from the phone. I can sound out letters and read short words, 'Duh-ah-duh, dad' and that means I can dial my husband's number and ask him questions if I need to.*
>
> *(Razia)*

> *I can write phone numbers by myself now. If somebody says, "Write down that number or tell me your phone number", I can do that. I can call my son in Pakistan by myself because I can dial numbers, too. I do not need my husband's help for this anymore.*
>
> *(Refiat)*

Similarly, being able to read prices, expiry dates and food-related words has given Roxanna, Sadia, Sanam, Sara and Sarbgit the freedom and confidence to go shopping on their own. Roxanna, for instance, said:

> *It took me a long, long time to go to Asda on my own. I was scared. But now, I can read the prices and I can pay on my own. I know how to use the debit card, and I know how to use cash. I know how to read the expiry date and where to find the things that are at a reduced price.*
>
> *(Roxanna)*

Learning English and acquiring some competency in the language, even if minimally, also had an impact on how the women see themselves: Sanam no longer feels ashamed of speaking in front of other Pakistani women and Refiat is proud of who she is and what she has accomplished:

> *When I started studying, I didn't know how to speak in English. I remember being in the classroom and needing a pen. I tried to ask the teacher for one in English, and all the Pakistani women laughed. They laughed in the market, too, and said I could not speak English at all. I do not feel ashamed about speaking in the classroom or in the market anymore. I know I make mistakes, but I will improve by practicing.*
>
> *(Sanam)*

> *When I went back to Pakistan to visit my family, my brother-in-law came to visit. He said to me 'What is your name?' and I replied 'My name is...', then I told him my address. Then he said to his wife 'Look, she is speaking in English now!'" I told him how important it is to know your own address, telephone number and date of birth in the UK. I felt really good and quite proud because I don't have any educational background but at least now I know these things.*
>
> *(Refiat)*

5.6. Literacy Practices

In this section, I adopt Compton-Lilly and Naya's (2016) 'literacy capital' concept, an extension to Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) framework, to identify the forms of capital that support the women's emerging literacy skills at home. Compton-Lilly and Naya (ibid.) include different types of capital under the literacy capital umbrella, namely economic literacy capital, social literacy capital and cultural literacy capital. In the next sections, I discuss these types of capital and relate them to the women's narratives and the physical evidence of literacy instruction, learning or practice (Purcell-Gates et al., 2012) I photographed during the home visits.

5.6.1. Economic literacy capital

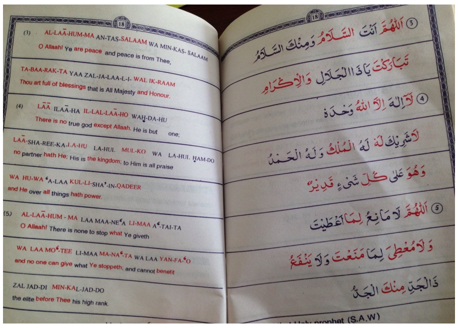
Economic literacy capital is defined as ‘possessions that require economic investment and are convertible to literacy success’ (Compton-Lilly and Naya, 2016: 256), including attending classes, having books to read at home and using computers or technology to develop one’s literacy skills.

All the women engaged with literacies for religious purposes in multiple ways, for example by praying or reading their faith books, but Razia and Sadia attended Qur’anic classes, too:

> *At home, I read my Islamic books. I attend an Islamic class three days a week and they give me three lines to read every day, and I try to read these at home.*
>
> (Razia)

> *I pray every day and go to an Islamic class on Sunday to learn to read the Qur’an.*
>
> (Sadia)

Reading and praying from the Qur’an includes ‘attending to written language, memorization, repetition, interpretation, and making meaning from Arabic text’ (Cun and Kfouri, 2021). Attending Qur’anic classes helped Razia memorize long *surah* (verses in the Qur’an) and learn to read in Arabic, developing both her literacy and linguistic capitals. When we visited her home, Razia showed us her religious books, including the one I photographed:



18

(3) AL-LAĀ-HUM-MA AN-TAS-SALAAM WA MIN-KAS- SALAAM
O Allaah! Ye are peace and peace is from Thee,

TA-BAA-RAK-TA YAA ZAL-JA-LAA-L-I- WAL IK-RAAM
Thou art full of blessings that is All Majesty and Honour.

(4) LAĀ ILAĀ-HA IL-LAL-LAĀ-HO WAḤ-DA-HU
There is no true god except Allaah. He is but one;

LAĀ-SHA-REE-KA-LA-HU LA-HUL MUL-KO WA LA-HUL ḤAM-DO
no partner hath He; His is the kingdom; to Him is all praise

WA HU-WA ʿA-LAA KUL-LI-SHA’-IN-QADEER
and He over all things hath power.

(5) AL-LAĀ-HUM - MA LAA MAA-NEʿA LI-MAA Aʿ-TAI-TA
O Allaah! There is none to stop what Ye giveth

WA LAA MOʿ-TEE LI-MAA MA-NAʿ-TA WA LAA YAN-FA-ʿO
and no one can give what Ye stoppeth; and cannot benefit

ZAL JAD-DI MIN-KAL-JAD-DO
the elite before Thee his high rank.

18

③ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَنْتَ السَّلَامُ وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ

تَبَارَكْتَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

④ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ

لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ

وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

⑤ اَللّٰهُمَّ لَا مَانِعَ لِمَا اَعْطَيْتَ

وَلَا مُعْطِيَ لِمَا مَنَعْتَ وَلَا يَنْفَعُ

ذَا الْجَدِّ مِنْكَ الْجَدُّ

Holy prophet (S.A.W)

Image 5.1. Pages from Razia’s religious book

Razia has learnt a valuable literacy skill by attending Qur’anic classes: she has learnt to segment Arabic words in the Qur’an into phonemes in order to decode key words – a skill that could be transferred cross-linguistically (Koda and Zehler, 2008). The extract and comments below are from my visit to Razia’s home in May 2015 and illustrate this finding:

Extract from home visit with comments: Razia (May 2015)

Alicia: I do not understand. What is she showing me? Razia, please sit down.

Research mediator: She is very proud of you visiting her home. She will not sit down. I think she wants to show you what she studies when she is at home. Umm… this is an Arabic book. I think she is learning to read Arabic.

Alicia: Arabic or the Qur’an? She told me she is attending Qur’an classes.

Research mediator: Arabic, I think. Razia, are you learning to read the Qur’an? [question asked in Punjabi.]

Razia: Yes, yes, Qur’an and Arabic. Arabic letters with the Arabic teacher. [answer given in English] [Razia proceeds to demonstrate how to say the Arabic alphabet.]

Alicia: Can you? Read the Qur’an?

[Razia brings an abridged version and starts reading several verses. The research mediator and I are both surprised as she is quite fluent. How did she learn to read in Arabic?]

Alicia: Is she reciting from memory?

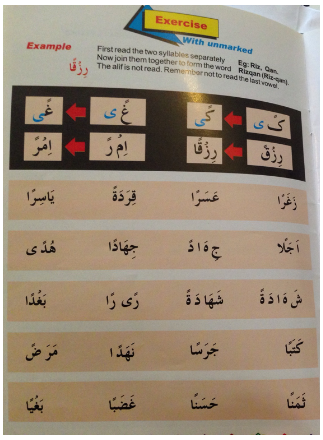
Research mediator: Maybe. Let me check. [The research mediator uses the words from the verses and writes a different verse.] Razia, can you read what I have written, please? [question asked in Punjabi].

[She does - she recognises most words!]

Sanam also uses the skills she learnt when she was able to attend Qur’anic classes to read the Qur’an:

> *Every morning after praying, I try to read at least one and a half pages of the Qur’an. I do not understand everything. When I struggle, I try to break the big chunks into smaller chunks and try really hard and eventually I make it. The Qur’an is in Arabic, so I do not really understand all the meanings, but it still is good to just open it and read it for the blessings of God. I used to go to Islamic class, but it is too far away, and I cannot get there in time on the bus. That’s where I learned how to split the words into smaller chunks.*

Similar to Razia, Sanam learnt how to use phoneme segmentation to read Arabic words. When we visited her home in March 2016, she showed us her religious book (image 5.2.) and tried to read a few words – some successfully and some not.



Exercise

With unmarked

Example

رِزْقًا

First read the two syllables separately
Now join them together to form the word
The alif is not read. Remember not to read the last vowel.

Eg: Riz, Qan.
Rizqan (Riz-qan).

كً ى ← كًى

رِزْقً ← رِزْقًا

غً ى ← غًى

اِمْ رً ← اِمْرًا

زَغَرًا	عَسَرًا	قِرَدَةً	يَاسِرًا
اَجَلًا	جِ ه ا دً	جِهَادًا	هُدًى
شَ ه ا دَ ةً	شَهَا دَ ةً	رًى رًا	بَغْدًا
كَتَبًا	جَرَسًا	نَهَدًا	مَرَضً
ثَمَنًا	حَسَنًا	غَضَبًا	بَغْيًا

Image 5.2. A page from Sanam's religious book

Having books at home is another example of economic literacy capital – capital which Sara and Sarbgit mobilized to develop their literacy skills. Sarbgit said:

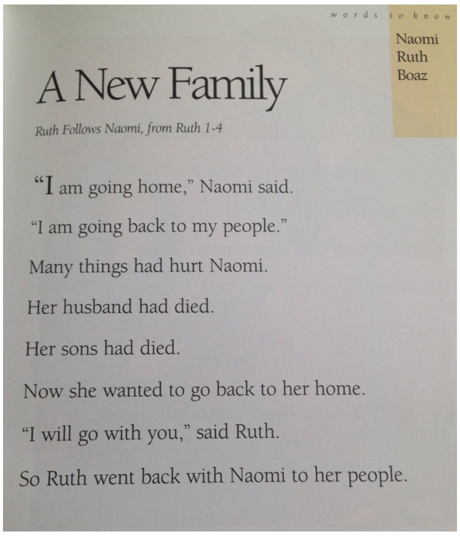
> *The children have lots of books - nearly a hundred of them! I read as many books as I can. I like books which are funny. When I understand what I am reading, I feel really happy, but if I don't understand then I feel a little bit sad. I read at night when the children are asleep. If I don't understand a book, I ask the girls for help in the morning.*
>
> *(Sarbgit)*

Image 5.2. Sarbgit's children's bookcase

Becoming a proficient reader involves reading more than what is read in the classroom or what is given for homework. Sarbgit demonstrates that she reads books in English for pleasure, a reading practice which is key to develop one's literacy skills (Young-Scholten and Maguire, 2009).

Sara also reads for pleasure, but she reads adult easy readers which the library staff bring home for her and her husband:

> *I've got a few books my husband had from two people from the library. They always bring library books for my husband and for me. They asked me what books I need. I didn't know what to say so they bring me a few storybooks. I read these books when I have time. My friend said "just start reading children's storybooks" and that's what I did first. Now, I read short adult stories.*
>
> (Sara)



words to know

Naomi
Ruth
Boaz

A New Family

Ruth Follows Naomi, from Ruth 1-4

"I am going home," Naomi said.
"I am going back to my people."
Many things had hurt Naomi.
Her husband had died.
Her sons had died.
Now she wanted to go back to her home.
"I will go with you," said Ruth.
So Ruth went back with Naomi to her people.

Image 5.4. A page from Sara's easy reader story

When we visited her home in June 2016, Sara read several easy reader books for us, demonstrating a more advanced reading level than the one she had been assessed at in college. Being able to decode words and read fluently, however, does not guarantee comprehension whether in a first or second language as can be seen in the next section.

In terms of technology, Sanam and Sarbgit used a computer and iPad to support their literacy development. Sanam discussed her computer use in her Photovoice story (see Chapter 7) and Sarbgit said:

> *This week I read and listened to a story on the iPad about Elsa and Anna… You know, the 'Frozen' story… And I understood the whole story. And I am listening to other stories about Mr. Bean which I understand very well.*
>
> *(Sarbgit)*

5.6.2. Social literacy capital

According to Compton-Lilly and Naya (2016: 257), social literacy capital 'entails being able to recognize, access, and utilize social relationships to support oneself as a reader.' The social networks that contributed to developing the women's literacy skills were their families and their teachers, although the help of family members was not always guaranteed.

Sargit and Razia's daughters helped them with their homework on an everyday basis:

> I do my homework every day - my younger daughter helps me study. She helps me read the homework and checks my spelling.
>
> (Razia)

> Every day my daughter says, 'Okay, come and sit down and do your homework.' And when I finish it, my daughter checks it and says, 'Mummy, you didn't do this one right. So, do it again now.' So, when I do it again, then she says, 'Yes, this time you did it really well. Now, let's practice it. Let's read together."
>
> (Sarbgit)

Sadia and Refiat also talked about their families providing them with social literacy capital, but this capital was not one they could rely on. Sadia said:

> *My husband doesn't really help me study. Sometimes, when I ask him to help me read my homework, he does, but sometimes her doesn't.*
>
> *(Sadia)*

Roxanna's husband also contributed to her development of literacy skills but not by helping her read or write, instead he did some of the chores at home, so she has sufficient time to study:

> *My husband looks after me. He cannot help me with my homework because he cannot read or write. He's also from Pakistan and has been here for the last 50 years. He can speak English very well but because he has limited schooling, he doesn't know how to read or write at all. So he washes the pots, makes chapattis for me and helps in the house so I can study. But he is not very well at the moment, and that is worrying.*
>
> *(Roxanna)*

Here, it is important to note the different ways in which the women are able to mobilise their familial capital. The women's narratives in this chapter suggest that practitioners should not assume that their family members are able to, or happy to, support their literacy development.

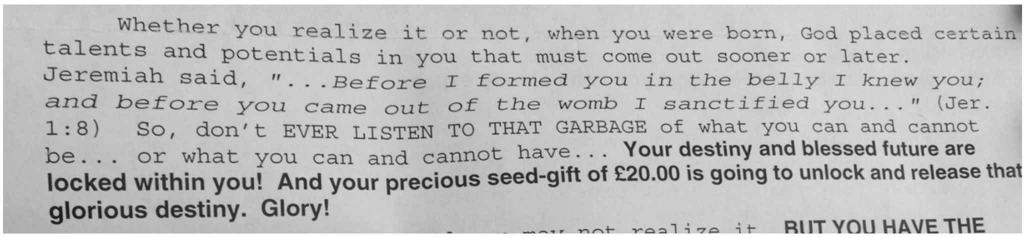
5.6.3. Cultural literacy capital

Compton-Lilly and Naya (2016) state that 'cultural literacy capital' exists in three states: 'embodied', 'objectified', and 'institutionalized'. Of particular relevance to this discussion is the existence, or lack thereof, of 'objectified cultural literacy capital'. According to Compton-Lilly and Naya (2016: 257), this type of capital 'includes the creation of products that are officially recognized as evidence of literacy proficiency'. This includes the books the women read at home for pleasure, like the ones Sarbgit and Sara discussed in section 5.4.1. However, to be able to read for read for pleasure one must have the capability for 'time autonomy' (Robeyns, 2003), an issue which Refiat and Sadia raised:

> *I do not read or write at home. I wish I could do more than my homework. But no, I am too busy doing everything else in my home and taking care of my husband.*
>
> *(Sadia)*

> *Some books in my house are in English, some are in Urdu, and the Qur'an is in Arabic. I try to read the Qur'an every day but not the other books because there isn't enough time with all the chores I need to do.*
>
> *(Refiat)*

When visiting Sara's home, she discussed a different kind of 'objectified literacy capital': correspondence with her 'pastor'. While she was very proud of being able to read these letters, on close inspection I realised they were a scam:



Whether you realize it or not, when you were born, God placed certain talents and potentials in you that must come out sooner or later. Jeremiah said, "...*Before I formed you in the belly I knew you; and before you came out of the womb I sanctified you...*" (Jer. 1:8) So, don't EVER LISTEN TO THAT GARBAGE of what you can and cannot be... or what you can and cannot have... **Your destiny and blessed future are locked within you! And your precious seed-gift of £20.00 is going to unlock and release that glorious destiny. Glory!**

may not realize it **BUT YOU HAVE THE**

Image 5.5. Extract from Sara's letter from her pastor

Luckily, Sara had not sent any money to her 'pastor' yet, but she was intending to enclose £20 with her reply the next day. Here, decoding words and reading fluently was not sufficient. Sara's limited media literacy, i.e. the ability to analyze and evaluate media communication, including 'considering who is sending a message, the purpose of a message, the persuasive techniques included, and the potential interpretations of a message' (Hobbs, 2007, cited in Lee, 2018: 460), had left her vulnerable to fraud. After explaining what a scam was and how scammers target older people, Sara decided not to continue corresponding with her pastor.

5.7. Formal Citizenship and a sense of belonging

Citizenship is not a concept that is easy to define and its very nature is highly contested as 'empirical claims about what citizenship *is* can never be entirely disentangled from moral evaluations of what it should *be*' (Peutrell, 2019: 87). Joppke (2010) points out that citizenship has three main dimensions: status, rights and identity. In this view, citizenship is more than 'a formal status that secures rights and entitlements, it is a marker of identity and belonging' (Pogonyi, 2019: 977).

When asked about whether they identified as British or Pakistani/Indian, Refiat, Sanam and Sara unequivocally said that they were British citizens because they "*have a British passport*". This finding aligns with Pogonyi's assertion that 'the passport strengthens the holder's sense of belonging to the national group.' (ibid.) Razia, Roxanna, Sadia and Sarbgit also identified as British citizens, despite being 'denizens' at the time of the study, i.e. residents with a foreign citizenship:

> *I have been in the UK for three years and three months. I do not have a British passport, but I feel British because this is where I feel at home.*
> (Sadia)

> *I don't have a British passport, but I live here. The UK is my home.*
> (Roxanna)

> *I don't have a British passport, but I feel British. I live with my family here. My husband is here and he works here. My children are here and they go to a good school. There is no need to go back to India. My sister is there, but she is happy there with her family. I am happy here with mine. We have everything we need here.*
> (Sarbgit)

> *I don't have a passport yet, but the children are happy here and the teachers are good. My husband is happy here and he is employed. And I am happy, too. The UK is my home.*
> (Razia)

In the extracts above, Razia, Roxanna, Sadia and Sarbgit frame their citizenship in terms of their 'sense of belonging', i.e. feeling at home in the UK (Yuval-Davis, 2011). In addition to strongly stating that they are British, Sarbgit and Razia justify their assertions by providing a list of the advantages of living in the country, a finding similar to the 'balance sheet' provided by the migrant women who participated in Tastsoglou's (2007) study of migration and citizenship in the Canadian Maritimes.

Although the women identify as British, some of them position themselves as Indian/Pakistani when discussing their identity, language and culture. The women clearly inhabit what Brah (1996) has termed as the 'diaspora', i.e. 'multi-locationality within and across territorial, cultural and psychic boundaries.'

When talking about their language use, Refiat, Roxanna and Sadia told me that when they are home, they communicate in their home languages as these allow them to say what they want. Sadia said:

> *I speak in English when I am in town, but I express myself better in Pahari and Urdu when I am at home because I am Pakistani.*
>
> *(Sadia)*

Sarbgit, on the other hand, explained that she uses every opportunity to communicate in English, speaking Punjabi only when she doesn't understand:

> *I like speaking in English. I try to talk in English with Sara because she is so good. When I go out shopping, I speak in English and I always say to my children, "Talk to me in English." If I don't understand what they're saying, then I talk to them in Punjabi.*
>
> *(Sarbgit)*

English is central to Sarbgit's identity and this can be seen throughout the dissertation. She added:

> *At home, I sometimes talk to my children about Indian traditions but not that much, because our whole future is here. We want to live here. So, there's no need for them to know about Indian culture. They are fluent in Punjabi, though, but in my house, we communicate in English. They speak English with my husband and my in-laws and as much as possible with me, too.*
>
> *(Sarbgit)*

Notably, Sanam said that she does not try to speak in English when she is around other Pakistani women, but has not issues communicating in English with her neighbours:

> *I speak Urdu or Punjabi a lot of the time because if I try to speak in English with the other ladies from Pakistan and I make mistakes, they start laughing. My neighbours don't laugh. One of my neighbours is an English man, he's an engineer, and my other neighbours are Polish people. They are all very, very good people. They always say, "Hi Sanam, how are you? How's your husband?". My Polish neighbour is really nice - she took me shopping, to the park food store on the high street. There's nice food there, it's cheap. She always says, "Whenever you go there, take me with you and I'll help you." We are friends.*
>
> *(Sanam)*

These extracts illustrate that social networks can enable or constrain the development of capabilities: Sara and her children help Sarbgit develop her linguistic capabilities and so do Sanam's neighbours, whereas the Pakistani women known to Sanam constrain her ability to develop her linguistic capabilities.

5.8. Conclusion

In this chapter I considered the women's initial perceptions of the country and contrasted these to their preconceived notions. Then, I discussed the challenges the women have faced since settling in the UK and the strategies they have used to overcome them. I also explored the negative conversion factors that have had an impact on the women's access to formal education and examined how their families have fostered their motivation, engagement, and resilience to persist in education. I then moved on to explore how the women use language and literacy and discuss the importance of literacy mediation and cultural brokerage in their everyday lives. Finally, I examined the women's sense of belonging and attachment to Britain, India, and Pakistan.

I would like to finish this chapter by providing a reflection on the second aspect of power identified by Wolf (1996), that is, the power the researcher can exert during the research process (see discussion in Chapter 1) by discussing a specific moment during the interviews: the discussion of racism.

Since arriving in the UK, I have encountered racism several times. Although in many ways my whiteness can be considered a visible mark of privilege, I have also been perceived as an 'undesirable migrant', particularly after Brexit. Racist slurs have been directed at me because of my ethnicity, the languages I speak and my foreign accent. These instances are one example of 'Othering' and clearly suggest that 'racialization does not require putative phenotypical or biological difference' (Fox, Morosanu and Szilassy, 2012: 681). I assumed my experiences of being constructed as the 'Other' would be, in a way, similar to the women's lived experiences as immigrants. During the interviews, however, I was surprised to find out the women did not recognise racism as a part of their lives and were, in fact, reluctant to explore their experiences.

Here, I must acknowledge the power dynamics that operated during the interviews. Despite being given negative answers, I continued asking the women about their experiences of racism and resorted to providing them with examples of racist incidents in order to elicit an answer. I knew that to discuss an experience of racism, the women might have had to go through 'moments of vulnerability' and experience 'discomfort' and 'cognitive dissonance' (Kishimoto and Mwangi, 2009) but I strongly felt I had reason to believe the women were not acknowledging their negative experiences. In exercising my professional knowledge, I undoubtedly reinforced my position as one of power in the study, prioritising pursuit of knowledge over protecting the women's emotions. Hammersley and Traianou (2012:6) argue that the researcher's primary obligation is 'to pursue research in ways that answer worthwhile questions' and that other concerns are secondary to this responsibility, unless this is ethically required. I strongly disagree with this argument. While I acknowledge that when confronted with the women's reticence to answer my questions I did not abandon the topic, the women's responses, while powerful, did not demonstrate harm. Not exploring the women's experiences, however, would have been harmful in several ways including leaving racist behaviour unchallenged, racial disparities obscured and rendering discriminatory practices invisible.

Chapter 6

Aspirations, Aspirational Capital, and Possible Selves

If I was born here and I'd got something in my hand, I'd be a doctor, I'd be a lawyer or I'd be something, not just a mum. But I am a mum, and I am here now. And I have the chance to learn so I will learn.

(Sara)

6.1. Introduction

Having discussed the women's experiences since settling in the United Kingdom in the previous chapter, here I intend to reclaim representations of these women from the deficit narratives dominating media and political agendas by highlighting their aspirations. Analysing what the women want to be and do is essential for understanding not only their level of agency in shaping their future selves, but also the degree to which ESOL classes offer an opportunity to achieve the women's own goals and aspirations. Understanding these aspirations 'has the potential to invite empathy and solidarity in a time of distrust, and can nuance the more simplistic dominant frameworks' used to analyse contemporary migration (Amrith, 2018: 125).

I start this chapter by discussing the importance the women place on their education, language learning and literacy acquisition and identify the intrinsic and instrumental capabilities that the women value. Next, I present the women's aspirations for their futures, aspirations which relate to their education, employment, and children. Here, I explore how the women mobilise their cultural wealth to support their children's education and identify the conversion factors that constrain their ability to enter the labour market. Throughout the Chapter, I also consider how the women envision their future selves and provide two contrasting accounts: Refiat's and Roxanna's feared unemployed selves and Sadia's happy, successful and respected future self.

The question that leads the analysis for this chapter is: *What aspirations do the women have for their futures?*

6.2. Educational aspirational capital and the value of education

Yosso (2005: 77) describes aspirational capital as 'the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers.' Aspirational capital is evident in Sara's quote that opens this chapter. Despite the struggles she has faced in her life (see Chapters 4 and 5), Sara remains determined to succeed educationally. Acquiring literacy and improving her spoken English are fundamentally important to her to realise her long-term goals.

During the interviews, all the women displayed educational aspirational capital. When asked how they envisioned their future 'possible selves', that is 'the ideal selves that [they] would very much like to become… the selves [they] could become, and the selves [they] are afraid of becoming' (Markus and Nurius, 1986: 954, cited in Stevenson, 2019: 131), the women not only spoke about being fluent in English and being (or becoming) literate but also referred to education as the way to improve their own and their children's future lives. In the next section, I discuss the different views the women have about the importance of education, language learning and literacy acquisition[14] in their lives.

6.2.1. The value of education

Razia and Sanam presented a perspective on literacy acquisition, English language learning and education as intrinsically valuable, that is, as central to living a good life. As Razia puts it, "*literacy can help your life*"; similarly, for Sanam, "*it is really important to have an education to have a good life*." Refiat,

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[14] Although these three terms (education, language learning and literacy acquisition) have different meanings, the women used them interchangeably as they are studying English and basic literacy.

Sara and Sarbgit, on the other hand, related education to being empowered and having more knowledge:

> *If you have any education, you don't just think differently… you are different and you can do more things.*
>
> *(Refiat)*
>
> *I would love to be educated… to have that with me. To learn to read and write gives you power to do what you want and to be who you want to be.*
>
> *(Sara)*
>
> *Education is really good for me. I would like to read and write so I can learn. I want to learn everything. I want to get knowledge.*
>
> *(Sarbgit)*

Refiat and Sara relate education to being able to do more than communicate in English and being literate. In their view, education is the way to increase their freedoms - not only enhance their personal agency but also 'transform' who they are. This is consistent with Mathews-Aydinli's (2008) argument that second language acquisition (SLA) is 'more than just language learning but, rather, constitutes a social process of reconstructing a new self in the target language culture' (p. 203). Sarbgit, on the other hand, sees education as the way to gain the knowledge she had been prevented from acquiring in her childhood (see Chapter 4). The women's comments resonate with Sen's (1997) views on the worth of education, which lies 'in reading, communicating, arguing, in being able to choose in a more informed way, in being taken more seriously by others and so on' (p. 1959).

Sara and Sadia linked education to having a voice and being heard. For Sadia, "*when you can speak English well, when you can read and you can write, you can say what think – you don't have to keep quiet*" whereas for Sara, "*education is freedom… freedom to be heard*." These comments are highly significant and suggest that Sara and Sadia feel, or have felt in the past, silenced or marginalised for not being educated or not knowing sufficient English (see discussion in Chapter 5). It is often argued that migrants with a good language proficiency level will have a higher level of 'audibility' (Pavlenko and Blackledge,

2004) as they are recognised as legitimate by the native-speaker listener (i.e. the expert language speaker). Emerging speaking and literacy skills can contribute to the view of migrants as lacking the 'power to impose reception' or of not being 'worthy to speak' (Norton, 2000). However, the desire to find a way to 'fulfill [one's] innermost needs of self-expression and self-realisation; the desire to find a voice and to be recognised as human individuals as opposed to the prescribed social roles of mothers, daughters and wives' cannot be overstated (Zubair, 2004: 97). In fact, not being able to communicate one's ideas is a form of capability deprivation (Sen, 2003).

With regards to the instrumental value of education, the women recognised that in a hyperliterate society, such as the UK, doing what you value can depend on being literate and fluent in English. For instance, the women highlighted how education, literacy acquisition and English language learning could help them overcome the challenges they face in everyday life. Among the everyday challenges that literacy and a knowledge of English would mitigate were: accessing GP services and reading prescriptions, identifying halal or vegetarian food from the labels, completing forms, engaging with schools, and reading addresses. Crucially, Refiat strongly stated, it was a matter of not wanting *"to depend on anyone, I want to make myself independent. So, I don't want to ask anybody to come and help me to do these little things for me. Learning to read and write is the most important thing in my life."*

As argued previously, education is a necessary condition of well-being and one which the women assert is a central to what they can do and be, their future aspirations and their freedom to lead the kind of life they value (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000; Dreze and Sen, 2002). Razia, Refiat, Sanam and Sarbgit assigned several instrumental values to education: having functional literacy and a good level of English can could help them perform concrete actions that are significant to them, including communicating at the doctor's and the other examples noted above. Yet the women were already able to manage these tasks with some degree of confidence, albeit not on their own. Razia, Refiat and

Sanam rely on their children, spouses, friends, and neighbours to act as brokers and cultural mediators (see discussion in Chapter 5). Despite having social capital (Yosso, 2005), underpinning the women's responses is a strong desire to achieve personal independence and self-sufficiency, an aspect which Refiat strongly asserts when she stated that she did "*not want to depend on anyone*" in the extract above.

Razia and Roxanna also framed education as necessary to being more independent. They said:

> *I need to study for my children because my husband is not well. He may pass away in the future, and I am the only support for my children. So, nobody else will support me, so I really need to study English.*
>
> *(Roxanna)*

> *I would like to keep learning English for myself, and I want to learn for the children as well, because in the future they will be working and they can't stay every time with me.*
>
> *(Razia)*

These comments illustrate Ward and Spacey's (2008) claim that migrant women's investment in learning English (Norton, 2000) is closely connected to their children's needs. Roxanna, for instance, would like to improve her English language skills to support her children if something happens to her husband; Razia is cognisant that in the future her children may be unable to act as language brokers or cultural mediators. Razia and Roxanna's desire to continue learning English in the future highlights the social embeddedness of aspirations (Appadurai, 2004), and that achievement or the desire to achieve may be collective rather than individualistic in nature (Mkwananzi, 2019). Razia and Roxanna's aspirations are influenced by the needs of their families and their sense of responsibility towards their children's well-being. Here, their children provide an impetus for continuing studying and learning English.

6.2.2 Long-term aspirations

Sanam, Sadia and Sara talked about their long-term aspirations. Sanam, for instance, wanted:

> *… to learn English in next two years because I want to learn how to drive a car as well. This is important for me.*
>
> *(Sanam)*

For Sadia, classes were important because she was 'not literate' and did not 'know anything', and yet wanted to pass the Life in the UK test:

> *… and I cannot do it if I do not learn how to read and write in English.*
>
> *(Sadia)*

In contrast, Sara's motivations were religious. Studying English and learning how to write properly would enable her to go to her church:

> *… and write all the testimony what God has done in my life. Believe me, my Lord has done many miracles in my life, in our lives, and I want to write all of them from the start until now and give the testimony wherever I want to go. Then songs about my Lord. That's what I'm waiting for. I can do it just using my words and I can sing, but I want to write it down on my own.*
>
> *(Sara)*

Sanam, Sadia and Sara's long-term aspirations include learning to drive, passing the 'Life in the UK' test, and writing a book. These aspirations not only signal a desire to gain more independence, but also a desire to achieve self-realisation and to belong (Yuval-Davis, 2002) and be British, which most of the women see as instrumental i.e. having a British passport (see discussion of formal citizenship in Chapter 5). These aspirations, however, require a higher level of English proficiency than the everyday challenges discussed previously. Learning to drive, for instance, involves listening to complex instructions in English, reading texts and signs, and, like the LLUK Test, answering multiple choice questions on a computer. Similarly, writing a religious testimony unaided means independently drafting an extensive text. According to the LLUK Test Preparation materials, the test questions are designed to require an understanding of English 'at the level that the law requires of people becoming British citizens' (Home Office, 2007: 4), that is, migrants who take the test should have at least the pre-intermediate level of English the government deems necessary for a non-citizen to become British. Clearly, high levels of literacy and proficiency in the language, which would require several years of schooling, are essential for Sanam, Sadia and Sara to realise their long-term aspirations.

However, the women, like the migrant youth (Mkwananzi, 2019: 101) researched 'remain optimistic that their aspirations will be attained in the future', and actively seek ways in which to convert their resources into valued functionings (see Chapter 7 for an example). These aspirations can be conceptualised as 'persistent aspirations' (ibid.), as the women are exercising some level of agency in pursuing them (e.g. by attending classes) but social and structural factors may restrict their conversion into functionings (e.g. gender norms, lack of familial support). The factors that constrain the women's ability to develop their capabilities were explored in the previous chapter and without additional funding or support will continue having an impact on their lives.

Drawing on the accounts presented in this section, it can be concluded that the women have the 'capability to aspire' and a high 'aspirational capital', both of which are crucial to maintaining motivation and continuing investment in language learning and literacy acquisition. However, to achieve their educational aspirations, the women must have the 'capability to participate in education' (Vaughan, 2007: 116 - 117), that is, they must have the freedom to fully participate in college-based learning, by attending classes and engaging in learning confidently and successfully.

6.2.3. Expansion of educational capabilities

Migration and education have expanded the women's 'brittle horizon of aspiration' (Appadurai, 2004: 69). Tables 6.1 and 6.2 provide a summary of the women's educational functionings and aspirations pre- and post-migration. These tables show that aspirations are fluid, and 'do not remain the same, particularly in contexts where social and structural factors have different levels of influence on one's life.' I turn to the educational aspirations the women have for their children in the next section.

Table 6.1: Women’s pre- migration educational functionings and aspirations

Name	Attended school	Number of years at school	Completed primary schooling	Educational aspirations
Razia	No	0 years	No	Wanted to go to school Dreamed of getting married and forming a family
Sanam	No	0 years	No	Wanted to go to primary school Dreamed of getting married and forming a family
Refiat	No	0 years	No	No educational aspiration conveyed Did not discuss marriage aspirations
Sadia	No	0 years	No	Wanted to go to school Did not discuss marriage aspirations
Roxanna	Yes	5 years	No	Wanted to finish 10 years of schooling Dreamed of getting married and forming a family
Sara	Yes	0 years	No	No educational aspiration conveyed Dreamed of getting married and forming a family
Sarbgit	Yes	6 years	Yes	Wanted to attend secondary school Dreamed of getting married and forming a family

Table 6.2: Women's post- migration educational functionings and aspirations

Name	Attending college	Number of years at college	Educational functionings	Educational aspirations	Functionings resulting from education	Other aspirations resulting from education
Razia	Yes	2 years	- Pre-A1 reading and writing (Emerging) - Pre-A1 speaking and listening (Emerging)	- Have a good command of spoken English - Achieve a functional literacy level	Independence Self-sufficiency	
Sanam	Yes	3 years	- Pre-A1 reading and writing (Emerging) - Pre-A1 speaking and listening (Emerging)	- Have a good command of spoken English - Achieve a functional literacy level	Independence Self-sufficiency	Drive a car
Refiat	Yes	3 years	- Pre-A1 reading and writing (Consolidating) - Pre-A1 speaking and listening (Emerging)	- Have a good command of spoken English - Achieve a functional literacy level	Empowerment Independence Self-sufficiency	
Sadia	Yes	2 years	- Pre-A1 reading and writing (Consolidating) - Pre-A1 speaking and listening (Emerging)	- Have a good command of spoken English - Achieve a functional literacy level	Independence Self-sufficiency Having a voice and being heard	Pass 'Life in the UK test'
Roxanna	Yes	3 years	- Pre-A1 reading and writing (Consolidating) - Pre-A1 speaking and listening (Emerging)	- Have a good command of spoken English - Achieve a functional literacy level	Independence	
Sara	Yes	2 years	- Pre-A1 reading and writing (Established) - A2 speaking and listening (Established)	- Achieve a functional literacy level	Empowerment Having a voice and being heard	Write a religious testimony
Sarbgit	Yes	2 years	- Pre-A1 reading and writing (Consolidating) - Pre-A1 speaking and listening (Emerging)	- Have a good command of spoken English - Achieve a functional literacy level	Gain knowledge Independence Self-sufficiency	Drive a car

6.3 Familial aspirations: What matters is the future of my children

Razia, Sanam, Roxanna and Sarbgit, the women with school-aged children, talked about their hopes for their children's education. Their views were embedded in their own educational experiences: they saw education as intrinsically and instrumentally valuable for their children - a way for them to achieve social mobility and have better futures.

6.3.1. Stressing the importance of education

During the interviews, Razia and Roxanna shared how they constantly stress the importance of education to their children:

> *In the future, I want my children to be educated and have a good job and then settle here. I always tell them "concentrate on your studies and then you will get the better futures."*
>
> *(Razia)*
>
> *I tell my children, "You read and write because you must get an education. Your father didn't have an education so you must get something." I [tell] them to study because I have no education, my husband has no education, so it's really important for them to get some education. Because of no education, we are not doing anything. It is really hard, Alicia, you know? I do not want a hard life for my children. We need somebody to read for us, to write for us. All about appointments, so what time is that appointment, what time is dad's appointment. I do not want that for them. So, I tell them, "You study hard. You continue studying. You must work hard for your future so you can get a job."*
>
> *(Roxanna)*

Most parents want their children to do well in their studies, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds (Strand and Winston, 2008). This is evident in the extracts above – both women clearly want their children to succeed and are cognisant of the importance of education. These examples of diasporic discourses (Archer and Francis, 2007), convey the women's belief that the UK can provide their children with opportunities for upward social mobility: employment and settlement in the country. Through verbal encouragement and stories about the hardships they have endured due to their limited schooling, Razia and Roxanna aim to motivate their children to accomplish academically. Auerbach (2002, 2006) refers to this advice as 'consejos' in relation to Latina/o families: familial messages about education that can cultivate migrant children's educational aspirations. These messages can provide children not only with aspirational capital, but also with familial capital (Yosso, 2005) by inspiring the children to persist and succeed in their studies.

6.3.2. Parental support strategies

In terms of schoolwork, Razia, Roxanna and Sarbgit shared how they support their children:

> *I sit with them and ask them about what they are studying but I don't understand, you know? But I am there. I am always there.*
>
> *(Razia)*
>
> *I tell them, it's time to do some reading now. "Come and show me what you did today at school." They say, "Mummy, you don't know what we did today." I say, "No, come on show me." They say, "Mummy, you don't know how to read or write, and dad doesn't know." But they still show me, and I am proud of them.*
>
> *(Roxanna)*
>
> *Our children's future that is what matters. I see them going to University. We have full control over expenditures. We don't really need branded clothes. It's okay with me to buy our clothes from Primark. And we really don't need the pizza or fast food every day. We can make some simple vegetables at home. So, it saves money to spend on our children. That's why we're sending them to learning centres to help them with their studies.*
>
> (Sarbgit)

In these extracts, the three women demonstrate a high level of parental engagement at home: Razia and Roxanna monitor schoolwork despite their emerging English and literacy skills, and Sarbgit saves to pay for extra tuition to ensure her children's academic success. In the thesis, the parental involvement of the three women is seen in a positive light and as equally valuable. However, I must acknowledge that Sarbgit's mobilisation of 'economic capital' (Shah et al., 2010) and 'social and navigational capital' (Yosso, 2005) to support her children aligns more closely with normative forms of parental involvement. According to Espino (2016), traditional forms of parental involvement expected by educational institutions include parental participation in schools, sustained contact with teachers, and providing additional educational support when academic issues arise. Razia and Roxanna's less visible ways of supporting their children often go unrecognised in schools (Daniels, 2019), despite research which indicates that migrant parents may employ different supporting strategies (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992). Daniels (2019: 23) argues that teachers often assume that their students' parents are functionally literate and that literacy development in home and school will both follow the same 'vertical trajectory'.

Razia and Roxanna may not demonstrate parental involvement in normative ways, but they clearly value education and mobilise their 'ethnic capital' (Shah et al., 2010) by 'creating a home environment where education [is] the priority' (p. 1116). They consistently create dialogical spaces during homework time, asking the children questions about what they are studying – a supervision process that literate parents also engage with. When asked whether their presence during study time helped their children with their studies, Razia and Roxanna responded affirmatively. They proudly stated how well their children were doing in school and how they were working at above average level. This finding is in line with other studies (Ashraf, 2019; Gutman and Akerman, 2008) which find that children perform better in school when their parents have high aspirations for their future and engage in their studies, regardless of their gender, educational level, or social class.

Daniels (2019: 35) argues that the support with schoolwork migrant mothers with low levels of literacy give to their children 'challenge the perception that, when children hand in incomplete homework at school, provide incorrect answers to teachers' questions, or submit poorly done projects, their parents were not involved in their homework.' Instead, the children's familial capital, that is the support provided by the women, contributed to their success.

6.3.3. Children’s future careers

Roxanna and Sanam both expressed high aspirations for their children’s future:

> *My daughter wants to be a doctor. My son is really good in computing side. The teacher said he’s really good, like, he can be a computer engineer, something like that. My other daughter wants to be an actress. I do not mind what they study, but they go to University.*
>
> (Roxanna)

> *I am happy with my children’s education, whatever they're doing. Other parents have a desire for their future but it’s the children's choice. They can be who they want to be, but they have to study and go to university.*
>
> (Sanam)

Several important issues emerge from these extracts. Both women have strong expectations of their children pursuing higher education but are not directional about the professions they should choose. This directly contrasts with the popular ‘known routes’ discussed by Archer and Francis (2007: 134), occupations in the legal, medical, education and care sectors commonly favoured by Southeast Asian parents. Although Roxanna and Sanam express a strong desire for their children to achieve higher levels of education, there is room for individual agency in the path they have set for their sons and daughters, evident when Sanam notes that “*it’s the children’s choice*” and Roxanna states that “*I do not mind what they study*”. These comments also suggest that Roxanna’s and Sanam’s parental aspirations are not limited by their own or their children’s ethnic background, class or gender. Their aspirations, like those of British Pakistani families in Shah et al’s (2010) research and British Bangladeshi families in Scandone’s (2018) study, urge a reconsideration of policy discourses which frame the aspirations of working-class and minority ethnic background children in a negative light. According to Scandone (2018: 532), the aspirations of South Asians are often viewed as limited and narrow, with South Asian parents commonly being stereotyped as ‘pushing their sons and daughters to become either doctors or lawyers.’

6.4. Employment aspirations: I would like to work

In public discourse, there are recurrent concerns that South Asian migrant wives' low employment rates and limited integration into British society are, at least partly, due to cultural values, religion, and traditions (Charsley et al., 2020; Cheung, 2014; Heath and Martin, 2013). In this section, I challenge this notion and discuss the employment aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005) the women have by providing an account of the work the women value. I also discuss Refiat and Roxanna's frustrated aspirations (Mkwananzi, 2019).

6.4.1. Valued work

None of the women were in paid employment at the time of the study but Sara had worked when she was younger, Sarbgit and Sadia engaged in unpaid informal work, and all the women are engaged in the 'invisible work of caring' (see discussion in Chapter 5). Despite their lack of experience in the formal labour market, and their limited formal schooling, Sadia, Razia and Sarbgit expressed positive attitudes to work and a strong desire to pursue paid employment:

> *In the future, I would like to have a better life and be successful. I would like to do any type of job - any type of job with children or any other work, like carer, but work that pays.*
>
> *(Sadia)*

> *I do not want to volunteer like the other women! I want to be a successful woman who has a better life and get paid for what I do.*
>
> *(Razia)*

> *In the future, I would like to be a professional woman, a woman who works and is successful. It's not a problem where the place, it can be a Tesco, any other place. I just want to earn a salary.*
>
> *(Sarbgit)*

There are three aspects to the women's aspirations: being successful, earning an income, and having a better life. These suggest that Sadia, Razia and Sarbgit not only view labour market participation as a way to achieve social mobility and integrate into British society but are also aware of the economic benefits of paid employment.

Razia's assertion that she does not want to volunteer, on the other hand, suggests that volunteering is one of the jobs that other South Asian migrant wives do in the community. Whether volunteering is the type of job these wives are allowed to do, or whether it is the one that is available to them because of their emerging English language skills, is not clear. What is clear, however, is that Sadia, Razia and Sarbgit's families support their employment aspirations. When asked whether pursuing paid employment would cause difficulties at home, the women stated that their husbands and children encourage them to find work. These comments do not support the assertion in the Casey Review (Casey, 2016) that religion, cultural norms, and tradition prevent migrant wives from engaging in the labour market. These women's husbands are not – in what might be seen as typically patriarchal understandings of gender: trying to keep their wives out of the labour market. Instead, familial capital contributes to the women's job aspirations. Sanam, for instance, commented that her husband constantly encourages her to work:

> *My husband says, "okay, you go out and work somewhere because when you speak with other people, you will pick some more things and will learn the language." I am nervous about looking for work, but he believes I can do it.*
>
> *(Sanam)*

Sanam's husband's belief that she "*can do it*", encourages Sanam to continue looking for work by building her sense of agency. Three conversion factors, which I discuss in the next sub-section, mediate Sadia, Razia, Sarbgit and Sanam's 'capability for employment': emerging speaking and literacy skills, family responsibilities and gender norms.

6.4.2. Emerging speaking and literacy skills

The women's English language proficiency and their emerging literacy skills clearly contribute to their inability to access the labour market as Razia, Sarbgit, Sanam and Sadia all observed:

> *When I learn English then I will find work. It's difficult at the moment because the places to work they don't speak Punjabi.*
>
> *(Razia)*

> *I want to start looking for a job. But at the moment, the main problem is the English, because I don't have the language.*
>
> *(Sarbgit)*

> *I want to work soon but I cannot communicate in English yet.*
>
> *(Sanam)*

> *I need to learn English first because there are some places to work like the carer house, but I do not know where I'm going. How do I find the place? How do I tell them I can do the job?*
>
> *(Sadia)*

Although education does not necessarily mediate a person's ability to find a paid job, it is increasingly more difficult to find formal employment in the UK if a person is not fluent in English, the dominant language. When discussing the importance of education for entering the labour market, one participant in Charsley et al.'s (2020) study of marriage migrants, suggested that people with very emerging English language skills have fewer opportunities to gain employment in the country, even in secondary sector occupations, such as cleaning. This is not surprising. As part of the Immigration Act 2016, the government introduced a 'Code of Practice on the English Language Requirement for Public Sector Workers' requiring all public authorities to only employ personnel who meet the required proficiency level for the job advertised. A google search suggests that cleaning personnel, including those employed by agencies for roles in the public and private sectors, are required to have at least a basic command of English, demonstrated by an A1 or A2 level certificate for all skills.

It is important to note that it is unclear whether achieving this level of language proficiency and literacy skills would lead to employment. As Blommaert et al. (2014) noted, discrimination negatively affects the employment opportunities of ethnic minorities. Despite the women's high aspirations for employment, they face several barriers – significant, if not unsurmountable - to having successful occupational trajectories.

6.4.3. Family responsibilities

According to Cobb-Clark and Connolly (2001), migrant mothers face several challenges when entering the labour market. Sarbgit highlighted these challenges when asked about work:

> *When my children get bigger and they can do everything for themselves, then I will start looking for a job. But at the moment, the children are still little, and I want to take them to school and help them when they come home. I can go to college, but I do not want to be away from them all day long.*
>
> *(Sarbgit)*

Although Sarbgit would like to gain employment, balancing family, studies, and work life is difficult because of her daughters' age. Several studies emphasise the fact that the gendered dimension of unemployment in ethnic minority communities, and caring for others, restrict migrant mothers from looking for paid work (Macdonald, 2019). However, whilst the *capacity* to look for work can be shaped by gender and culture, the *decision* to look for work is informed also by one's own understanding of what a good mother is, what is best for one's children, and what makes a meaningful life. For Sarbgit, taking her children to school and being home when they return is essential to living a flourishing life. This is an example of how aspirations can be influenced by the happiness, safety, and well-being of one's family.

6.4.4. Frustrated aspirations

When discussing their employment aspirations, Refiat and Roxanna commented on how their aspirations to work had been frustrated:

> *I am not young anymore. I would like to get a job, but I cannot get a job because I am old. If I had known English before maybe I worked in the kitchen. I wanted to help in children's school, but my husband was not agreeing to that. He did not want me to leave the house even though I worked in the fields in Pakistan and know how to cook.*
>
> *(Refiat)*

> *I wanted to work as a cook because I love cooking, but I don't think I will ever work in a school kitchen. My husband is not well. The doctors say he will need to have his feet chopped off. I will need to care for my husband and do the housework and help the children. What time for work? There is no help. Nobody can help.*
>
> *(Roxanna)*

These extracts suggest that Refiat and Roxanna have given up on their employment aspirations. Mkwananzi (2019) discusses frustrated aspirations in her study with marginalised migrant youth in contexts of disadvantage. Frustrated aspirations arise when low levels of agency combine and interact with the negative influences of social and structural conditions. According to Mzwananzi (2019), this potentially results in individuals resigning their aspirations, whilst 'this resignation is accompanied by lack of belief in oneself and in the social and structural conditions present.' Refiat and Roxanna's experiences and personal circumstances have led them to believe that finding work is impossible for them. The impact of their private lives on their 'capacity to aspire' can be seen in these narratives. The restrictions imposed by Refiat's husband on her freedoms and opportunities when she arrived in the country and her failure to achieve what she saw as valued functionings in her youth (see discussion in Chapter 5), have had a negative influence on her future aspirations. In contrast, Roxanna's feelings of insecurity (due to her husband's diagnosis of diabetes) and lack of family and institutional support undermine her capacity to consider future employment aspirations. For Refiat and Roxanna, these 'feared selves' (Stevenson, 2019: 141) - women who remain unemployed - are the only plausible future given their current circumstances.

6.5 Capability chains and aspiration maps

Many of the aspirations the women talked about can be considered as 'capabilities that can be gained through education' (Vaughan, 2007: 117 – 118). These are listed in figure 6.1 below, and, following Unterhalter and Brighouse (2007), are classified into intrinsic and instrumental aspirations resulting from education[15].

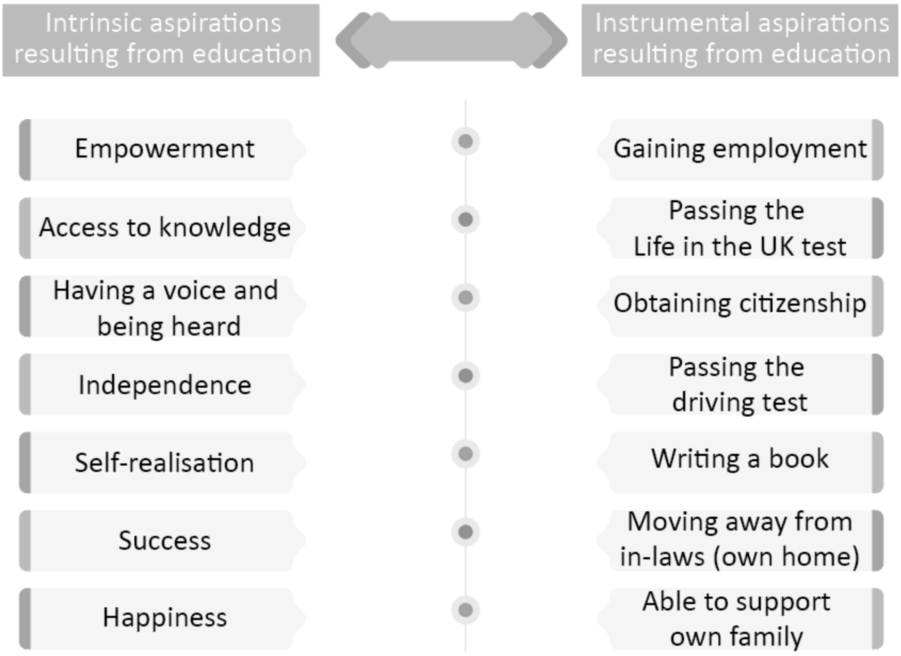
Intrinsic aspirations resulting from education
Instrumental aspirations resulting from education
Empowerment
Access to knowledge
Having a voice and being heard
Independence
Self-realisation
Success
Happiness
Gaining employment
Passing the Life in the UK test
Obtaining citizenship
Passing the driving test
Writing a book
Moving away from in-laws (own home)
Able to support own family

Figure 6.5.1: Intrinsic and instrumental aspirations resulting from education

According to Mkwananzi (2019), there is a close relationship between these two types of aspirations. Similarly, Hart (2012) argues that certain aspirations require the realisation of other aspirations first, a notion which can be associated with Wright's (2012) 'capability chain' and Biggeri et al.'s (2012) 'evolving capacities' concept – the idea that functionings and capabilities can open other valued functionings and capabilities. Improving one's language proficiency, for example, may result in gaining employment, which in turn, may result in more independence.

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[15] Unterhalter and Brighouse (2007) also discuss the positional value of education, but this value was not evident in the women's narratives.

The women all aspire to improve their language proficiency and literacy skills but to Sadia, this is not her ultimate desired achievement (see also Sanam's and Sara's long-term aspirations in section 6.2.2. When asked about her 'possible future self' (Stevenson, 2019: 131), Sadia provided a map of the journey of her life (Appadurai, 2004), a map which is illustrated in figure 6.2. below:

> *In the future, I will be British, and I'll be a successful woman. I will come to the college and then understand how to speak and read and write, then understand the doctor and pass my tests, then get my nationality and get a job and get a separate home from my in-laws as well. Then I will be happy… happy and successful and respected.*
>
> *(Sadia)*

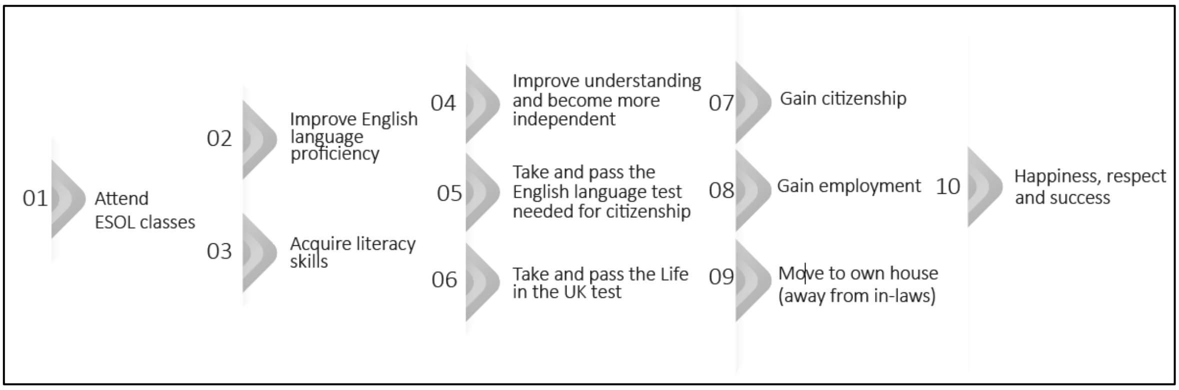

01 Attend ESOL classes
02 Improve English language proficiency
03 Acquire literacy skills
04 Improve understanding and become more independent
05 Take and pass the English language test needed for citizenship
06 Take and pass the Life in the UK test
07 Gain citizenship
08 Gain employment
09 Move to own house (away from in-laws)
10 Happiness, respect and success

Figure 6.1.2: Sadia's aspiration map

For Sadia, the route to her ultimate desired achievement, "*being happy, successful and respected*" is linear: one capability or functioning leads to another. Yet, achieved functionings and capabilities can open other valued functionings and capabilities (Wright, 2012; Biggeri et al., 2012), the route to one's ultimate desired achievement rarely follows a linear path. According to Mkwananzi (2019: 155), the development of functionings and capabilities is 'dynamic and iterative' and dependant on several factors, including cultural norms, familial environments, religious views, educational and employment opportunities and financial support. These conversion factors, some of which have been explored throughout this chapter, can curtail the formation of desired capabilities and functionings.

6.6. Conclusion

I started this chapter by discussing the women's different views on education, the value of learning English and becoming literate in their lives, and their long-term aspirations. Next, I discussed the educational aspirations the women have for their children before providing an account of the work the women value.

Chapter 7

Pedagogies of Possibility: Photovoice and Translanguaging

> *I like coming to the Saturday class. We learn about many topics together and I can always say what I think in Punjabi. [The research mediator] and Alicia help me find the English words and then we practice reading and writing.*
>
> *(Sarbgit)*

7.1. Introduction

Having discussed the women's aspirations for their futures in the previous chapter, in this chapter I aim to contribute to Cooke and Peutrell's (2019: 368) discussion of 'the kind of ESOL we need', a provision that is not only 'fixat[ed] with skills, 'employability', benchmarks and other quasi-market performance measures' (ibid., p. 369), but one, which I argue, can be a social good for promoting 'human development freedom' (Walker, 2006: 168).

In this Chapter, I use the women's accounts of their lives and what they value to extrapolate a list of basic capabilities that could inform ESOL teaching and learning. ESOL can widen the possibilities for flourishing for female LESLLA learners by providing them with a 'capability space' (Walker and Mkwananzi, 2015: 24), a space where their capabilities are nurtured, their cultural wealths are acknowledged and leveraged, and their language and literacy development fostered. To provide the women with this space, the research design in this study included the use of two participatory pedagogical approaches: Photovoice and translanguaging, the latter being referred to by Sarbgit in the extract that opens this chapter.

I explore the effectiveness of these innovative practices in this Chapter. First, I discuss the main tenets of these pedagogical approaches before presenting and analysing the women's Photovoice stories. Here, I highlight how the women draw on their cultural wealths and consider how the use of translanguaging fostered the development of their narrative and autonomy capabilities. Next, I discuss how adopting a translanguaging stance during the Saturday reading and writing classes resulted in enhanced classroom participation and the nurturing of their capability for language and literacy.

The questions that lead the analysis for this chapter are: *How can the women's accounts of their own lives and what they value be used to inform LESLLA teaching and learning? How effective are innovative practices, such as Photovoice and Translanguaging, in nurturing the women's capabilities and uncovering their cultural wealths?*

7.2. Extrapolating educational capabilities

In the previous chapters, I have highlighted how the capability to be educated is crucial for the women in terms of real opportunities for formal schooling and as a conversion factor for the expansion of other capabilities (Terzi, 2007; Vaughan, 2007). In line with Wood and Deprez (2012: 476), and in an effort to 'see each student's development more in terms of what he or she values and less in terms of what we have valued or what we want them to value' I draw on the capability approach as a heuristic tool to examine how ESOL can broaden the women's valued capabilities and functionings.

I have drawn from on the women's accounts of their own lives and what they value, the theory – in particular the works of Nussbaum (2000), Robeyns (2003), Terzi (2007), and Walker (2007), and my own experience, to derive the following theoretical, but non-definite, non-universal list of basic capabilities that can inform ESOL teaching and learning:

1. *Language and literacy*: learning how to read and write in class; practicing English to communicate with others; using new literacies; and developing numeracy skills.
2. *Knowledge*: having access to knowledge which is (1) instrumentally useful for employment, citizenship, and life in the UK; (2) intrinsically interesting; (3) which contributes to the women's general knowledge; development of critical thinking and reflection.
3. *Respect and dignity*: having respect for and from others; being treated with dignity and without discrimination; not being diminished or devalued because of one's gender, religion, race, or language.
4. *Physical and mental health:* being able to be physically and mentally healthy.
5. *Bodily integrity and safety:* being able to be protected from violence.
6. *Autonomy*: being able to have choices, having information on which choices to make, becoming more independent and empowered.
7. *Voice:* being able to contribute to discussions and participate actively in class, not being silenced through pedagogy, the curriculum or power relations in the classroom.

In the following sections, I discuss the implementation of two pedagogical practices that can contribute to the development of the capabilities of women with emerging English language skills, emerging literacy skills and/or limited formal schooling, namely translanguaging and Photovoice.

7.3. Adopting a translanguaging stance

As discussed in Chapter 2, the use of students' home languages (L1) is advantageous for language learning (Cummins, 2000). However, despite research recommendations to value and make pedagogical use of these resources (Cummins, 2017), ESOL classes are still dominated by monolingual norms and practices. Simpson (2020) argues that

> The multilingual reality of ESOL learners' lives tends not to be acknowledged in either ESOL policy or practice, […] suggesting an inherent contradiction in the ESOL policy-practice-research nexus between a monolingual approach to ESOL teaching (on one hand) and (on the other) the multilingual experience of ESOL students outside their classrooms. (p.1)

Moreover, monolingual ESOL instruction for second language learners with emerging English language skills and limited formal schooling has severe consequences for the learners' self-esteem; their 'sense of powerlessness is reinforced either because they are de facto excluded from the classroom or because their life experiences and language resources are excluded' (Auerbach, 1993: 8). To enact social justice and enable the women to use their voices and access knowledge, I rejected monolingualism in the Photovoice sessions and the free reading and writing class. Instead, a translanguaging stance was adopted to redress the linguistic and epistemic exclusion highlighted by Auerbach (1993). Translanguaging gives primacy to repertoires and practices rather than languages. Its advocates argue that there are no borders between languages and that 'there is only one linguistic system' used by bilingual and multilingual individuals (Garcia and Li, 2014: 14), a system made up of a range of communicative repertoires, including the students' expert languages which maximize communicative potential (Garcia, 2009: 140). This is an epistemological shift in ESOL practice (Simpson, 2020), as in translanguaging all linguistic resources are seen as useful for learning not a hindrance to English language acquisition.

Simpson and Bradley (2017) identified four types of translanguaging practices, namely: interlingual, intralingual, intersemiotic and interdiscursive. In this study, I adopted 'interlingual translanguaging', that is 'mediating and interpreting between one societally recognised language and another' (ibid., p.

15). The choice to encourage the women to use their full linguistic repertoire was made to:

1. redress concerns about linguistic and epistemic exclusion by disrupting linguistic hierarchies;
2. facilitate understanding of the content being learned (Clegg and Simpson, 2016);
3. support language and literacy development (Garcia and Li, 2014);
4. provide the women with 'real opportunities […] to tell their stories' and 'the substantive freedom to deploy [their] narrative capital in order to be heard and acknowledged' (Watts, 2008: 100);

7.4. Photovoice Stories

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Razia, Sarbgit and Sanam took multiple photographs as part of the study. I used an adapted version of Photovoice (developed by Wang and Burris, 1997) to provide the women with an opportunity to document their individual realities, share their stories visually, and improve their print literacy and linguistic skills (Strawn and Monama, 2012).

After the women's pictures were developed, the women were asked to consider the photographs they wanted to show others. To locate the nuances of their photographic images, I adjusted Wang's (1999: 188) 'SHOWeD' technique:

1. What do you SEE here?
2. What is really HAPPENING here?
3. How does it relate to OUR lives?
4. WHY does this situation, strength or concern exist?
5. How do we become EMPOWERED by our new social understanding?
6. What can we DO to address these issues?

And asked Razia, Sarbgit and Sanam the following questions, with the help of the research mediator, to encourage self-reflection and language skill development:

1. What is in this photo?
2. What does this photo mean to you?
3. Why did you take this photo?

Once we had discussed these questions, Razia, Sarbgit and Sanam were encouraged to write about each photo individually, or with our help, in a 'co-constructed knowledge and text process' (Liscio and Farrelly, 2019: 148), similar to the Language Experience Approach (LEA, Lypka, 2018). In line with Vygotsky's concept of mediation (Vygotsky, 1978), our interactions with the women during these writing sessions were scaffolded. During this process, we used translanguaging as a mediational tool: the women negotiated the meaning of items of vocabulary in their home languages with the research mediator or confirmed the meaning of words with me if they knew what they wanted to say in English.

To foster the women's language and literacy development, opportunities for collaboration, dialogue and skill development were included in each session. I noted the new vocabulary on the board and encouraged them to listen to their pronunciation before reading them aloud and using them in sentences. These words were copied in their vocabulary notebooks and referred to when writing the short narratives for their photos. The women also practiced the spelling of high frequency words in English before producing their first drafts. Unfortunately, due to time and financial constraints, a public display of the women's stories was not possible, so each story was typed, printed, bound, and given to the women to share with their families. The women were open to the idea of including their stories in a bilingual book co-written with the research mediator to be used for language development in other classes, but institutional factors prevented these materials from being developed.

In the next section, I present a selection of the photos and short narratives from the women's work to bring an awareness to the cultural wealths that the women already possess, with the aim of empowering them from a strengths-based perspective, while broadening mine and other teachers', theoretical perspectives for 'culturally relevant teaching' (Gay, 2002).

7.4.2. Sarbgit: I love my family and coming to college

In these Photovoice stories, the women documented what they have reason to value: their families, social networks, religion, and aspirations. In Sarbgit's Photovoice story, family took centre stage and her familial capital (Yosso, 2005) was evident in several ways. Sarbgit mentions her husband, daughters and her brother-in-law as crucial supports in the short narratives she wrote for images 7.1 – 7.4.

Image 7.1: *These are my husband, my younger daughter, and my nephew. I like this picture because my husband is reading books with the children. My husband always reads books with the children, and he reads with me, too. He helps me study as well.*

Image 7.2: *This is my oldest daughter. She likes to play with Legos, and puzzles. She smiles for the camera. She likes to read all the time. I listen to her read. Her books are very hard so I can't read them yet, but I will one day. I help her with Maths – I am good at Maths.*

Image 7.3: *This is another picture of my daughter. She is eight. My daughter says, "Go to work, mum. You get bored when we are at school. You can work, mum." She is right – I get bored. In India, everyone knows each other – you can just go and visit. It is different here.*

Image 7.4: *This is my brother-in-law. He works in his shop. He is responsible for running the cash and carry. He puts the prices on the products. He says, "Come work at the shop. It's good for you." I go to the shop and help him. I like working at the till because it is easy to work with numbers. My problem is I can't always read the name of the products.*

Research has highlighted the influence of family on students' educational persistence, academic achievement, and formation of life plans (e.g. see Epstein and Sheldon, 2002). Familial capital emerges in several ways in these pictures and short narratives. Sarbgit discussed how her husband helps her with her studies during the interviews (see Chapter 5) and in this Photostory she shared how her daughter provides her with encouragement to find employment and how her brother-in-law encourages her to help in his shop. Sarbgit's photos also demonstrate how her home is one where literacy is valued: her husband frequently reads to the children and her older daughter reads to Sarbgit. Familial capital thus supports Sarbgit's educational and employment aspirations through words of encouragement, a constructive literacy environment, help with her studies, and access to informal work.

A notable finding in these short narratives is Sarbgit's mathematical knowledge, 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et. al., 1992) she accesses to support her daughter's mathematical learning and to use the cash register in the shop. It is also worth highlighting Sarbgit's self-belief in her ability to improve her literacy skills, a positive conversion factor evident when she proudly states that although she cannot read difficult books yet, she will be able to in the future.

Sarbgit's short narratives for images 7.5 and 7.6 illustrate the importance of her social and community network. Sarbgit's social capital (Yosso, 2005) is evident when she discusses the support provided by myself and the women in this study.

Image 7.5: *This is me. I am at college. I like studying English. I like my friends and my teacher. My teacher and my friends help me understand. They help me with English, and they help me with advice. They give me advice about children, about shopping, about everything! And they help me if I have a problem.*

Image 7.6: *This is my teacher, Alicia. I love my teacher because she helps me study. She is a good teacher because she listens to us and helps us understand English. She gives us advice, too, and tells us not to give up – to continue studying.*

In these short narratives, Sarbgit highlighted the role of her teacher and peers in providing her with advice about life in general and encouragement to continue studying. Sarbgit's social and community network is a source of extra knowledge and emotional support, both of which can help her navigate obstacles at home, within the Further Education system and broader British society. Sarbgit's teacher and friends are clearly positive conversion factors: they enhance Sarbgit's opportunity to be and do things she values. As discussed in Chapter 2, teachers and peers can influence students' capabilities, not only in terms of their academic achievement, but more broadly, influence their continued participation in school and contribute to a sense of affiliation to the school environment (Walker, 2019).

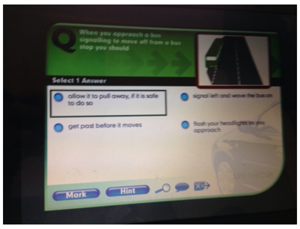
7.4.3. Sanam: I would like to drive a car

Sanam's Photovoice story was centred around her aspirations. In the short narratives she wrote for images 7.7 to 7.9, Sanam discusses two of her future ambitions: to learn English and to drive a car.

Image 7.7: *This is me. I am working on the computer. I like working on the computer because you can learn English – you can read, and you can listen. I want to learn English so I can drive a car.*

Theory Test

Image 7.8: *This is my driving Theory Test book. I would like to pass the driving test, so I study the book every day, but the book is hard, and I don't understand.*



When you approach a bus signalling to move off from a bus stop you should

Select 1 Answer

○ allow it to pull away, if it is safe to do so
○ signal left and wave the bus on
○ get past before it moves
○ flash your headlights as you approach

Image 7.9: *This is a picture of my driving Theory Test DVD. I practice and practice on the computer so I can take my driving test but many times I don't understand.*

Sanam's aspiration to learn English to be able to drive a car was discussed in the previous chapter. In this section, I highlight her educational efforts to realise these aspirations. The pictures and captions above illustrate Sanam's agency, in particular her self-efficacy (Kim et al., 2015): she uses the computer to study English independently, reads the driving Theory Test book to prepare for the exam, and uses the CD to assess her level of understanding. These actions are directly related to becoming what she values, however, they are not sufficient for success. Sarbgit's current educational functionings, that is her English proficiency level and literacy skills, constrain her personal efforts to pass the driving test. This is evident in the short narratives for images 7.8 and 7.9 where Sanam states that she does not understand what she is reading in the book or on the screen.

Images 7.10 – 7.12, and their accompanying short narratives, foreground the role of social and familial capital in enabling and constraining Sanam's aspirational capital.

Image 7.10: *My husband bought this car for me. Last Sunday, he took me to a big area. He asked me to drive, and I did for a little bit, but then I stalled the car. I became very nervous and couldn't start the car again and when I did, I almost crashed the car! My husband was very upset. He sold the car a few hours later. I miss my car. I loved it. I cried a lot.*

Image 7.11: *This is me and Sarbgit. We are in college, in our Saturday class. I like this class because I read and write and I learn new things. I like coming to college and talking to the teacher and the other ladies because that helps me learn faster. My husband sold my car but I still want drive. I am studying more English and I practice and practice more on the computer so I can have a car again.*

Image 7.12: *This is my teacher, Alicia. I love her because she works hard with us. She has patience with us and does not get upset when we do not understand. She teaches us English. I work hard in class because when I learn more English, I will take my driving test.*

In Sanam's view, ESOL classes are vital for achieving her aspirations. Underpinning her short narrative, there is a strong desire to achieve freedom and autonomy – a desire that is both real and symbolic. Sanam recognises that in order to realise these 'persistent aspirations' (Mkwananzi, 2019: 101) she must learn English first. Sanam's social and community network, made up of the same actors as Sarbgit's, is a positive conversion factor – a source of embodied support and one presented as having a positive effect on her educational achievements. Her husband's actions, on the other hand, could be interpreted as a negative conversion factor: his response to Sanam stalling the car and its subsequent sale, resulted in Sanam not having the means to practice for her driving test. Whether her husband was concerned for her safety or re-evaluated the feasibility of her aspirations at that point, is not clear in this story. What is clear, however, is Sanam's 'grit' – her 'perseverance and passion for long-term goals' (Duckworth and Quinn, 2009: 166) and her 'resistant capital' (Yosso, 2005). Despite her husband's actions, Sanam remains motivated, perhaps even more so, to persevere in her language classes and engage in independent study to realise her aspirations.

7.4.4. Razia: Being a Muslim is important to me

The importance of religion to Razia's identity is clear in her Photovoice story. This can be seen in the short narratives she wrote for images 7.13 and 7.14.

Image 7.13: *This is me praying. Being a Muslim, it is important we pray five times a day. I ask God [Allah] to guide me and help me with my studies.*

Image 7.14: *I like to wear a black hijab because our beloved prophet's wives wore black. Most people do not mind what I wear. However, one day I got on the bus and the bus driver didn't let me get on because of my niqab. I got off the bus and was very upset and nervous. People should not be discriminated because of their religion.*

Razia's spiritual capital is evident, for instance, in the short narrative that accompanies image 7.13. Here she shared how she asks God (Allah) for guidance and help every day. According to Liscio and Farrelly (2019: 141), ‘spiritual capital is the foundation for life choices and decisions; it provides the strength to continue’ and ‘offers the source of hope for meaning in life and the belief that [individuals] are being cared for and guided by someone other than themselves.’ Razia’s beliefs are evident in her choice of garment: she wears the niqab as a commitment to her faith. In her view, dress requirements in Islam should be inspired by the Prophet’s wives, who were fully covered. According to Hasan (2011), like the ideal of the Virgin Mary in Christianity, the wives of the Prophet Muhammad are seen as the ultimate role models for women in Islam. To Razia, the niqab is an expression of religious observance and piety. This suggests agency on Razia’s part, as she acts upon her understanding of her religion when making the choice of wearing the niqab in public.

Freedom of religion or belief is included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Human Rights Act in the UK. Although women have the freedom to wear religious symbols, including Muslim garments in Britain, Muslim women continue to face harassment for this choice. Mason-Bish and Zempi (2019) argue that this harassment is fuelled by racism, Islamohobia and misogyny. Another form of prejudice highlighted in the literature is the association of the niqab with religious radicalization, terrorism, and violence (see Piela, 2015). Peutrell (2019: 53) adds that in his study of ESOL practitioners’ views of citizenship, ‘[t]he niqab or veil was […] seen as indicating a desire among some migrants to maintain distance from British society and norms; its description by one participant as aggressively extreme and ‘culturally inept’’. Clearly, the agency that Razia displays is not usually recognised.

In the narrative that accompanies image 7.14, Razia shared the bus incident referred to in Chapter 1. Razia’s harassment and exclusion from public transport led to feelings of insecurity and fear. However, it is important to highlight that Razia’s understanding of her right to express her religious identity had advanced by the time she wrote the narrative. Razia now understood the incident as an act of discrimination and racism and was determined to defend her free choice if the situation arose again (see discussion at the end of the chapter), displaying evidence of resistant capital (Yosso, 2005).

Social capital (Yosso, 2005) and navigational capital were also evident in Razia's photos and narratives for images 7.15 to 7.18. Razia discussed the support provided by her teachers (her Qur'an teacher and myself) other students in the classroom, and friends in the community.

Image 7.15 (not shown): *This is my Qur'an teacher and me. I respect her very much because I didn't know how to read the Qur'an before and she taught me. Qur'an is an important book and all Muslim people should learn how to read it.*

WAY OUT
Enquiries
Telephone

Image 7.16: *This is my teacher, Alicia. She teaches us English. I like her because she is very polite and friendly. She always smiles and helps us. She reminds us to study every day and gives us advice.*

Image 7.17 (not shown): *These are all my college friends. We study together in the same class. They are nice. They are very nice to me. We are from different countries and speak different languages, but we help each other learn English and learn about life in the UK.*

Image 7.18 (not shown): *In this picture I am attending a behaviour management class for children. This class helped me improve my younger daughter's behaviour. The class was in English but another lady helped me understand because she translated everything the teacher said.*

In a similar way to Sarbgit's and Sanam's narratives, Razia highlighted the role of her teachers, peers, and friends in providing her with advice about life in general and encouragement to continue studying. As mentioned previously, these are positive conversion factors that enhance her opportunity to be and do things she values.

In this Photostory, it is evident that Razia's actions and level of agency convert her capability to be educated into a functioning. Razia discussed her religious capital in these accounts, sharing how reading and praying from the Qur'an are important to her. These are practices which she is able to engage with because she attends Qur'an classes and which afford her an opportunity to develop her oral language in Arabic, practice her home language, and make links between these two languages (see also discussion of literacy capital in Chapter 5).

In addition to her religious literacy practices, in image and narrative 7.18, Razia also shared that she has attended a behaviour management class for children at college. This is a class generally aimed at native speakers and ESOL students who are proficient in the language. Although Razia could not understand the teacher, given her level of English at the time, she benefitted from the course. Translation allowed Razia to make sense of what was being said and participate in class much as the advocates of translanguaging (see section 7.2) suggest it might. This is in line with the arguments put forward by advocates of translanguaging in section 7.2.

7.4.5. Photovoice stories and translanguaging to develop capabilities and uncover capital wealths

Although there was no formal evaluation of the outcomes of the Photovoice stories, the three women's level of participation in this project; their pride in the pictures they took and the narratives they wrote, their families' support and help in taking photographs, and their investment in their language learning and literacy acquisition are important markers of success.

In terms of capabilities, the Photovoice stories, and the use of translanguaging, fostered the development of several capabilities. By allowing the women to articulate their thoughts using their full linguistic repertoire (their expert languages, English or a combination of both/various languages), the women's capability to use their voice to tell their own stories, i.e. their 'narrative capability' (Watts, 2008: 100), was advanced. The women's capability for autonomy was also enhanced by allowing them to choose what to photograph and encouraging them to articulate what they have reason to value in their own lives without any 'hegemonic imposition' from myself (Watts, 2008: 106). Discussing the photographs and writing the short narratives built the women's language and literacy skills and developed the connection between digital literacy and linguistic skills.

In terms of the content of the Photovoice stories, the women wrote about experiences, funds of knowledge and social contacts, which often go 'unrecognized and unacknowledged' (Yosso, 2015: 69). The Photovoice stories also uncovered other ways in which the women draw on their familial, social, aspirational, and spiritual capital to enhance their opportunities to be and do things they value, further dispelling the idea that the notion of deficit might legitimately be applied to them.

7.5. Saturday Classes: A Translanguaging Participatory Space

As mentioned in Chapter 3, to thank the women for their participation, I taught an additional Saturday class for the duration of the fieldwork. The class was based on Participatory ESOL pedagogies (Archer and Newman, 2003; Auerbach, 1992; Bryers et al., 2013; Cooke, Winstanley and Bryers, 2015) and was attended by Razia, Roxanna, Sara, Sarbgit and Sanam. Instead of relying on pre-planned lessons, the content of each session emerged from the women's questions, thoughts, and experiences. The classroom was a democratic communicative space where we learnt together through dialogue. The women were encouraged to articulate their thoughts in English or their home languages, with the research mediator providing support. The women's multilingual discourses and translanguaging practices, were used as 'mediational tools to create expanded zones for learning' (Martin-Beltran, 2014: 211).

7.5.1. A classroom discussion about integration and terrorism

Two extracts are presented here to highlight how adopting a translanguaging stance resulted in participation in a discussion about integration and terrorism, topics not generally included in the Pre-Entry curriculum, a curriculum that has tended to be focused on the acquisition of mechanical literacy skills and functional English. The discussion examined in this section took place in January 2016, shortly after the then Prime Minster, David Cameron, announced plans to launch a £20 million fund to help tens of thousands of Muslim women learn English in a government drive to build community integration and counter extremism.

Extract 1 below illustrates how a translanguaging pedagogy allowed for the co-construction of a definition of integration.

Classroom discussion: Extract 1

Early morning. Research mediator, Alicia, Sarbgit, Sara and Roxanna present in the room.

Research mediator [in English]:	*Alicia, I was telling the women that I heard in the news that the government is going to pay more money for Muslim women to learn English. That's good, right? But I did not understand what was said about terrorism.*
Research mediator [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*
Alicia [in English]:	*Yes, it is good, but problematic. The Prime Minister is allocating £20m for classes for Muslim women who speak little or no English. What he said is that this a way to help women integrate, a way to help them feel more British, so they do not listen to the message coming from Daesh.*
Research mediator [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*
Sara [in English]:	*Integrate. What does that mean? Is that like when you go to have a visa done?*
Research mediator [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*
Sarbgit [in Punjabi]:	*I don't think that is right. Isn't integration when you mix up with British people? Not just Indian or Pakistani people?*
Research mediator [in English]:	*[Provides translation]*
The women [in Punjabi]:	*[Crosstalk]*

Alicia [in English]:	*Roxanna, what do you think?*
Roxanna [in English]:	*Open.*
Alicia [in English]:	*Open…what do you mean?*
Roxanna [in Punjabi]:	*Integration is when you are not closed to other people – you are open to making friends with British people, not just with Pakistani or Indian people.*
Research mediator [in English]:	*[Provides translation]*
Alicia [in English]:	*I like that… that you equate integration to being open.*
Research mediator [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*
Sarbgit [in English]:	*Yes, but you speak English first. Go to college and study and make British friends.*
Research mediator [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*
Alicia [in English]:	*So, are you saying that women need to speak English to be able to integrate? And college can help?*
Research mediator [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*
Sarbgit [in Punjabi]:	*Yes, yes. Women must go to college to study and learn English.*
Research mediator [in English]:	*[Provides translation]*
Sara [in English]:	*I think I understand. Integrate is being part of British life – being open to having British friends and going to school and everything, but also to speak English.*
Research mediator [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*
The women [in Punjabi]:	*[Crosstalk] Yes, yes.*
Alicia [in English]:	*Yes, but integration is not just your responsibility. British people, institutions and the government have a responsibility, too.*
Research mediator [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*
Sara [in English]:	*Maybe. But, I don't think all British people agree with you, Alicia.*
Sara [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*

Research suggests that translanguaging may promote better understanding of class content (Paulsrud et al., 2017). This is clearly illustrated in the extract above. Sara's view of integration as having a passport is a view of citizenship shared by many learners (see discussion in Chapter 5). Through translanguaging, Sarbgit and Roxanna provided their views, in English, Punjabi and a mix of both languages (not illustrated in the transcript for ease of reading) and contributed to the discussion. Through questioning and the use of translanguaging by the research mediator and the women, a definition was co-constructed, albeit one where integration is viewed as primarily the responsibility of migrant women (who should learn English, go to college, and make British friends). This is a notion that is widely held and supported by other migrants in the country (Han, Starkey and Green, 2010) and is a recurrent theme in public discourse and citizenship policy (Simpson, 2019). However, this definition does not consider the role of the British population, institutions, and government, a distinction that I highlight, but one which Sara argues is not necessarily shared by the wider British population.

Research also emphasises the role of translanguaging in helping students make their voices heard by others (Garcia, 2009). In the following extract, the women used their full linguistic repertoire to challenge views of Islam as a religion of war and terrorism and of competence in English as essential to countering extremism.

Classroom discussion – Extract 2

Research mediator, Alicia, Sarbgit, Sara, Roxanna and Razia present in the room.

Sara [in English]:	*Alicia, you said Daesh before. What is it?*
Research mediator [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*
Alicia [in English]:	*Do you know what ISIS is?*
Sara [in English]:	*Terrorists? [Sarbgit nods in agreement]*
Research mediator [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*
Razia and Roxanna [in English]:	*I don't understand.*

Alicia [in English]:	*Yes, ISIS is a terrorist group. A group of Muslim men that want to create a land that is holy, where only good Muslim people live. If they do not think someone is a good Muslim or if someone is their enemy, they kill them. This is what is happening in Syria – in the name of Islam.*
Research mediator [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*
Research mediator [in English]:	*This is not Islam.*
Razia [in Punjabi]:	*These are not Muslim beliefs. Islam is a religion of peace, of understanding, not of killing.* *[Roxanna and the research mediator nod in agreement]*
Research mediator [in English]:	*[Provides translation]*
Razia [in Punjabi]:	*There is nothing in Islam that says that people need to kill. This is their own thinking. They are using Islam for what they want. This is wrong.* *[Roxanna and the research mediator nod in agreement]*
Research mediator [in English]:	*[Provides translation]*
The women:	*[Crosstalk – nods of agreement]*
Alicia [in English]:	*Thanks for sharing your thinking about your religion. It is really horrible what is happening.*
Research mediator [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*
The women:	*[Crosstalk – nods of agreement] Yes, yes, bad… wrong…*
Sara [in English]:	*What has ISIS got to do with learning English?*
Alicia [in English]:	*Well, the Prime Minister suggested that if women don't speak English, then they won't integrate into British society. And if they don't integrate neither might their children. And if the children do not feel British then they are at risk of listening to terrorists and might leave the country to go to Syria and join ISIS.*
Research mediator [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*
The women:	[Crosstalk] *No, no, no…wrong*
Alicia [in English]:	*Wrong?*
Sara [in English]:	*Yes, this is wrong. Even if you don't speak English and you don't have British friends you can tell your son, "That's wrong. We don't do that. We don't kill people."*
Sara [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*
Sarbgit [in Punjabi]:	*Values don't have a language. It doesn't matter if you speak English or Punjabi or Urdu or Arabic. You're going to teach your children good values in your language.*

Roxanna [in Punjabi]:	*I remind my children to be good all the time. [The women and the research mediator nod in agreement.]*
Razia [in Punjabi]:	*I tell my children they must be good people all the time. [The women and the research mediator nod in agreement.]*
Research mediator [in English]:	*Please, wait, wait. Let me tell Alicia! [Provides translation]*
Alicia [in English]:	*So, is the Prime Minister wrong?*
Research mediator [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*
The women:	*[Crosstalk – nods of agreement] Yes, yes…*
Sara [in English]:	*Yes, he is wrong. I don't like this politician. I bet he is not Labour.*
Research mediator [in Punjabi]:	*[Provides translation]*
The women:	*[laughter]*

The idea of Islam as a religion of war and terrorism is one espoused by anti-Islamic rhetoric in public discourse in the UK (Shaffer, 2016). The research mediator, Razia and Roxanna did not share this understanding of their religion, offering instead a counter-narrative, with Razia strongly stating that "*Islam is a religion of peace, of understanding, not of killing."* The women's contributions in this discussion also challenge the notion that all Muslims are aggressive or that they think it is right to kill in the name of religion. As Razia explained, *'this is the jihadists' own thinking. They are using Islam for what they want'*. In addition to these contributions, the women also disagreed with these hegemonic views of English proficiency as essential to countering extremism, stating strongly that '*values don't have a language',* a counter-narrative against dominant policy discourse.

7.5.2. Developing capabilities through dialogue and translanguaging

Although not evident in the extracts above, these discussions nurtured the women's capability for language and literacy. The women learnt new vocabulary, practised their spelling, read sentences, and wrote Language Experience Approach (LEA) texts. The Saturday classes provided the women with the opportunity to 'bring the outside in' (Baynham, 2006) and in that way share their everyday experiences, life stories, questions or pressing issues. To ensure the classes resulted in a ‘dynamic, agentive and contingent learning environment’ (ibid., p. 38), the women were encouraged to use their full linguistic repertoire and participate actively in the classroom. Thus, a participatory, dialogical approach to teaching and learning, underpinned by translanguaging, fostered the women’s capabilities for knowledge, voice, autonomy, respect and dignity. As Jones (2013:22 cited in Labadi, 2018) argues, discussing pressing issues in language classes allows ‘learners to construct a sense of who they are and to negotiate and resist identity positions assigned to them by cultural, social and political contexts.’ Indeed, the women engaged critically with the notions presented and challenged the stereotypes being discussed in the news - stereotypes which presented their religion and values as something they did not recognise.

The government’s cultural stereotyping discussed in this chapter is an example of ‘epistemic injustice’, in particular ‘hermeneutical injustice’, i.e. ‘interpretations of [a] group’s social experiences that are biased because [they have been] insufficiently influenced by the subject group, and therefore unduly influenced by more hermeneutically powerful groups’ (Fricker, 2007: 155). By framing Muslim women with emerging literacy skills and limited schooling as deficient and in need of additional language instruction to counter terrorism, political discourse disregards the women’s ‘moral equality and valuable competences’ (Stojanov, 2020: 75).

7.6. Conclusion

I began this chapter by presenting the basic capabilities for educational functionings for female LESLLA learners that can inform second language pedagogies. I discussed translanguaging next, a pedagogy that has the potential of supporting the development of the women’s capabilities. Then, I presented the Photovoice project and the women’s stories alongside an examination of the capital wealths that contribute to the range of resources they draw on to develop their capabilities. Finally, I shared two classroom discussions to illustrate the benefits of the women engaging in class discussions using their full linguistic repertoire in the classroom.

Chapter 8

Reflection and Conclusions

I have learnt a lot since starting college, but I want to do more. I'd like to learn how to cook English food – my children are tired of my cooking! Are there any cooking courses at college? Or maybe a sewing class?

(Roxanna)

8.1. Introduction

Despite the super-diverse multilingual reality of language use in Britain (Vertovec, 2007), the dominant linguistic ideologies which underlie immigration policies in the UK are pervasively 'monolingualist' and 'monolingualizing' (Simpson and Whiteside, 2012). As discussed throughout the thesis, political rhetoric insists that all migrants have an obligation to learn English, with competence in the language being presented as necessary for integration, social cohesion, citizenship and to combat extremism. Language proficiency is also being used as a gate-keeping mechanism preventing spouses, particularly those from non-European, non-English speaking countries (who have emerging English language and literacy skills), from realizing their citizenship entitlement in practice – a politicization which not only keeps migrants like Roxanna, whose quote opens this chapter, in an 'anxious liminal space of exclusion' (Morrice, 2017), but which also has a significant impact on their 'capability to be educated' and their capability to achieve other valuable capabilities and functionings (Terzi, 2007).

The ideologies which have shaped the formation and implementation of these policies, which are by no means uncontested, are also evident in public discourses on immigration in general. As Gabrielatos and Baker (2008) have documented, some UK public discourse about migrants from non-European and non-English speaking countries is overwhelmingly negative, Islamophobic, racist, hostile and prejudiced. Migrants in the UK lead their lives within a social and political climate in which immigration is highly debated and face a number of formidable challenges including settling in an unfamiliar place, learning about a different culture, dealing with feelings of displacement, trauma or loss, securing employment and acquiring English language skills. Yet, for some migrants these challenges are compounded by their emerging literacy skills, factors which may position them as 'challenging', 'problematic', 'non-agentic' or 'deficient' (Gunn, 2003) in second classrooms where passivity, a lack of skills, a lack of understanding, a lack of family support, or a lack of desire for education may be assumed (Shapiro and McDonald, 2017).

To understand the lived experiences of LESLLA female migrants, in this thesis I explored the pre- and post-migration experiences, educational trajectories and future aspirations of seven marriage migrants: Razia, Refiat, Roxanna, Sadia, Sanam, Sara and Sarbgit - migrant spouses from India and Pakistan who have settled in the East Midlands and who have emerging English language skills, emerging literacy skills and/or limited formal schooling.

The methodology of this research study drew largely on its epistemological lenses (feminist research and feminist standpoint theory). These framed not only the formulation of the research design, but also how it was conducted. As illustrated in chapter 3, collecting the data for this study involved negotiating not only differences of language, education levels and perceptions (mine and the women's) but also issues of patriarchy, autonomy, and power. Specific attention was also paid to how translations were used, the ethical underpinnings of the study and my own positionality.

In order to provide a 'balance of stories' (Achebe, 2003), a theoretical fusion approach was adopted as the conceptual framework in this study: a fusion of the Community Cultural Wealth (CWW) framework and the Capability Approach. The Community Cultural Wealth framework (Yosso, 2005) was used to counter deficit thinking by highlighting the cultural wealths the women draw on to navigate their lives and persist and succeed in education.

The capability approach (Sen, 1992; Nussbaum, 2000) provided me with the theoretical tools to examine what the women value, interrogate the freedoms the women have to achieve their valued beings and doings, and investigate how their language learning and literacy acquisition are supported – or not – in UK government policy and ESOL provision.

Five questions guided this study:

1. What were the experiences of the women before migrating to the UK (in terms of their childhoods, education and marriages)?
    a. What cultural wealths did they draw on?
    b. What structural conditions enabled or constrained these experiences?
2. What have the experiences of the women been since settling in the UK (in terms of their perceptions of the country, access to formal education, family life and English language and literacy use)?
    a. What cultural wealths do they draw on?
    b. What structural conditions enable or constrain these experiences?
3. What aspirations do the women have for their futures?
4. How can the women's accounts of their own lives and what they value be used to inform LESLLA teaching and learning?
5. How effective are innovative practices, such as Photovoice and Translanguaging, in nurturing the women's capabilities and uncovering their cultural wealths?

In this chapter, I summarise the answers to these research questions, put forward an agenda for further research in the field of LESLLA teaching and learning and provide a personal reflection.

8.2. Summary

8.2.1. What were the experiences of the women before migrating to the UK (in terms of their childhoods, education and marriages)?

The accounts discussed in chapter 4 provide a nuanced understanding of the pre-migration experiences of the women in this study: women who have experienced several unfreedoms but who also bring cultural wealths and funds of knowledge to the classroom. The women's pre-migration narratives illustrate how during childhood, basic necessities, such as food and rest, were not always met. These constrained capabilities for growth impacted negatively on their physical and psychological well-being and limited their ability to pursue education. However, the women framed their childhood accounts in the context of strong familial relationships, which have contributed to their familial, aspirational, resistant and navigational capitals.

The women's narratives also illustrated how poverty, poor accessibility to schools and gendered cultural expectations played a detrimental role in their 'capability to be educated'. These issues, which stem from broader economic, political, and societal structures, limited what the women could have become and done in their home countries as 'education plays a fertile role, opening up options for many kinds across the board' (Nussbaum, 2001: 42 – 44). They also provided an understanding of why learning English and acquiring literacy are important to the women – their experience of unfreedoms have influenced their current investment in education and their future aspirations, contributing to their resistant and aspirational capitals.

With regards to their arranged marriages and their migration to the UK, Sarbgit, Roxanna, Sara, Sanam and Razia's narratives suggest some level of agency in the decision-making process of their arranged marriages. Sarbgit, Roxanna and Sara negotiated their choice of spouse, which was influenced by their aspiration to migrate to the UK, with their families. Sanam agreed to enter a polygynous marriage with her British Pakistani cousin because it offered her the capability to leave her village, whereas Razia married her cousin because they were a good match. Refiat and Sadia's participation in the decision-making of their arranged marriages, on the other hand, was limited to a complicit type of agency (Sahu, Jeffery and Nakeeran, 2016) – but a situation which Sadia characterises as deception by her husband's family.

Sanam and Razia's narratives regarding their eventual migration to the UK, on the other hand, highlight not only the role of the British state in shaping their transnational movements and eventual settlement in England, but also the increasing use of the 'technology of governmentality' (Foucault, 2007; Yuval-Davis, 2012) by the British government to regulate marriage migration.

8.2.2. What have the experiences of the women been since settling in the UK (in terms of their perceptions of the country, access to formal education, family life and English language and literacy use)?

The accounts discussed in chapter 5 provide a nuanced understanding of the post-migration experiences of the women in this study. Some of their initial perceptions of the country were negative: Razia, Sanam, Sara and Roxanna experienced a sense of negative dislocation when arriving in the country due to differences between the UK and India/Pakistan, dislocation that can be considered as 'culture shock' (Oberg, 1960). This sense of dislocation had a significant impact on Roxanna, who did not leave her house for one year because she had not experienced this type of weather before. Refiat and Sarbit, on the other hand, had more positive initial perceptions of the UK, perceptions which may have been influenced by the hardship they experienced in their home countries or by their aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005). Here, the women's sense of dislocation and aspirations acted as positive and negative conversion factors, respectively.

In terms of the challenges the women have experienced since settling in the UK, some of the women have experienced serious forms of unfreedom

(Goodchild, 2016). Sara, Sadia and Sanam experienced domestic violence perpetuated by their in-laws. By mobilizing their social, aspirational and resistant capitals, the women were able to stop this abuse and achieve what they had reason to value (Sen, 1984): Sara convinced her husband to teach her English and Sadia demanded new accommodation. Although Sarbgit and Razia have both experienced more than one instance of racism, they did not see these incidents as connected or were aware of the political climate preoccupying society at the time, views which add to their powerlessness and vulnerability.

In terms of language learning and their linguistic and literacy capitals, engaging with literacy mediators has allowed the women to extend their own literacy skills (Papen, 2010). It is worth noting here that this is an adaptive preference for the women (Sen, 2005): they aspire to be independent – to have the ability to communicate with others and engage in literacy practices without requiring support – support which sometimes brought feelings of shame (Chase and Walker, 2013). In terms of developing their literacy skills at home, the women mobilized their spiritual capital and engaged in religious-related literacy practices, some of which have resulted in being able to segment phonemes in Arabic or read more fluently. Participating in spiritual and religious spaces has also contributed to the women's linguistic, resistant, social and navigational capitals. By attending Qur'an classes, for instance, the women have developed their multilingualism in other spaces: they were able to practice their English or Arabic skills with students who were in their classes but who are not Indian or Pakistani.

The women's literacy progress could be considered limited if assessed using the 'institutionalised literacy capital' (Comptom-Lilly and Naya, 2016) valued in the curriculum. If evaluated in terms of the capability approach, the women's achievements are significant. They allow them to have some freedom - freedom to use the phone independently and freedom to go shopping on their own.

The women's capability to remain in education can be constrained by several conversion factors, including cost, availability and time of classes, domestic duties, patriarchal attitudes and gender norms.

Although the women expressed nostalgic longing for life in their home countries, they all proudly stated they were British. The women qualified their Britishness in two ways: by being passport holders and by feeling at home in Britain. Like other women in the diaspora, the women explained that they feel more like themselves when they communicate in their home languages. These allow them to express what they value without seeking help. To the women in this study, English language fluency is essential not only to achieve their valued doings but would to be who they want to be. The women's aspirations are discussed next.

8.2.3. What aspirations do the women have for their futures?

The women's aspirations for their futures relate to their own education, their children's future and employment. The women have high aspirational capital. Education has a central role in their present and future lives: it is valued as a functioning (being educated), as well as a capability to achieve other valuable functionings and capabilities. The values the women place on education and their aspirations, like those of Suart's (2019) participants, 'are driven by a desperate need to live a better life than they have been living' (p. 357). The accounts discussed in this chapter suggest that the women value education for broader and more complex reasons than just attainment and employability, the priorities that drive current FE policy and funding. Among the intrinsic capabilities that the women value are empowerment, access to knowledge, having a voice and self-sufficiency. The instrumental capabilities that the women value include English proficiency, being literate, gaining employment and obtaining citizenship.

With regards to the aspirations the women with school-aged children have for their daughters and sons, these include doing well at school and going to university, but not pursuing a particular career. The views expressed by the women were embedded in their own educational experiences – experiences which they referred to when encouraging their children to succeed academically. The women mobilised familial, economic, ethnic, and aspirational capital to support their children's education. The extracts discussed in this chapter also stress the importance of social capital, that is social networks such as schools and teachers, in raising awareness of migrant children's possible career and study options.

Some of the women also aspire to gain employment. Razia, Sadia, Sanam and Sarbgit aspire to get paid employment but cite English language proficiency, their emerging literacy skills and family responsibilities as factors constraining their ability to enter the labour market. Refiat and Roxanna, on the other hand, have resigned their aspirations to be employed due to their personal circumstances.

8.2.4. How can the women's accounts of their own lives and what they value be used to inform LESLLA teaching and learning?

The women's accounts of their lives and what they value were used to extrapolate a list of basic capabilities that could inform ESOL teaching and learning. The list includes six capabilities: (1) language and literacy, (2) knowledge, (3) respect and dignity, (4) bodily integrity and safety, (5) autonomy, and (6) voice. This proposed list is theoretical, but non-definite and non-universal. It has not been discussed with the women, nor has it been defended with other ESOL practitioners - criteria which Robeyns (2003) argues should be met when using the capability approach as a heuristic tool. However, if we are to achieve 'equity from below' (Unterhalter, 2009), we must have a way to evaluate ESOL pedagogies and ESOL provision not just in terms of language learning, but also as a conversion factor for the expansion of other valued capabilities, hence the creation of this list from what the women have said to me is justified.

8.2.5. How effective are innovative practices, such as Photovoice and Translanguaging, in nurturing the women's capabilities and uncovering their cultural wealths?

Photovoice was used to uncover the women's cultural wealths and develop their language and literacy skills. Whilst not evaluated formally, I believe this pedagogical approach was successful in not only achieving these two objectives but in developing the women's 'narrative capability' and their capability for autonomy. Translanguaging was key in broadening the women's capabilities during the Photovoice project and the Saturday reading and writing classes. These classes were underpinned by a participatory pedagogy: the women were encouraged to bring the outside in and engage in discussion and debates through the use of their full linguistic repertoire. This approach fostered the women's capabilities for knowledge, voice, autonomy, respect, and dignity. The capability for bodily integrity and safety, as well as the capability for physical and mental health, were not fostered during our classroom discussions.

8.3. Overall reflections

The study has shown how pre- and post-migration experiences have affected the women's capabilities and their capacity for agency and decision-making, both positively and negatively. The women have shown multiple forms of capital present in their lives, including high aspirational and familial capitals, that enable them to persist in education despite the several barriers they face. Their cultural wealths, which act as positive conversion factors, support the development of their capabilities but in order to convert these into functionings, it is crucial that we provide the women with further support to expand their capabilities. Understanding and addressing the specific personal, sociocultural and political contexts in which the women develop as learners is essential to achieving ‘equity from below’ (Unterhalter, 2009).

ESOL classes can be an empowering social resource that allows the women ‘to lead the lives they have reason to value and to enhance the real choices they have’ (Sen 1999: 293). For women who have experienced a lifetime of unequal access to education, this means adult language schooling that provides them with a ‘capability space’ (Walker and Mkwananzi, 2015: 24) where they can improve their literacy and English language skills, obtain general knowledge, develop their life plans, and realise some of their aspirations. Primary and secondary schools, on the other hand, can help enhance their children’s capability to aspire by working with the women to increase their children’s capability to realise their aspirations (Hart, 2013, Scandone, 2018) and widen their horizons of possibility (Crozier and Davis, 2006).

The women’s views on the political discourse in the extracts included in chapter 7, for instance, are evidence of the ‘hermeneutical injustice’ (Fricker, 2007: 155) the women experience. ESOL can also play a role in empowering them to ‘better defend their positions as well as their rights, challenge unhelpful stereotypes, become more audible and in the process transform both themselves and the communities they live in’ (Hepworth, 2019: 201). The women’s experiences are discussed in policy, but their views are rarely sought. By encouraging them to bring the outside in and engage in meaningful debates, in which participation is mediated through translanguaging practices, we can ensure the potential for their ‘epistemic contributions’ is not overlooked (Walker, 2020), thus fostering their democratic participation and ‘political empowerment’ capability (Robeyns, 2003: 72).

8.4. Recommendations for further research

This research may be expanded in the following ways:

1. Carrying out a similar narrative inquiry with female LESLLA learners from other cultural backgrounds.
2. Identifying the positive and negative conversion factors that prevent other female LESLLA learners from India or Pakistan from accessing adult second language classes. This could involve engaging some of the individuals the women identified as being in England but not having the capability to participate in education.
3. Piloting the use of Photovoice and translanguaging in other Pre-Entry classes to examine their potential to uncover cultural wealth and develop capabilities with women from other backgrounds and cultures.

On a broader scale, future research can be expanded by focusing on other aspects related to migration, education, second language learning, literacy acquisition or gender.

8.5. Personal reflection

Garcia (2017: 22 - 24) argues that teachers who adopt a personal stance must also adopt new different roles, including:

1. The detective – What does the learner know? Why does the learner want to invest? What are the learners preferred ways of meaning making?
2. The co-learner – What can I learn from this person? From his/her interests? How do I distribute agency equally in the classroom?
3. The builder – How do I build an affinity space that bridges differences in age, class, gender, and educational level?
4. The transformer – How can I make visible the rhetorical narrative of modernity and coloniality?

At the beginning of the study, I saw my role as being a detective and a co-learner. I aimed to examine the women's lives, their literacy practices and language use, but as the study progressed, I realised that I needed to be much more – someone who could build a space for the women:

- a space to tell their stories in their full linguistic repertoire
- a space where they could bring awareness to their 'cultural wealths', and
- a space where they could develop their capabilities

Yet, this was not sufficient because the women continued to experience inequities. So, I became a transformer, engaging with issues that affected their equal educational opportunities, advocating for change to ensure 'equity from below' (Unterhalter, 2009) in the classroom and the college. Yet there is much more I can do to help the women not only 'analyze language and understand how it is lodged with power' (Garcia, 2017: 24), but challenge stereotypes and defend their rights.

The journey is not over yet.

Epilogue

Revisiting the Research Context

On a Thursday morning in April 2017, Razia was *again* refused a bus ride to the centre of town because she was wearing a *niqab*. As she had done the previous three times this had happened, she walked for almost an hour, determined not to miss her ESOL class. Unlike the previous times, though, Razia was not saddened by the driver's and passengers' clear anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic behaviour. This time, she was determined to address these discriminatory and illegal acts of racism. Drawing on her social capital, i.e. myself and the learning coach who often acted as 'literacy mediator' for the women, Razia logged a complaint to the City Transport Company. The incident was investigated thoroughly: the Garage Manager reviewed the CCTV and audio footage of the bus and upheld the complaint. Razia was offered an apology for the driver's racist conduct and the driver was made to take anti-racist training at work. By participating in classes mediated by translanguaging and centred on what she had 'reason to value', Razia had gained the knowledge, skills and values to exercise her right to equal treatment and freedom of religion. Although McCowan and Unterhalter (2013) caution practitioners not to assume that education will always have a positive effect on learners' individual capabilities, here, education acted as a 'capability multiplier' that enabled Razia to engage in a much needed 'act of citizenship' (Isin, 2008) to seek justice.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Schedule

I. Demographic Information

Name (pseudonym): ______________________________ Age: _________________

Country of birth: _____________________ First language: __________________

Do you speak any other languages? If so, which ones?

How long have you been in the UK?

Which country did you live in before you came to the UK?

What is your immigration status?

What is your religious background?

II. Childhood

Tell me about your childhood.

- Where did you live when you were a child?
- What is your fondest memory of those years?
- What were your dreams and aspirations growing up?

III. Immigration Journey and Identity

Tell me about your immigration journey.

- When did you arrive in the UK?
- Did you come alone? If not, who came with you?
- What were your reasons for coming to the UK?
- Did you know someone here before coming to the UK?
- Did you know any English before coming to the UK? Did you encounter any difficulties learning English?
- What did you think about England when you first arrived?
- Did you face any challenges when you came here? If yes, how did you deal with them?
- Is there anything about everyday life in England that you still find hard / difficult?

- Since arriving in the UK, have you ever felt any kind of discrimination or racism? Can you give us some examples? What impact did this have on you?
- Do you feel British? If not, why not?

IV. Life as a wife and a mother

Tell me about your life as a wife and a mother.

- Were you married in England or in your country?
- What did you expect of married life and what did you find after getting married?
- What are your duties and what are your husband's duties in your family? Do you share responsibilities?
- What does your husband think about you coming to college? Does he help you study?
- How many children have you got?
- Were they born in your country or were they born here? Tell me about them.
- As a mother, can you explain your role in the family?
- Have you tried to transmit your values or traditions to your children? Why or why not?
- Do you speak your first language with your children? If not, which language do you speak? Do your children speak to you in your first language? If not, which language do they use?
- What did it mean to you to send your children to school? What do you think about the education they have received so far?
- How do you see the future of your children? How can you help them in this regard?
- What do your children think about you coming to college? Do they help you study?

V. Everyday life

Tell me about your week.

- What is a typical day like for you?
- What do you do in your free time? Do you have any hobbies?
- What do you do at the weekend?
- Do you do any paid work? Did you work in your country?

VI. Languages

Let's talk about the languages you know.

- What languages do you speak?
- What languages do you read?
- What languages do you write?
- When did you learn to speak, read and write each of these languages?
- Think about the different languages that you know
    a. Which one did you use most in your childhood?
    b. Which one do you use with your immediate family? relatives?
    c. Which one do you use with your friends?
    d. Which one do you use in the community?
    e. Which language would you say is most you?
- Do you think your home language is important? Why or why not?
- Tell me about your experiences using English.
    a. How did you feel the first time you spoke in English? Do you remember where / when / with whom it was?
    b. Can you think of a time in the past when you felt happy because you could communicate in English?
    c. Can you think of a time in the past when you felt frustrated because you could not speak in English?
    d. How easy is it for you to understand English? And to speak it?
    e. Are you going to keep learning English in the future? Why?

VII.Literacy Practices

Importance

- What does literacy mean to you?
- How important is it to you to learn to read and write?

Childhood

- Did you go to school as a child?
- If yes, for how long? Why did you stop?

- Do you remember what kinds of texts you read and write in your school when you were a child?
- If no, why not? Did you want to go to school?
- When you were a child, what kinds of texts did people in your house read regularly? Write regularly? What about in the community? What kinds of texts did other people in the community read or write?

College

- Why did you enrol in ESOL Literacy classes? Did you think about joining for a long time? How did it feel to start?
- How do literacy classes help you? What is the most important thing that you have learnt in your classes?
- What kinds of texts do you read in college?
- Which of these texts do you enjoy reading? Dislike? Find difficult? Boring? Why? Examples?
- What kinds of texts do you write in college?
- Which of these texts do you enjoy writing? Dislike? Find difficult? Boring? Why? Examples?
- Do you find learning in England different from learning in your home country? If yes, how so? If similar, in what ways?

Home

- What written texts do you have at home?
- What kinds of things do you read in your life that are not part of any college work? What have you read this week? Do you read things now that you didn't before you started your ESOL classes?
- What kinds of things do you write in your life that are not part of any college work? What have you written this week? Do you write things now that you didn't before you started your ESOL classes?
- Do you read or write anything related to your religion?
- Do you think the reading and writing you do at college prepares you for the kinds of things you read and write outside college? Why or why not? In what ways?
- Do you ever ask other people to read to you?
- Do you ever ask other people to help you write?

- Is not being able to speak, read or write English proficiently a problem to you?
- Have you ever been prevented from doing something you wanted to do because you could not read or write?

VIII. Closing questions

- How did immigration influence the person you have become?
- If you had to choose only a few words, how would you describe the feelings of learning to read and write in English?
- How can the college help you learn more?
- What are your plans for the future?
- Do you have anything else you would like to say?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix 2: Letter of Information for Students

The 'Non-Literate' Other: The Gendered Narratives of Indian and Pakistani Female Migrant Spouses with emerging English language and literacy skills

Letter of Information for Students

My name is Alicia Bowman and I am a doctoral student at the University of Nottingham. I am doing a research project about the lives of adult immigrant women from Pakistan and India who are learning to read and write in English and who live in Nottingham. This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee at the School of Education.

Can you help me? This project will provide you the opportunity to voice your experiences and opinions and will help me and other educators identify the needs of Pakistani and Indian women who are learning to read and write in English.

If you agree to take part in this project, I will:

1. Interview you with the help of a research mediator on two different occasions in a classroom at the college you attend. The interviews will take between 45 minutes and 1 hour.
2. Visit you once at home, in the community or in any other location that you choose in order to talk about how you use language and literacy in your everyday life. The research mediator may be present, if you agree, and the visit will last between 1 and 2 hours.
3. Provide you with a disposable camera for the duration of the project. I will ask you to take pictures of things that show your educational experiences, language use and literacy practices. We will use these photos to create Photostories. I will work with you on how to use the camera and how to take photographs and will help you write your stories. You will be invited to help create an exhibit of your images and stories.

Before you agree to take part in this study, I would like you to understand the following:

- I will ask you to sign a consent form before we start the interviews.
- The interviews will be recorded and transcribed but your name will not be used.

- You do not have to participate in the research if you do not want to. This will not affect any help you receive from me or any other teacher at the college now or in the future.
- You do not have to participate in all parts of the research if you do not want to. This will not affect any help you receive from me or any other teacher at the college now or in the future.
- You can leave the research at any time. If you do, this will not affect your studies and I will not use any of your information.
- You can refuse to answer any of the questions if you do not feel happy about them.
- You can ask me or the interpreter to turn off the voice recorder at any time.
- I will type the interviews and check their accuracy with the help of the research mediator.
- All the information will be encrypted and will only be accessible to me and my supervisors.
- I will hold the original recordings until the degree is awarded. The data will be destroyed afterwards and will not be used for any other purpose.
- All the photographs you take belong to you. With your permission, some of your pictures and stories will be used in the exhibit or the thesis. You only need to share the photographs that you consider appropriate and which you are comfortable sharing with the public.

If you have any questions about the project, please talk to me or the research mediator. You can also ask a family member to contact me at Alicia.Bowman@nottingham.ac.uk or my supervisor at Monica.McLean@nottingham.ac.uk. If you or your family have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a participant, you may contact the School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator at educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

Thank you for helping with this research.
Your support is much appreciated!

Appendix 3: Consent Form

The 'Non-Literate' Other: The Gendered Narratives of Indian and Pakistani Female Migrant Spouses with emerging English language and literacy skills

Consent Form

- The information sheet has been read to me in my home language and a translated copy has been given to me. I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand and agree to take part in this study.
- I understand that I may choose to participate in one, two or all parts of the study and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal information will remain confidential.
- I understand that the photos I take and the stories I write may be used in the exhibit or the thesis.
- I understand that I will be recorded during the interview, house visit, photograph discussion sessions and/or Saturday classes.
- I understand that data will be encrypted and will only be accessible to the researcher and her supervisors.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Participant's name: _________________________ Date: ________________________

Participant's signature: ____

Research mediator attestation:

I confirm that I interpreted these forms, as well as the participants' questions and the researcher's answers to the best of my ability.

Research mediator's name: _______________________ Date: _____________________

Research mediator's signature: ____

Date: ____

Appendix 4: Confidentiality Form (research mediator)

The 'Non-Literate' Other: The Gendered Narratives of Indian and Pakistani Female Migrant Spouses with emerging English language and literacy skills

Confidentiality Form

I ______________________________, have been invited to act as an independent translator by _____________________________.

I agree to:

1. keep all the research information shared with me private and confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g. audio recordings, transcripts) with anyone other than the researcher.
2. keep all research information in any form or format (e.g. audio recordings, transcripts) secure while in my possession.
3. return all research information in any form or format (e.g. audio recordings, transcripts) to the researcher when I have completed the verification tasks.
4. execute a faithful interpretation (to the best of my ability), not omitting or changing what is being discussed.
5. remain impartial and unbiased and not allow my personal opinions to interfere with what the participants are saying.

Research mediator's name: ____

Research mediator's signature: ____

Date:____

Researcher's name: ____

Researcher's signature: ____

Date: ____

Appendix 5: Confidentiality Form (independent translator)

The 'Non-Literate' Other: The Gendered Narratives of Indian and Pakistani Female Migrant Spouses with emerging English language and literacy skills

Confidentiality Form

I _____________________________, have been invited to act as an independent translator by ____________________________.

I agree to:

1. keep all the research information shared with me private and confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g. audio recordings, transcripts) with anyone other than the researcher.

2. keep all research information in any form or format (e.g. audio recordings, transcripts) secure while in my possession.

3. return all research information in any form or format (e.g. audio recordings, transcripts) to the researcher when I have completed the verification tasks.

Independent Translator's name: ____

Independent Translator's signature: ____

Date: ____

Researcher's name: ____

Researcher's signature: ____

Date: ____

Appendix 6: UK Transcription Non-Disclosure Agreement

Confidentiality & Non-Disclosure Agreement - Client

This Agreement is made on the ……………………………………………………………… ("The Client") between UK Transcription Ltd of 15-17 Middle Street, Brighton, BN1 1AL ("UKT") and (2) ……………………………… of ……………………………………………………………… ("The Client").

UKT has been appointed by the Client to transcribe video/audio files and documentation ("Work") which will involve the disclosure to UKT of sensitive and confidential data relating to both the Client and/or its client(s).

In consideration of payment by the Client for work, UKT undertakes to:

- maintain confidentiality and not to disclose to any person or organisation (save as required by law) at any time any work including but not limited to any and all audio files, video files, audiotapes, videotapes, and oral or written documentation provided by the Client to UKT;
- actively maintain GDPR compliance, as laid out in the appending clauses;
- not use any confidential information for any purpose except to evaluate and engage in the performance of transcription services for the Client;
- not authorise or otherwise enable any other person or organisation to have access to the content of work (save as required by law) without obtaining the Client's prior written consent;
- not make any kind of contact with and/or solicit business from any person or organisation involved (directly or indirectly) with work provided by the Client.
- For the avoidance of doubt, the undertakings set out in clause 1 above shall apply both during the period in which work is carried out and at all times thereafter;
- Neither the Client nor UKT intend to create the relationship of employer and employee between them and nothing in this Agreement shall comprise such relationship. Accordingly, UKT shall be solely responsible for any tax and other responsibilities arising out of performing and delivering work pursuant to this Agreement,

This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and the parties hereby submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts.

Signed by ……………………….
For and on behalf of the Client Date ………………………..

Signed by: ………………………., Sales
For and on behalf of UKT, UK Transcription Ltd Date: ………………………..

Appendix 7: Women’s reading and writing sub-skills at the beginning and end of the study

Table 5.1 – Women’s reading sub-skills at the beginning and end of the study: Letters and Digits and Word

Names		Razia		Refiat		Roxanna		Sadia		Sanam		Sara		Sarbgit	
		Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment
Letters and Digits	**Recognizes the letters of the alphabet case in upper case**	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est
	Recognizes the letters of the alphabet in lower case	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est
	Recognizes numbers (1 - 10)	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est
Word	**Uses individual sound-symbol correspondence with automaticity**	U	Em	Em	Em	Em	Em	U	Em	Em	Em	Em	C	Em	C
	Recognizes key personal words and high frequency words	U	Em	Em	Em	Em	Em	U	Em	Em	Em	Em	C	Em	C

Table 5.2 – Women's reading sub-skills at the beginning and end of the study: Sentence and Text

Names		Razia		Refiat		Roxanna		Sadia		Sanam		Sara		Sarbgit	
		Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment
Sentence	**Reads and understands a simple sentence**	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	Em	C	Em	C
	Reads and understands questions	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	Em	C	Em	C
	Reads and understands instructions	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	Em	C	Em	C
Text	**Recognizes and identifies information in a simple text**	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	Em	C	Em	C
	Read key social signs	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	Em	C	Em	C
Educational functioning at the end of the study		Pre-A1 reading (Emerging)		Pre-A1 reading (Emerging)		Pre-A1 reading (Emerging)		Pre-A1 reading (Emerging)		Pre-A1 reading (Emerging)		Pre-A1 reading (Consolidating)		Pre-A1 reading (Consolidating)	

Table 5.3 – Women's writing sub-skills at the beginning and end of the study: Letters and Digits and Word

Names		Razia		Refiat		Roxanna		Sadia		Sanam		Sara		Sarbgit	
		Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment
Letters and Digits	**Forms the letters of the alphabet accurately**	C	C	C	C	C	Est	C	Est	C	C	Est	Est	Est	Est
	Forms digits accurately	C	C	C	C	C	Est	C	Est	C	C	Est	Est	Est	Est
Word	**Can copy words accurately**	C	C	C	C	C	Est	C	Est	C	C	Est	Est	Est	Est
	Spells correctly personal key words and high frequency words	Em	C	Em	C	Em	C	Em	C	Em	C	C	C	Em	C
	Uses knowledge of sound-letter correspondence to aid spelling	Em	C	Em	C	Em	C	Em	C	Em	C	C	C	Em	C

Table 5.4 – Women's writing sub-skills at the beginning and end of the study: Sentence and Text

Names		Razia		Refiat		Roxanna		Sadia		Sanam		Sara		Sarbgit	
		Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment	Initial assessment	Final assessment
Sentence	**Can construct a simple sentence, using basic word order and verb form**	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	Em	C	Em	C
	Uses full stops and capital letters to mark boundaries	Em	C	Em	C	Em	C	Em	C	Em	C	C	C	C	C
	Uses a capital letter for the personal pronoun 'I', names, dates and places	Em	C	Em	C	Em	C	Em	C	Em	C	C	C	C	C
Text	**Can compose a very simple text**	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	C	C	Em	C
	Understands basic conventions and layout of basic genres	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	U	Em	C	C	Em	C
Educational functioning at the end of the study		Pre-A1 writing (Emerging)		Pre-A1 writing (Emerging)		Pre-A1 writing (Emerging)		Pre-A1 writing (Emerging)		Pre-A1 writing (Emerging)		Pre-A1 writing (Consolidating)		Pre-A1 writing (Consolidating)	