The impact of English on learners' wider lives

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Acknowledgements

About the authors

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Abstract

The spread of English and its impact on educational domains and career trajectories has been well documented. However, the impact of the spread and penetration of English still needs to be investigated in some detail. This report presents the outcomes of a project which investigated the impact of English on learners' wider lives and gathered data from five sites: Abu Dhabi, Bogotá, Shandong, Leeds and Salford. Data from this project suggests that after education and work, areas of lives most influenced by English are access to knowledge and new ways of thinking, as well as social contact and leisure activities. Resourcing English language teaching is often justified with reference to improved employment opportunities and standards of living. However, data revealed that English played an equally important role in enriching the quality of life. Data also raised questions about the ownership of English. The report suggests two tools for measuring the impact of English on learners' lives.

Glossary

CEFR   Common European Framework

ESL   English as a second language

ESOL   English as a second or other language

LSEB   London Skills and Employment Board

SLA   Second language acquisition

UKCES   United Kingdom Commission for Employability Skills

Contents

1

Introduction

The spread of English and the need for English speakers in global and international contexts has been discussed in linguistic, educational, economic and social forums. However, the impact of English on learners' wider lives is seldom researched. Debates and public funding in ESOL (English as a second or other language) tend to push agendas of employability and integration, claiming immigrants are a drain on the economy or – contradicting that – taking local jobs. Not enough is published on the impact of ESOL provision on learners' careers, and especially their lives.

It is now accepted that, from the second half of the last century, emphasis on acquiring English language skills has been gathering momentum – there is a growing demand for English medium schools and universities in most countries. Alongside this, demand for English language courses for immigrants as well as students from overseas has been growing; not just in the UK and other English speaking countries but also in Europe, in non-English speaking countries. For instance, Salusbury (2013) reports a tenfold increase in the number of masters' programmes delivered in English across Europe.

Data for this project was gathered between November 2012 and October 2013, against the backdrop of a fast-changing, politically complex and fiscally challenging world. A considerable amount of personal and state resources are being expended to increase the English language skills of individuals at the sites for this project and many other countries and we felt that the impact of English on learners' wider lives needed further investigation.

Project contexts

In the post-war years, along with international travel, global migration of labour increased. The language and other needs of these newcomers in English speaking countries (Britain, Australasia and North America – BANA) are particularly well documented. As the use of English spread across the world (Crystal, 2003; McKay, 2002; McKay and Hornberger, 1996), it was increasingly taught and learned in Kachru's outer and inner circles (Kachru, 1985; Kachru and Nelson, 1996). Alongside this, there was a growing awareness of the difference between the language needs of immigrants and those who needed English to work from their own countries, as well as the implications of this difference for the learning and teaching of English (Rosenberg, 2007; Cooke and Simpson, 2008). Today, there is a growing understanding of the differences as well as common areas between the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) or second language (ESOL/ESL).

Therefore, when we set out to investigate the impact of English on wider lives, we were conscious of the need to do so in both these domains of English use and learning.

In terms of **EFL**, recent papers related to English in development, mostly published and commissioned by the British Council, evidence the impact of English on a country in global and to an extent, local, economic and educational contexts (Euromonitor International, 2010; Coleman, 2010, 2011). Yet, except for the Euromonitor report which briefly touches upon the influence of English on career prospects of individuals, these publications are largely silent when it comes to the impact on individuals. Therefore, we felt that a framework to assess impact on learners' learning and wider lives will help evaluate English language programmes in terms of effectiveness, as well as help in designing publicity for such programmes. Publicity could state the impact on learners' wider lives as well as careers. Although the concept of Social Return On Investment (SROI) (www.thesroinetwork.org/) has been explored in other areas of economic and social activity, we could not find evidence of this concept being systematically explored in the context of EFL or ESOL.

Similarly, literature in **ESOL** discusses the hoped-for impact on ESOL learners' lives in terms of their English language needs to live economically active lives in the UK, but is largely silent on the impact of ESOL provision on learners' careers and especially their lives (Hashem and Aspinall, 2010; Simpson et al., 2011).

This project, therefore, aims to inform wider policy by drawing on the expertise of projects and literature from ESOL as well as EFL. These will underpin our understanding and development of the framework to assess the impact on learners and their wider lives.

The project being reported here has five partners: Leeds Metropolitan University and Salford City College, UK; Qufu Normal University, China; Abu Dhabi Polytechnic, United Arab Emirates; and Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá, Colombia. Our concern about the huge amount of resources being poured into English education and education in English, and curiosity about what was happening in domains of life other than work and education brought us together in this project. At this stage, it would be useful to see what is happening with English in these four countries.

In China, the emphasis on acquiring English language had been gathering momentum over the last few decades as was evident by the growing demand for English medium schools and universities, as well as an English language requirement for entering post-graduate programmes. For example, of 11 major research projects completed by the National Research Centre for Foreign Language Education in China (NRCFLE, 2012: 263), ten investigate matters related to the teaching and learning of English. However, there is recent evidence that China is reducing English language requirements in primary and tertiary education (Salusbury, 2013; Yang, 2013).

In Colombia, the Ministry of Education and some organisations in the private sector are looking for strategies to make the country bilingual and a lot of effort is being expended in order to achieve this. For example, English has been increased from four to six hours a week in public and private schools. The National Bilingual Programme was launched in 2004 and will continue until 2019. This programme has also been implemented in higher education. In this respect, university students are required to get B2 level in English according to the CEFR. However, there are not enough studies that determine the impact of such a strategy in the country so far.

UAE has spent billions of US dollars on education and on English development in particular. The current trend is to recruit native speakers of English to teach English, maths, and science in all school stages and institutions in Abu Dhabi. This approach of the medium of instruction being English was put into place about five years ago.

Parallel to this, demand for English language courses for immigrants as well as students from overseas has been growing in the UK. For instance, Salford City College has been working with Salford City Council as a partner in delivering the ESOL component of Migration Impact Fund and European Integration Fund projects based around developing and continually improving a contextualised approach to community-based ESOL delivery. Through this project work, an approach to materials development and classroom delivery has been developed. It can therefore be said that a significant amount of personal and state resources are being invested in English language courses in both ESOL and EFL.

At the same time, while the advantages of English for societies and economies have been reported and assumed widely, the impact of English language courses on individuals' learning and wider lives is under reported. Although learning English for economic reasons is clearly important, it would be useful to also consider values of social integration and personal growth when investigating the impact of learning a second or foreign language such as English. The importance of social integration for immigrants to the UK has been highlighted by the UK government and linked to English language ability.

This project proposes to investigate the impact of English language courses on non-English major (EFL) graduates and postgraduate students in the UK and overseas who do not have English as a first language, as well as the impact on ESOL students' learning and wider lives in order to develop a framework of indicators for assessing impact.

2

The impact of English on learners' wider lives – background from literature

Since the focus is on learners' perceptions of the impact of English on their lives, this project drew on these areas of research publications:

English for development

Recent literature has shown the relationship between competency in English language and access to economic and social benefit as reported by Chiswick et al. (2005), Coleman (2010), Graddol (2006) and Schellekens (2001). Increasingly, the relationship between 'English, international mobility and development' with a focus on 'international migrant working' (Coleman, 2010: 8) is also being discussed. More recently, the role of English in membership of social class and the (upward) job mobility this brings has also been reported (Dong, 2012).

English for living

Traditionally, language and literacy have been viewed through a deficit lens – as a set of skills. Barton et al. (2007) suggest that literacy and language need to be seen in use and be approached as a set of social practices. This takes the learning and teaching of literacy beyond a restricting range of skills, into the use of language and literacy across people's wider (beyond learning contexts) lives. In a practitioner guide published the following year, Barton and Appleby (2008) suggest a set of five principles, which foreground the importance of staying close to learners' everyday lives when developing teaching practices and materials.

Do respondents relate positive or negative life trajectories to investment in learning English?

Over the last decade and a half, there has been a growing number of publications which suggest a (positive) relationship between investment in learning English and English learned, as well as the quality of the learning experience, for example work by Norton (1995, 2000) and Norton and Toohey (2001). Others, such as Golovatch and Vanderplank (2007) and Peacock (2010), report on positive and negative attributions assigned by English language learners to

success or failure in English language courses. There is also discussion around the relationship between English, class, power and upward career mobility (Dong, 2012). However, we felt that there was still a need for a study which directly investigated the impact of English on learners' and ESL users' wider lives.

Before presenting findings from data gathered for this project, it would be useful to give a brief overview of debates around some of the themes which emerged from the data. The themes are reported in Section 4 – Findings.

Self-perception

Self-perception refers to how individuals view themselves and also an understanding of oneself in terms of values, motivations etc. As interest in the affective domain of second language acquisition grew, literature in this area increasingly reported on the role of self-concept and related concepts. Two papers from psychology seem to be the keys to bringing these constructs to the attention of researchers in second language acquisition (SLA): *Self-concept: The inter-play of theory and methods* by Shavelson and Bolus (1982) and *Possible Selves* by Markus and Nurius (1986). Various terms are used to refer to this set of factors in SLA: self-confidence, self-efficacy, the L2 self, self-esteem to name a few. However, this is usually in relation to the role of these in second language learning and the terms are used in the context of second language learning. For example, the role of a positive self-concept in improved learning, resulting in improved confidence to interact in the target language which in turn contributes to improved proficiency has been well documented (Gardner, 1985; Norton, 1995; Eldred, 2002; Eldred et al., 2006; Kramsch, 2008; Dörnyei, 2009). Similarly, self-concept in the sense of possible selves has recently been much discussed in relation to motivation as a driver for successful second language learning as well as increased and discerning use of language learning strategies to this end (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Ushioda, 2008; Ushioda and Dörnyei, 2009; Kormos et al., 2011). Mercer's (2011) book also addresses self-concept in the context of language learning.

A useful aspect of self-related constructs is their role in changing individuals' perceptions of themselves and their relationship with the world around them. Of particular interest is whether *using* (so beyond learning) a second language influences values and self-perception. Work in this area is beginning to emerge in a broad sense though the focus seems to be change in the second language i.e. English (Hornberger and McKay, 1996; McKay, 2002; Brutt-Griffler, 2002) rather than change in self-perception. Work around the effect of English on the lives of people in non-English speaking countries tends to present the impact of English as negative (Phillipson, 1992; Canarajah, 1999, 2006) or at best problematic (Pennycook, 2001; Tollefson, 2002). More recent work (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004) continues with this theme of tension between English and other languages for multilingual users and its effect on identity. There is, however, a growing body of work (Graddol, 2006; Coleman, 2010, 2011) which accentuates some positive, though still contested, effects of English in societies where English is a relatively recent arrival.

Employability

Definitions for employability vary, depending on the source. Employers and educators do not always agree on what counts as employability readiness, while policy tries to get an agreement between providers of education and employers outside educational institutions. In this section, the focus is on what employers look for. The UKCES (2008: 2), for example, has defined employability indicating that it is 'most often associated with "job readiness" through demonstration of some elements of the personal characteristics inherent in the draft UKCES definition (time keeping, responsibility, basic social interaction etc.) … the definitions in use are highly consistent with the UKCES draft definition with the emphasis being explicitly on functioning while in employment rather than merely the ability to credibly search for work'. Employability may also be used to 'mean the ability to move towards and into a sustainable job, continue acquiring skills and progress in the labour market' (London Skills and Employment Board, 2008). The employment challenges in helping people develop their skills are the same, regardless of how skills of employability are defined.

UKCES (2009) recommends that training should focus on developing the abilities to use knowledge and skills in the workplace effectively. LSEB (2008) concurs that English language training plays a key role in promoting the country's economic prosperity and community cohesion. People who speak English have more life chances such as sustainable work, supporting their families and accessing services. New arrivals may have key abilities, skills and experience which benefit the economy and culture of the UK and the provision of English language training can unlock this potential (LSEB, 2008).

As said earlier, literature discussing the spread and influence of English as well as our local and international practice suggested that while advantages and drawbacks of English for societies and economies had been discussed at length, the impact of the English language on individuals' learning and wider lives remained under-reported. Therefore the research questions we sought to answer were:

- How is impact described in planning and policy documents at local and national levels? For example, impact predicted to gain funding.

- What impact do graduates/ESOL learners hope for?

- What is the actual impact reported by graduates/ESOL learners?

Drawing on the above areas of research and data collected, the current project could contribute tools to the area of impact evaluation.

3

Research tools and methods for data analysis

Since this project sought a deeper understanding of the impact of English on learners' wider lives, a qualitative approach was adopted (Holliday, 2004; Dörnyei, 2007; Creswell, 2009).

Participants

Once ethical approval had been gained, students near the end of their courses at four sites were contacted via email. ESOL students were also contacted via tutors and community networks, and asked if they would like to participate in the research project. Once consent from at least five participants at each site has been gained, data collection began. From here on, snowball sampling was used whereby those responding were asked if they could introduce the researchers to further individuals or groups. Data collection stopped once theoretical saturation was observed.

For the first two research tools, brainstorm and ranking and timeline, there were 17 respondents in Abu Dhabi, five in Shandong, 18 in Bogotá, 18 in Leeds and nine in Salford. For the second stage of data collection, interviews from five respondents in Abu Dhabi, five in Shandong, 12 in Bogotá, seven in Leeds and two respondents in Salford were collected.

Respondents in Salford were ESOL learners at Entry 2/3 (EFL – Elementary, CEFR A2 to B1), all female. Their countries of origin were Yemen, Bangladesh, Turkey and Pakistan. Respondents in Leeds, Shandong, Bogotá and Abu Dhabi were non-English majors on undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Three research instruments were used for data collection to give a richer picture of the impact of English on learners' learning and lives and also provide a means for triangulating the data. Research instruments for the project are described below. It became clear at an early stage that the impact graduates/ESOL learners hoped for was an educational qualification and a job or a better job. Therefore we decided to concentrate on research question 3:

■ What is the actual impact reported by graduates/ ESOL learners?

Research instruments to investigate impact

1. Respondents were asked to participate in a **brainstorm and ranking activity** (Barton and Hodge, 2007) to list and then rank ways in which English has made a difference in their lives.

2. Next, respondents were given a **timeline** template (Barton and Hodge, 2007) where they mapped key occasions/milestones in their lives and whether or not English played a role. This could include decisions about subject choice at university, choice of university, applying for jobs etc. If yes, was it a positive or negative role?

3. The data gathered through brainstorm and ranking and timeline activities was used to develop an **interview guide** to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of English on their learning and wider lives.

A description of how each research tool was used and a brief rationale for the tools follows below.

Research tool 1: Brainstorm and ranking

Rationale

Learner perceptions and self-report are a useful and valid source of data in a qualitative study (Dörnyei, 2007; Peacock, 2010). A useful tool for gathering respondent perceptions and self-reports of variables related to English language learning is a focus group. Some drawbacks to the focus group format are how well or not the discussion is managed, allowing all in the group to have an equal voice. There is also a danger of people being influenced by one another (Bell, 2005; Dörnyei, 2007). However, brainstorming (Dörnyei, 2007) or giving just one open-ended question to the group (Silverman, 2008) have also been suggested. While this can minimise the effects of group influence and stronger voices dominating the data gathered, this tool can also 'yield high quality data' by creating a synergistic environment (Dörnyei, 2007). Keeping this in mind, the tool – brainstorm and ranking – demonstrated by Barton and Hodge (2007), is being used for the first stage of data gathering for this study. Brainstorm and ranking is a means of gathering learners' self-reports of the impact of English on their wider lives without

the prolonged contact that learners would have in a focus group discussion. This minimises the possibility of respondents influencing each other during data gathering. An additional reason for choosing this tool is in case there is sample attrition so at least this data would be available.

Resources
A pile of A4 sheets or Post-its, about five per participant; one marker per participant; tables and chairs so that participants can sit without looking at what others are writing (however, the atmosphere needs to be relaxed); an A1 sheet or white board or PowerPoint with this question on display: *What is the effect of English on your life?*; A1 sheets or chart paper to draw a spidergram or to rank data from brainstorm and ranking.

Procedure
1. Each group of participants was given 15 minutes to brainstorm and write the answer to the question. They did this individually and wrote one response/effect per page.

2. Next, in two groups of no more than five each, they agreed on three top effects and put these in a spidergram.

3. Finally, as groups, they ranked these in order of importance. Some chose to rank the effects without going through the spidergram stage.

A sample of data from the brainstorm and ranking activity can be seen in Appendix 2.

Analysis
All papers were collected and responses grouped into categories. These were compared with the ranking on the spidergrams. The themes/categories were used in conjunction with the themes/categories drawn from the second research tool – a timeline (described below) – to draw up interview questions.

Research tool 2: Timeline

Resources
One A1 sheet or chart paper per participant to draw timeline on; markers; string; Blu Tack; tables and chairs to work on.

Procedure
Each respondent plotted milestones in their lives on the paper; these could be the traditional ones – starting school, starting college/university, graduation, marriage, a bereavement or loss, moving town/country. Milestones could also include significant moments e.g. a meeting, incident or film which made a difference to their lives. As they plotted milestones, they were asked to put a + or – sign in terms of the effect on their lives and then write if English had a role to play and if so what.

A sample of data from the timeline tool can be seen in Appendix 4.

Analysis
All paper written on was collected and responses were grouped into categories of milestones and role played by English. The themes/categories were used in conjunction with the themes/categories drawn from the first research tool – brainstorm and ranking – to draw up interview questions.

Research tool 3: Interview

Rationale
Semi-structured interviews are recommended where researchers are familiar with the context of the participants (Dörnyei, 2007) and were used in addition to the research tools described above to gather in-depth information. Interview questions were based on the themes which emerged from the brainstorm and ranking exercise and timeline data.

As a research tool, interviews conducted by skilful interviewers have several advantages over other research tools. Interviews have a better response rate (Oppenheim, 1992; Bell, 2005; Dörnyei, 2007) and provide data where questionnaires would be difficult to use due to low literacy of participants (Oppenheim, 1992; Dörnyei, 2007). They are also an adaptable tool and the interviewer can use tone of voice, facial expressions and body language to probe deeper into issues as these come up (Bell, 2005).

Procedure
Interviews were conducted one-to-one or in small groups and recorded on digital recorders. Probe questions were used at the discretion of the interviewer.

Analysis

Interviews were transcribed and analysed, using Nvivo, for volume of references to themes in terms of impact of English on learners' wider lives.

Bachman (2004) and Silverman (2008) suggest that thematic analysis of qualitative data involves drawing out categories or themes directly from the data. Unlike quantitative content analysis these categories do not have to be decided on before analysis begins but can be 'derived inductively from the data' (Dörnyei, 2007: 245). The interview data contained a number of themes which the participants talked about when we analysed the content. Content analysis can be carried out manually or by using software such as NVivo (Lewins and Silver, 2007; Silverman, 2008). NVivo allows the storage of data in one file and the coding of data without losing or mixing any data sources in the process. To analyse the content using NVivo software, first, all audio data was transcribed. This was done so that it would be easier to refer back to the data when rechecking the themes and categories. This also meant excerpts from coded data could be located using search terms which were close to the original spoken interviews.

The overall approach to data analysis from all three instruments was thematic whereby themes were drawn from participants' responses, using an emic approach. To begin with, each project partner coded a percentage of the data independently and then categories were shared and discussed before agreeing on themes which could be applied to all the data. Any outlying themes were also included in the final report as these could reveal useful areas to investigate in the future or could be indicators of problem areas.

4

Findings

Of the three research questions we initially sought to answer, the question related to the actual impact reported by university students and ESOL learners yielded the most data.

Themes which emerged from brainstorm and ranking data were related to the role of English in:

■ knowledge and understanding of the world and the influence of this knowledge on self-perception, self-esteem, self-confidence

■ education and work

■ making friends, leisure and relationships

■ communication

■ travel

■ technology.

These themes were further explored in interviews. Some outlying themes which subsequently emerged from interviews were:

■ English versus mother tongue

■ the negative role of English.

The findings from each research tool are described below.

Findings from brainstorm activity

As expected, overall findings from all five sites showed the highest number of responses for education and work (89) followed by knowledge and understanding of the world (69). The next highest number of responses related to English as a means of communication (60) which, unsurprisingly, was close to the number of responses related to the role of English in making friends, leisure and relationships (54). Figure 1 shows the proportion of responses for each theme.
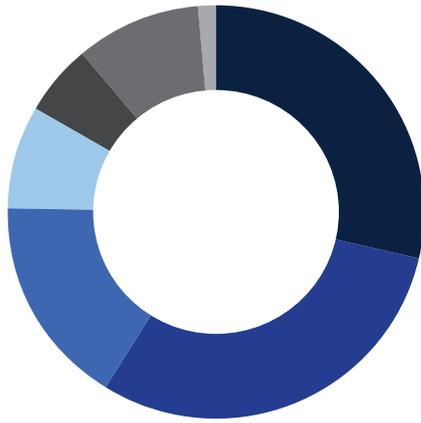
Figure 1: Impact of English on lives – brainstorm findings from all five sites

■ Means of communication
■ Education and work
■ Travel
■ Making friends, leisure and relationships
■ Technology
■ Knowledge and understanding of the world
■ Negative impact
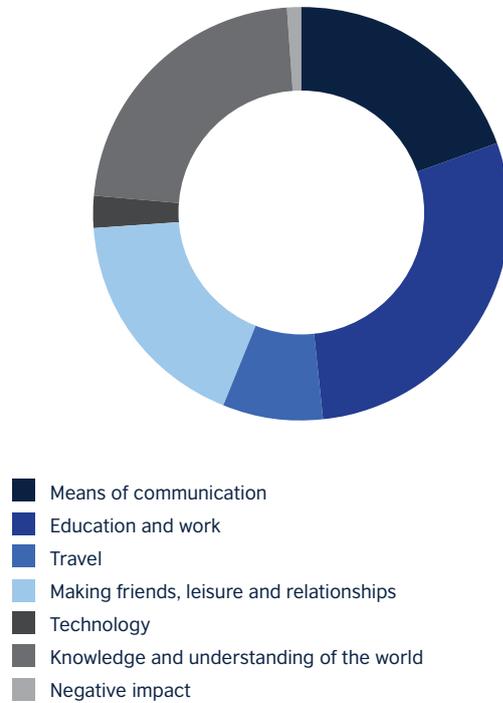
The next five figures show findings from brainstorm data for each of the five sites. Some interesting trends emerge here. In Shandong, knowledge and understanding of the world (17) has been reported as an area which had the most impact from English along with education and work (16). In Salford, knowledge and understanding of the world (17) has been reported as an area which had more impact from English than in the domain of education and work (4). In Leeds, the highest number of responses related to education and work (27) and the next highest to knowledge and understanding of the world (17). The respondents in Leeds were all postgraduate students, in the UK to complete research and postgraduate degrees.

Data from Abu Dhabi (Figure 2) shows that most respondents felt English allowed them to communicate with others (21) and had an impact on their education and career (22). This was as expected in a multilingual environment with a young population. However, a further three responses reported the role of English in developing their way of thinking and the way they solved problems. This came up in data from all three tools in the other four sites as well.

Figure 2: Impact of English on lives – Abu Dhabi, UAE

- Means of communication
- Education and work
- Travel
- Making friends, leisure and relationships
- Technology
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Negative impact

Brainstorm data from Shandong (Figure 3) showed the highest number of responses (17) related to the role of English in expanding their knowledge of different cultures and new ways of thinking. The next highest number of responses (16) at this site were related to education and work.
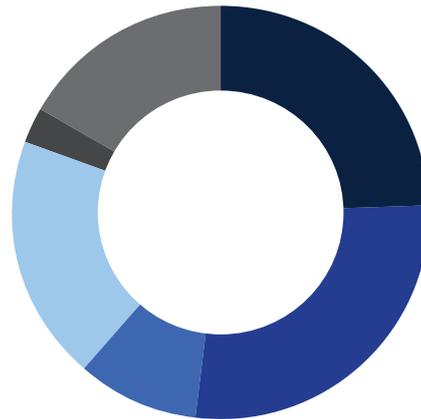
Figure 3: Impact of English on lives – Shandong, China

- Means of communication
- Education and work
- Travel
- Making friends, leisure and relationships
- Technology
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Negative impact

The highest number of responses from Bogotá (Figure 4) were about the role of English in education and work (20) and communication (18). However, a significant number of responses (14) were about the role of English in not just extending their knowledge and understanding but also providing new ways to explore information. Further evidence of this can be seen in the interview data later in this section. Respondents also wrote that they preferred reading articles and literature in the original English. They felt that translations did not give the same depth and breadth of access to materials.

Figure 4: Impact of English on lives – Bogotá, Colombia

- Means of communication
- Education and work
- Travel
- Making friends, leisure and relationships
- Technology
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Negative impact

Brainstorm data from Leeds (Figure 5) had the highest number of responses relating to the role of English in educational opportunity and success. Some respondents wrote about proficiency in English giving a false impression of their ability: *'made me look smarter'.*
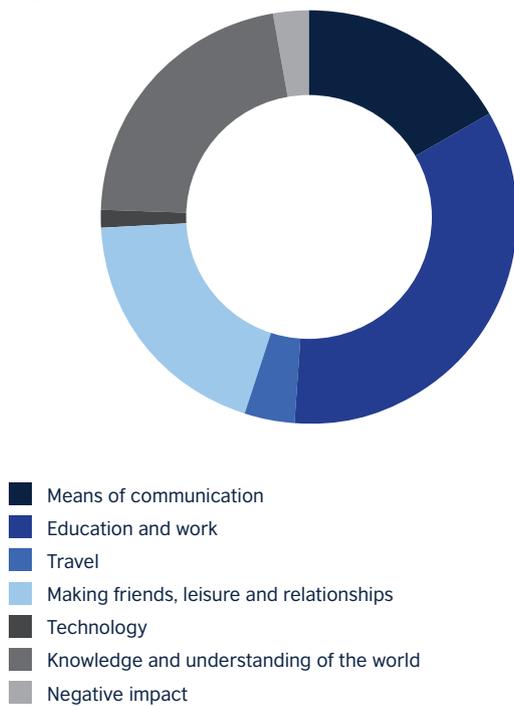
Figure 5: Impact of English on lives – Leeds, UK

- ■ Means of communication
- ■ Education and work
- ■ Travel
- ■ Making friends, leisure and relationships
- ■ Technology
- ■ Knowledge and understanding of the world
- ■ Negative impact

The highest number of responses in brainstorm data from Salford were to do with the role of English in increasing the respondents' knowledge and understanding of the world (16) compared with four responses related to education and work. They also reported how this richer knowledge and understanding made them better at solving problems and also empowered them to become more independent. This in turn added to their self-esteem and confidence. Data from this site is described in more detail at the end of this section as this set of respondents were in an ESOL, rather than EFL setting.

Figure 6: Impact of English on lives – Salford, UK

- ■ Means of communication
- ■ Education and work
- ■ Travel
- ■ Making friends, leisure and relationships
- ■ Technology
- ■ Knowledge and understanding of the world
- ■ Negative impact

Tables showing numeric values for these figures can be seen in the appendices.

Findings from ranking activity

Findings from the ranking activity surprised us and it was the analysis of this data which alerted us to exploring areas such as knowledge and understanding of the world, self-esteem and self-confidence further in the interviews. While education and communication were, predictably, ranked within the top three areas of impact from English, the second most important area where English played a role was interpersonal skills such as teamwork and access to knowledge, *'not just education'*. The comment on teamwork referred to skills beyond verbal communication in English.
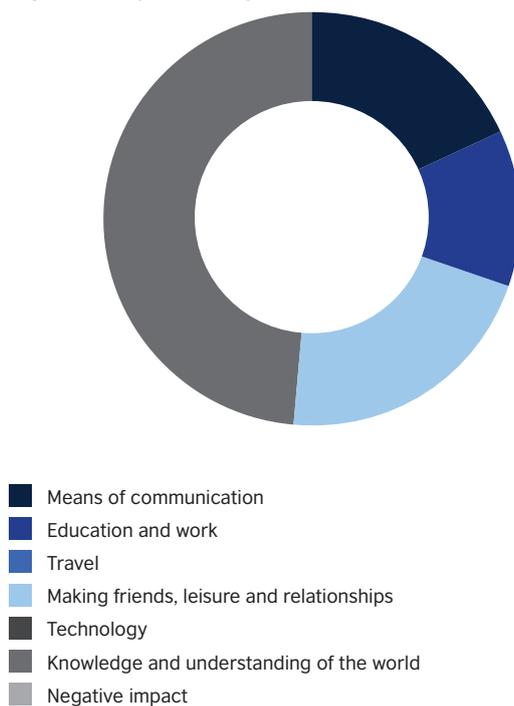
Table 1 reports responses from respondents when asked to rank three top effects of English.

Table 1: Impact of English on lives – findings from brainstorm and ranking activity

Research site	Effect 1	Effect 2	Effect 3
Abu Dhabi *(from four groups)*	Education Communication Lifestyle	Communication Education Low status for those who can't use English	Travelling Technology Loss of mother tongue Education
Shandong, China no ranking data available			
Bogotá, Colombia *(from two groups)*	International careers Access to information – educational and other	Communication Meeting people from other countries (friendship?)	Better access to information Entertainment (music, books, movies, games, etc.)
Leeds, UK *(from six groups/pairs)*	Independent in research Openness to other cultures and knowledge Learning Communication Travelling – English is common language among many travellers. Meeting people, making friends	Teamwork skills – enables you to be a member in a team Increase understanding and reflection Study Access to knowledge – not just education Coming to study at UK university Access to greater education and employment opportunities	International language – allows you to communicate with people from other places More motivation to learn another language. Communication Better jobs Finding work in the UK Access to information
Salford, UK	English allows you to share problems and discuss how to solve these	More confident [due to] English in life	English [is] an international language: 'wherever we go we can manage everything'.

Findings from interviews

A number of themes emerged from the brainstorm and ranking data and these have been described above. Interviews were conducted to explore themes beyond the predictable role of English in education and qualifications to get a job. However, it was quite difficult to separate what respondents said into distinct themes. For example, an expansion of, or change in, knowledge and understanding seemed to be related to a number of other concepts, such as personal development, self-esteem and self-confidence.

Figure 7 shows that interviewees referred most often to the role of English in education and employment (166 references across 21 interviews). Knowledge and understanding, as related to personal development, self-esteem and self-confidence was the next most referred to area of impact (138 references). As the quotes below reveal, English allowed respondents to communicate in functional and social situations in EFL and ESOL contexts. There were 59 references to the role of English in communication. Again, here it was difficult to separate the role of English in the domain of making friends, leisure and relationships from the importance of English in communicating with friends, accessing leisure activities and maintaining relationships.

Figure 7: Impact of English on lives – findings from interviews
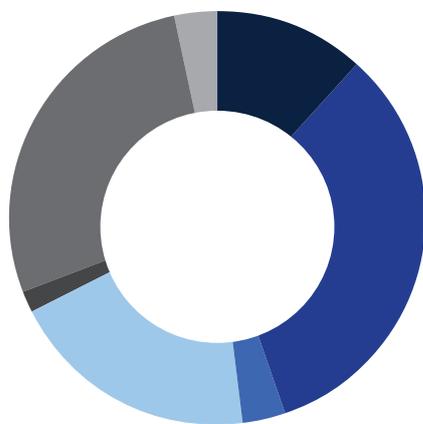
- Means of communication
- Education and work
- Travel
- Making friends, leisure and relationships
- Technology
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Negative impact

Data showed that even respondents who started learning English after primary school had come across the language before they began learning it formally. For example, as overheard discussions about their education or as participants in informal discussions about when children needed to begin learning English. Another context in which they came across English was the media, for example, cartoons in English from neighbouring territories.

'We watch Hong Kong television quite a lot, so, um, there are Eng-er-lish channel. I don't understand English, but I know they are English channel, and sometimes I can recognise this cartoon in the afternoon, they will be on those channels. So yes, I come across that before' Leeds Respondent 3.

What follows are insights into the role of English in various domains of life through quotes from interviews collected for this project.

Means of communication

An acute awareness of English as a means to communicate beyond one's geographical and temporal locations came through in the interviews *'When I was in my country I want to learn English language because all world speak this language'* Salford Respondent 2.

Evidence of the accommodation that second and foreign language users practise (Jenkins, 2009; Chong, 2012; Cogo, 2012) also comes through *'English, not only for England, but I think this is international language, even you going anywhere in the world you can't speak Thai or Chinese or Hindi, but English is the language you can explain easy, and other person doesn't matter, he speak or really good or not, but they still understand'.* Leeds Respondent 4.

A concept around the ownership of English seemed to emerge: *'If you travel abroad and you see people from different countries and then they are not going to say…oh be careful your accent is not like this, your pronunciation is not quite good [….] English is spoken by everybody,'* Bogotá Respondent 1.

Interviewees from Abu Dhabi also said that they didn't think English was a second language in Abu Dhabi anymore:

'I'm so enjoy, because very good communication with each other, with teachers, with parents, with kids, and they boost my confident and I'm so happy. I don't feel now this is my second language, and I ..... so happy actually.' Abu Dhabi Respondent 1.

Interviewees seemed to feel that being able to speak English allowed respondents to join a community (of practice) *'If you speak English then everybody understand your thought [......] no boundary, no wall'.* Leeds Respondent 4

As expected, there were more reports of English as a means of communication from multilingual cities such as Abu Dhabi or English speaking environments such as Salford and Leeds than at other sites. There were fewer direct references to English as a means of communication in interviews, compared to other categories such as knowledge and understanding. This could be due to the penetration of English, which meant that English as a means of communication is taken for granted. Or it could be that two sites of data collection were non-English speaking environments.

English also came across as a language of power, used to maintain discipline and order. One of the interviewees in Leeds who ran an internet café in a busy commercial, but not upmarket, area, explained *'if they are [...] causing problems [...] then you have to speak to them in English, and usually if you speak to them in English it puts more pressure on them [...] when you speak to them in English it's more power... ful'.* Leeds Respondent 7.

Knowledge and understanding

After education and work, this theme had the largest volume of data attached to it and contained a number of sub themes. Respondents felt that knowing English expanded and influenced their world view.

An interviewee in Leeds who presented with an ESOL profile, seemed to suggest that knowing English gave them access to information and news which allowed them to develop a balanced world view: *'If you don't [watch television in English], you don't understand, then you just think "Oh no, everybody's really bad, we are only right." But sometime you understand deeply "Oh, we are wrong maybe. Maybe some people use other religion name and they're doing something is just wrong thing." But always not only one way – both way'.* Leeds Respondent 4.

Another sub theme attached to the role of English in enriching knowledge and understanding was how English influenced respondents' ways of thinking, for example: *'[with English] you can know there is a world somehow'.* Bogotá Respondent 2.

Also *'because like in Spanish you are going to always see that there are only countries in Latin-America or Spain, but with English you understand that are cultures in Germany, cultures in Japan, cultures in Australia [....] with that tool of English you can connect with people'* Bogotá Respondent 3.

Another example of English changing respondents' thinking: *'I think the world changes when you realize that you're not in the little place, but it's a really, really big world with another points of views and it goes through English'.* Bogotá Respondent 2.

'In middle school, when I was properly studying English, I already know about Cambridge, Oxford, Harvard... I tend to like... English things - more than the [country name] things. For example, music, bands, singers, performers... I would like to listen to them rather than listen to the [country name] ones because I do... I did think that it is a [posh] thing at that time, at the time, and I want to explore the world. Er, although

they are not a western countries, I explore the country around South-east China a bit, and I want to meet foreigner there. I not want to meet local people there, but want to meet other western foreigners who travelled there as well, so I want to know what they think. I want to know how they live, and I feel proud or pride when I make friends with English-speaking people. So that is what the environment was, that is what the atmosphere was, and I...So I think English actually influenced quite a bit of the whole society, and then this influenced... indirectly influenced on how I think about the world'. Leeds Respondent 3.

And finally : *'some of our teachers told us ... the better way to learn English language is to don't translate everything from [own language] to English, to use [English] as your original thoughts. .And I realised that [......] using English, is very explicit, a straightforward way to say things, because [own language] and culture is sometimes [....] hiding behind... They talk about this, but they mean the other thing. You need to guess. But here, what I think is that people say things so directly, straightforward, simple, quick, easy, make things very efficient, and then I realise that is actually a very good way of managing our life and managing our work, so I try to do... I try to change my way of doing things. When I make decision I make it fast and quick. I think that the language does affect the way that I think here in this aspects, yes'.* Leeds Respondent 3.

English and personal development

Respondents talked about self-discovery and an awareness of ethical positions through using English.

'It affect me a lot. A lot. when we were little, we already think that foreigners, they are like more otherwise better than [own country] people. We didn't know that it was [wrong], but actually when I look back I know that was exactly [wrong]. .... we were influenced by the society, because people will say 'Oh, you have friend from America, wow, look at you! We were so like jealous about you because you have friends about from this other country. When you speak very good English people will look at you, "Wooh, you must be a really good student", or "You have a very good future", or something like that. And that was... that was racist. I think it was. But when I come here, [...] I get to know because of this word racist, it's English. And that let me... think about racist and how its position in my life, because it's not something that I will have more opportunity to know about in my own culture'. Leeds Respondent 3.

Respondent 3 from Leeds is referring to the impact of the higher value attached to English and culture associated with it and how it can impact negatively on those outside the 'golden circle' of knowers and users of English. The relationship between class, language and culture has been revisited a number of times, most recently by Dong (2012) who writes about criteria for membership of elite groups which include language. Greig (2013) also writes about the symbiotic relationship between power and class in her book about fashionable society in Georgian London.

This theme of positive developments in the self with the use of English continued to emerge throughout the interviews. Here is another example:

'The way I talk. I used to be much louder. I used to be much more impatient, probably, in the way I spoke. I mean all the time. And I don't do that any more, and I think it's partially because I am now a language teacher so I am much more aware of how I use my language and how I speak, but I think it is also an influence of living with British people and the way that people speak and interact with each other.' Leeds Respondent 5.

English was associated with a sense of **self-esteem and achievement** at EFL as well as ESOL sites. For example an interviewee in Shandong says 'someone of my age and experience, if with good English, they will have achieved something in one way or another.' Shandong Respondent 1.

An interviewee from Leeds described how she was motivated to learn English for personal reasons, progressed to getting a job and developed **confidence** as well as friendships: 'Actually, when I'm pregnant my son, and I'm going to hospital and sometime really hard to explain how do I go through this pregnancy And then when is my son born I think no, this is no good, because he's grown up, he goes to school, I take to doctor, so many other things and I must need learn something [….] then I go to college there, the teacher really good, and I learn. And after this slowly I get job and am working with school, with the young kids, I'm so enjoy, because very good communication with each other, with teachers, with parents, with kids, and they boost my confident and I'm so happy'. Leeds Respondent 4.

A surprise finding was the **responsibility** individuals felt as bilinguals in English and their first language: 'it happened to me in the first class that is Management introduction to be capable to read an article of Harvard and say "Uyyy" I have the information and when I was talking to another people they say "I don't read the article because I don't know English". I was thinking that is an advantage on other people, but also is a responsible for you, of, for me when you are doing an exercise or if you're doing an activity because the people that don't know English are only trusting in what you say to them...' Bogotá Respondent 3.

Also, 'so there are other ethics, for example responsibility of not just doing business but respect other people. So about what... everything we do, what we do, we do, we need to think about the responsibility when we're doing it'. Leeds Respondent 3.

Lifestyle

Respondents from Bogotá and Shandong said they did not feel that English had changed their lifestyle in terms of their lives within their countries. However, data from other sites showed evidence of the effect of English on their lifestyles. For example, when asked if English had an effect on his lifestyle, one of the interviewees from Leeds said: 'Yes. Oh, very much... Erm, well... The language gives me the... a tour to know about English culture, and then, and then it affects me on the food I eat, the clothes I choose, the sense of art and design is also different... although people may think ok it's just a phone, but in my mind I will think that it is not just a phone, it is a phone from the English culture. I think they maybe affect my lifestyle ......' Leeds Respondent 3.

So it could be said that English and the culture associated with it is a brand.

Along with lifestyle, English was also associated with (high) culture. Two aspects of **culture** in relation to English emerged, one was **exploiting culture to learn language**: 'Ah, yes, er... that is difficult to say, because sometimes we... enjoy entertainment because we want to learn better English. [….] That is one thing. The other thing is, I realise there is a movie, people say it is really good and that it's English. So... I can only enjoy it by knowing the English language. So it's kind of a little bit like both way'. Leeds Respondent 3.

The other aspect was related to the **culture of sophisticated thinking** which respondents associated with English. This has been discussed earlier.

Education and work

A huge investment in learning English was evident from the interviews. Most respondents had spent 12 to 16 years learning English and had started in primary school, one respondent was two years old when they began learning English at kindergarten. They continued by spending a year or more abroad in an English speaking country to improve their English, or even Canada, parts of which are officially bilingual. The interview extracts below evidence the major role of English in education at all sites.

Interviewer: *'In universities in China when a teacher or a researcher is to be promoted to a higher level, English is a must'.*

'Yes, especially when you want to study abroad. Generally speaking English influence depends on many factors'. Shandong Respondent 3.

Respondents in China talked mostly about the place and influence of English in terms of education (higher degrees) and career progression – English is needed for every promotion.

In Colombia, most, not all, respondents had started in bilingual schools. Interviewees talked about flexibility in career choices, not just in terms of geographical location but also disciplines: *'I think is mainly that like, or maybe for the future, I want to do like in other or … maybe Marketing,'* Bogotá Respondent 1.

A number of respondents also talked about being able to access papers and books etc. in the original language they were published in rather than translations. It is interesting that although most respondents who were outside the UK said that they did not use English much in everyday life, they had invested anywhere from ten to 25 years in learning English.

English is essential for employability in China as well: *'Almost every company, whatever it is state-owned, it is a civil servant or it is a private company or a international company, they require English. Right now it becomes a "must" if we want to find a job – although we will never use English in our job, but the boss will require me to have this opportunity to handle English'.* Leeds Respondent 3.

Another interviewee talked about the key role of English in his career as a teacher of Spanish: *'Of course, absolutely it does, yes. I did English studies, and I majored, in literature. But then when I finished my degree, I got the opportunity, through the partnership with the British Council and Spanish Ministry of Education, to come here and be a language assistant. And I somehow discovered that I really liked teaching language, and that I would enjoy more teaching my own language than teaching English. So instantly English changed from being my profession to being the tool to enable me to come over here, live in the UK and become a Spanish teacher.'* Leeds Respondent 5.

This interviewee also reported the influence of English classes in childhood on their own teaching practices: *'They always say that no matter how much you learn there is also a role model for teaching in your head, which is whoever was a successful teacher when you were a student. And I think that really… I mean, I never thought I would like to be a language teacher until I experienced those classes [private language school when respondent was a child]. So yes, I think that had a big influence'.* Leeds Respondent 5.

Respondents also talked about how English helped them participate in their children's education. One of the Salford respondents, an ESOL student, described how she encouraged and persuaded other parents to support their children in out of class activities:

'Today my middle daughter went to London they make a small movie they won and school bring them to London for walk the red carpet'.

'Really! That's wonderful'

'Encourage them to make a movie [.....] I speak with teacher and other parents.' Salford Respondent 2.

Respondents in China talked about being able to help their children with homework in English and how key this was to their children doing well at school and also progressing with their English. Respondents at other sites talked about the positive role of their parents in their education in English. Some respondents reported how their initial negativity towards English ebbed away as their parents persuaded them and resourced their education in English.

Making friends, leisure and culture, relationships

The theme of making friends and the role of English in raising cultural awareness, as well as leisure activities, was often mentioned in the same turn of speech as communication. For example, here are three excerpts from interviews:

'My life is pretty much in English.'
Leeds Respondent 5.

'It's […] the language that unites all the cultures and all the religions and everything and all the people can relate to it.' Abu Dhabi Respondent 4.

'When you meet someone it's like the first language [….] to use'. Leeds Respondent 1.

English seems to be the language of internationalisation in countries outside English speaking ones. When asked about using English in their social lives, for example with friends, interviewees often began by saying 'not much' but then talked about meeting people from other countries and talking with them in English. For example, here is an excerpt from a Leeds Met respondent talking about using English in her own country:

'Not very much. For a little bit when I was in university I did, because all of a sudden our university became quite popular with Erasmus students. We were a really small university and we didn't have international students or lot of Erasmus students, but while I was studying during my third and my fourth year, all of the sudden these agreements just started and we started getting lots of Erasmus students on campus. And the place, the building where they used to go to do the language classes was next to where I was studying, so by pure chance we started making international friends, and then the common language often was English also'. Leeds Respondent 5.

Respondents also reported feeling more comfortable in particular English speaking cultures: *'And somehow when I came back to England I realised that I could relate to this culture better, in the way that people interact, etc. Although it might seem that the other culture, the North American culture, could be more similar to the Spanish one, I don't know. I'm not sure if it is a matter of similarities in cultures in general or if it is a personal thing, and I just feel more comfortable here'.* Leeds Respondent 5.

Two themes which appeared at the fringes of interview data were negative aspects around learning English and how using English raised their awareness of how their first language did or did not work. The latter concept is well documented in literature about bilingualism. Here it would be useful to explore reports of negative aspects around English. A poignant quote comes from Colombia: *'English was like my stone in the school … the stone you have to carry…'* Bogotá Respondent 3.

The negative effects reported seem to be more around the early stages of learning English, when respondents were in primary school, rather than the language itself. However, one respondent talked about English, and the culture associated with it, being privileged over other languages. While Phillipson, Tollefson and to an extent, Pennycook, have written extensively about this, it would be useful to include here what someone who has directly experienced this (im)privilege says:

'Because I am too in to English, so I feel that I am dominated by English and English culture, English world, so I don't, I'm not a good [names nationality] people any more, because I don't know my culture, I don't know my history, I don't know my society. So if I… if I want to be a absolutely non-racist, I need to be fair to every culture, […] I used to say the English culture is something more than mine, so I just know about English culture but not my culture, so that's not right. So I am… I have a plan, I tell myself that I need to know the [own] culture by doing this, I have a list, But I started to do a little bit, maybe reading the [own language] poem, […] But… but, you see when we were kids, we started to learn English. It's more important than our language. So we spend more time on English, less time on our language, our history – so that is a impact. And then when I grow up I realised that, oh, right I didn't really do well in my language when I was at school because I spend most of my time on English. The thing is that the society, they think that English culture is more advanced. And maybe they make this atmosphere to let everybody to prefer a English culture, or English thing, English movie. It feels like it makes the world too imbalanced.And I don't know how to … help, because I don't like that situation. And you will realise if I want to know more about my language, they will discriminate me. They say I'm not modern. Are you really, did you really study overseas, you don't really look like… So, that is a bad influence I think. It's too powerful in a way, too too powerful. And we are now a very minority, so…' Leeds Respondent 3.

While this section with interview data ends with a report of negative impact, we would like to remind readers of the rest of the findings reported earlier. These come across as positive, if at times functional. English seems to have influenced almost all domains in respondents' lives – from the more functional domains such as education and employment to personal ones such as friendships and communicating with relatives. The most significant role of English reported was as an agent of change in the cognitive domains. Respondents reported a richer understanding of the world around them. This understanding led to self-reflection which at times resulted in almost a rejection of some values and practices associated with their first culture.

Earlier in this report we had suggested that this project could be considered as one of curriculum evaluation in its broadest sense. Data from the project shows that the influence of English has penetrated a number of areas of life which may not have been directly addressed in English language courses in EFL or ESOL contexts. Respondents report this influence originating not only from contact with individuals with English as a heritage language but also through communicating in English with speakers of English as a second or foreign language. English is perceived as a means of, and vessel for, new and better ideas.

In addition to the presentation above of overall data from all five sites, we felt that it would be useful to present data from Salford, UK, collected from ESOL students separately. This is for two reasons: Salford was the first site to generate data and also, we found that findings from data collected in ESOL contexts were slightly different to the overall data for brainstorm and ranking, for instance knowledge and understanding and its influence on changing respondents' world view accounted for almost half of the brainstorm responses, compared to a quarter to one third of the responses from the other sites. There seemed to be a strong theme of everyday life functionality running through the data – accessing services – compared to data from other sites, from EFL students. While data from EFL contexts also had a strong theme of functionality, this was more about work, education, travel, leisure and, occasionally, technology.

Salford ESOL – themes from brainstorm and ranking

The following themes emerged from the brainstorm data collected from ESOL students in Salford.'

- **Confidence**: 'more' e.g. 'explain to doctor myself', confidence 'helped find a job', 'more confidence in life'.
- **Jobs**: [English] 'big help in finding a job' [English led to] 'a good job' e.g. 'full-time' job.
- **More communication with others**: 'made lots of friends'.
- **Empowerment.** This had two sub themes:
  - **Power and status within family**: [can now] 'help child with homework'. Respondents reported taking in-laws to doctor as they can't speak English and received in-laws' personal phone calls. Communicating with family members who are native speakers of English, this also came up in timeline.
  - **Helping others** 'helping vulnerable people'.

- **English – language of transnational mobile communities**: 'wherever we go we will manage everything', 'of help [in] any other country'.
- **'Big help in life':** 'my English class is big help in life'. Helped change lifestyle e.g. 'we came from Bangladesh and don't know how to drive or speak to other people or dress up'. [can] 'share problems and discuss your opinion' e.g. 'bills or changing habits'.

Ranking

Respondents in Salford chose the following items brainstorm data as their top two effects of English.

- [English allows respondents to] share problems and discuss how to solve these in instrumental and social domains.
- More confident with English in life.
  - English as an international language: 'wherever we go we can manage everything'.

Salford ESOL – themes from timeline

Positive themes:	Negative themes:
Functionality: • going to doctor and hospital 'myself' • can use public transport Relationships and attitudes: • marriage – was able to travel to UK on her own to join husband • learning about English lifestyle Employability: • wants to contribute financially 'get job, help husband' • volunteering with the Red Cross raised the need to communicate in English 'big help for me' Impact before coming to the UK: • was able to get a degree in home country • worked as a teacher	• don't know what children are learning or doing • feels pressure to learn more English to live in the UK • working for an agency job • getting a British passport

ESOL interviews show an impact on lives which penetrates all areas of life – personal relationships, work, education, leisure and so on. For example:

'I am so, so happy, because I learn some English, because when I'm coming this country it's so hard to mix […] I understand little bit, but I can't explain or speak. But when it's little bit slowly after a few year I realise, no, life is so hard when you fight for your right, when you need something, when you explain something, you must learn language first. And it's when you learn then is life so easy and so comfortable, and you have no problem.' Leeds Respondent 3.

ESOL and EFL respondents also talked about parenthood or responsibility for other family members being the driver for needing English and learning it.

5

Implications and recommendations

The data gathered for this project repositions language learning as language use, in keeping with the sociolinguistic turn in second language acquisition (SLA) research. There seems to be a shift in identity from language learners to language users, even in EFL contexts. Data from Abu Dhabi particularly highlighted this. Alongside this the balance between instruction and facilitation is being revisited in higher education (Normand et al., 2008). Perhaps the time is ripe now to move beyond critical pedagogy to radical pedagogy.

Data revealed that respondents are using English beyond communication with native speakers and see it as a means for connecting with other cultures and countries which may not necessarily have roots in native-English speaking cultures, for example 'more friends from other countries' (Colombia and China).

English is also associated with a workforce which makes the most of a country's potential, supports its development and is seen as the key to future opportunities, both for the citizens of a country but also in terms of guest workers contributing to a country, for example a respondent suggests that English will help others to contribute to Colombia, 'a country of opportunities'.

The aim of the project was to draw on the data gathered and develop a framework of indicators for assessing the impact of English language courses on the learning and wider lives of learners of English. We wanted this framework to go beyond purely economic indicators of impact and to also measure impact on learners' wider lives such as impact on social integration and personal growth. As we analysed the data, we realised that in order to make the framework applicable by academics as well as practitioners, it may be more practical to suggest slightly different frameworks for ESOL and EFL contexts. Two frameworks are presented in Figure 8 and Figure 9.

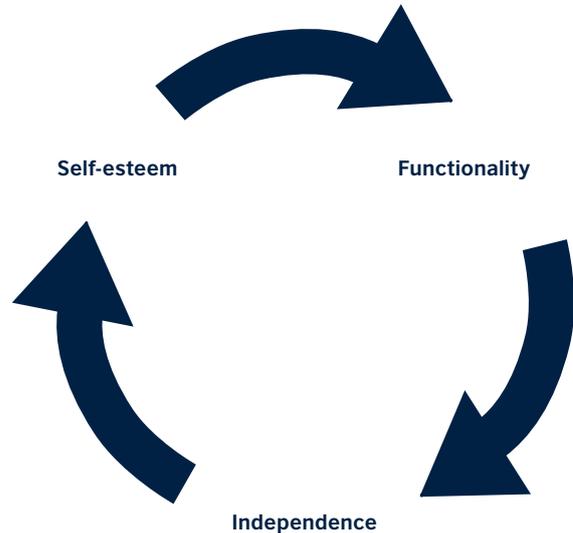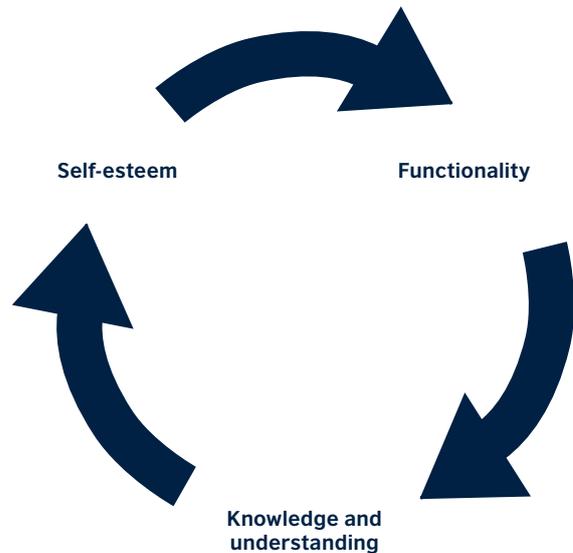**Figure 8:** Framework for measuring impact in ESOL contexts

Self-esteem Functionality

Independence

Figure 9: Framework for measuring impact in EFL contexts

Self-esteem Functionality

Knowledge and understanding

In order to measure impact on English language learners' (users') lives, two tools were developed and piloted. Again, the research team felt that these tools needed to be different for use in BANA countries and countries such as China. Both tools were presented for comment at an ESOL conference earlier this year as part of a workshop about this project and both were received well by workshop participants.

Tool 1: Questionnaire survey – Impact of English on learners' wider lives, Shandong China

This questionnaire asks for your views about the impact of English language courses on learners' wider lives. We are interested in your honest answers. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Always tick one box for each question. If you make a mistake just cross through the wrong answer and then tick the right answer.

This questionnaire will take about ten to 15 minutes. Thank you for your time.

1. Age _____

2. Male/female

3. Years of English learning_____

	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I use English in my social life	5	4	3	2	1
English has affected my life	5	4	3	2	1
English has helped me with making new friends	5	4	3	2	1
English helps me in entertaining myself	5	4	3	2	1
English has affected my lifestyle	5	4	3	2	1
English has affected my way of thinking	5	4	3	2	1
English gives me more satisfaction in my life	5	4	3	2	1
English helps with my self-esteem	5	4	3	2	1
English makes me feel confident	5	4	3	2	1
English has affected my career	5	4	3	2	1
English has played a negative role in my life	5	4	3	2	1

Measuring impact of English on learners' wider lives – impact map

Hello, we would like to know if English has had an effect in different areas of your life. Please drag and drop the figure you feel which expresses the degree of impact best for you, in the relevant areas.
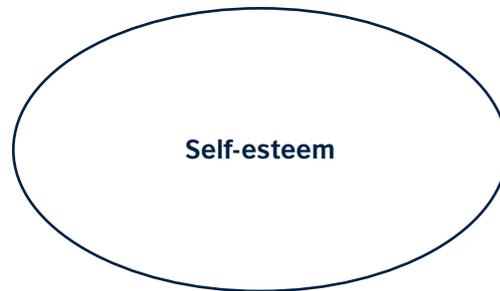
Completely changed my life

A little
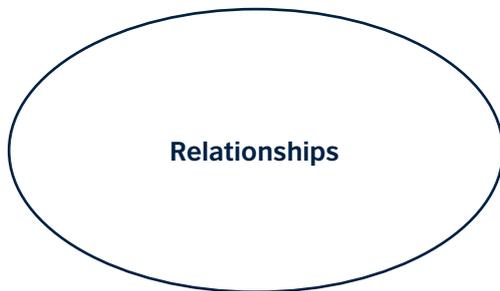
Not much

Not at all

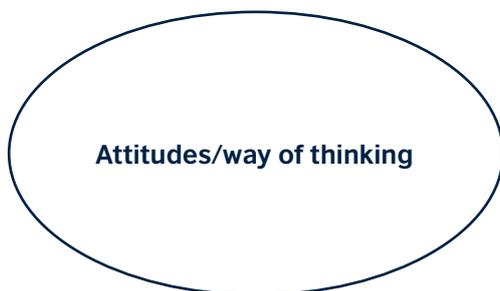**Independence/being able to function in society/ life/world**

Self-esteem

Relationships

Cultural experiences

Leisure opportunities

Attitudes/way of thinking

Education and work opportunities

Impact of project findings

By using these impact assessment tools course providers and funding bodies could find it useful to gain an understanding of how English language provision helps students survive or thrive in environments where they need English for instrumental purposes i.e. to access services or academic material. This improved understanding would support the design and delivery of more effective English language courses.

The framework of indicators for assessing impact could also provide a means to (re)design courses to meet the needs of the learners.

For researchers

The impact assessment frameworks could provide researchers with a tool which could be adapted to local contexts. The 'local' here refers to geographical as well as disciplinary contexts.

Impact on ELT practice

The frameworks could be contextualised to different contexts as it foregrounds common themes and areas of crossover and contrast. This could give practitioners a means to find out what the learners need and value, which in turn would impact on learners' experiences in learning English.

6

Conclusions and recommendations for future research

The data for this report suggests that the presence of English goes beyond utilitarian values to encompass a range of aspects of individuals' lives. English contributes to self esteem, widening the individual's networks of relationships, access to leisure and cultural opportunities from countries beyond those with English as a first language, for instance Britain. Most importantly, English gives the respondents a sense of global citizenship which is not restricted to the 'native speaker' world. It could be said that the impact of English for individuals is often multiplex and the different aspects of the impact are mutually re-enforcing, for instance knowledge and understanding of the world, self-esteem and self-perception.

It could be said that the potential impact could lead some individuals, particularly parents, to feel a sense of *responsibility* to learn English. In one or two cases, a rather more negative sense of *compulsion* comes across. However, overall, a sense of personal enrichment and empowerment emerged from the data.

A major limitation was that the data, except interview data from China, was collected in English. It could be suggested that the respondents were already benefiting from English. However, we feel that the volume of data about the influence of English in the domains of friendship and knowledge and understanding would counter this limitation. Having said that, a future project could use the same tools and methodology to collect data from respondents not proficient in English. It would be useful to compare findings for the two projects.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Consent form

Impact of English on learners' wider lives

This project will investigate the impact of English language courses on learning and learners' wider lives. The project is being carried out with support from the British Council, the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities.

The research questions we seek to answer are:

- How is impact described in planning and policy documents at local and national levels? For example, impact predicted to gain funding.

- What impact do graduates/ESOL learners hope for?

- What is the actual impact reported by graduates/ESOL learners?

In order to gather data, we would be grateful for your participation in a focus group which will last for ten to 15 minutes and then we will ask you to plot the main events in your life along a timeline. This second activity will take about ten to 20 minutes. You may also be asked to participate in an interview which will be 20 minutes long at the most.

Confidentiality of the data

All information provided by you will be given a numerical code, and your name will not appear anywhere within the data. Only the investigators will have access to the data. The data will be used by the British Council to inform ELT practice and it will not be used for marketing or any commercial purpose. The data will be stored on password protected computer files and in a locked office.

Disclaimer

You are not obliged to take part in this study, and are free to withdraw at any time. Should you choose to withdraw, you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason. You can withdraw by contacting the person named at the bottom of this sheet. Once you ask to withdraw, we will not contact you for further data collection and will destroy any data already collected from you.

- I have read the information above relating to the study in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy of this form to keep. I understand that my involvement in this project, and particular data from this research, will remain completely confidential. Only those involved in carrying out the study will have access to the data.

- I hereby fully and freely consent to participate in a survey for this study. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give a reason.

Participant's name (BLOCK CAPITALS):

_____

Participant's signature:

_____

Date:

_____

Investigator's name and contact details:

_____

_____

Investigator's signature:

_____

Date:

_____

Thank you for your participation.
Naeema B Hann, Senior Lecturer, School of Languages, Leeds Metropolitan University, Macaulay Hall, Headingley Campus, Leeds LS6 3QN
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Appendix 1 (continued):

Interview guide

Begin with open question:

1. How long have you been learning English?
   (tell me more...)

Another open question:

2. Has English affected your life in any way?
   What is the effect of English on your life?

The rest are probe questions, to ask if respondent doesn't say anything about these areas in answer to questions 1 and 2.

Relationships/leisure opportunities:

- Do you use English in your social life? How? Why?

- Has English affected your lifestyle? How?

- Do you think that English has helped with making new friends? Explain.

- Does using English help you in entertaining yourself? (Such as school trips, online games, having online friends, etc.?) Why (not)?

- Attitudes (world view?) cultural experiences.

- Do you feel English has affected your way of thinking?

Self-perception:

- Has English affected your personal development? (e.g., confidence, self-esteem, satisfaction?)

Work opportunities:

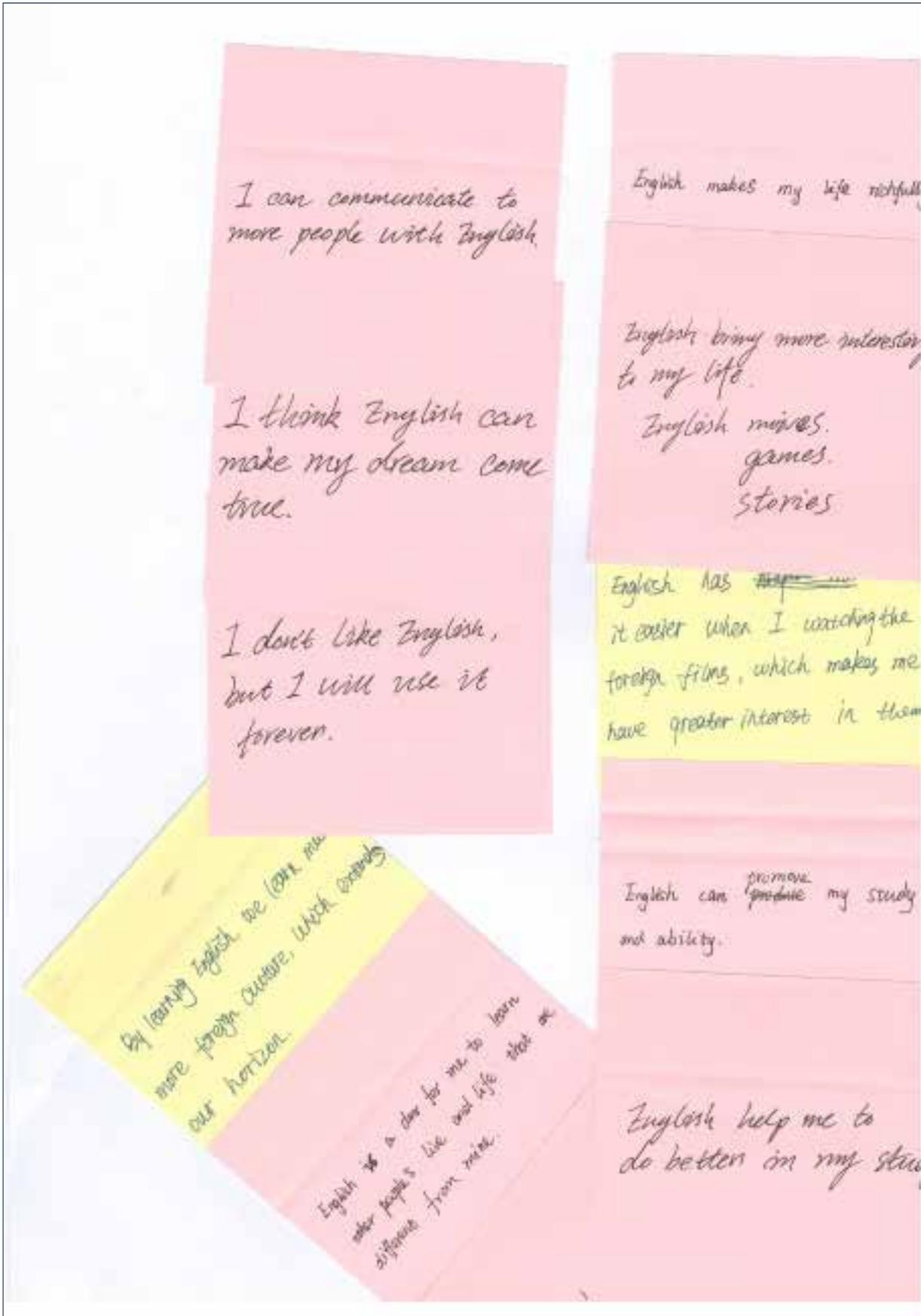- Has English affected your career/working life in any way?

End with open question:

3. Do you feel English has played a negative role in your life at times e.g. pressure to learn English or using English rather than your mother tongue or having difficulty in using the terms in your mother tongue? Why (not)?
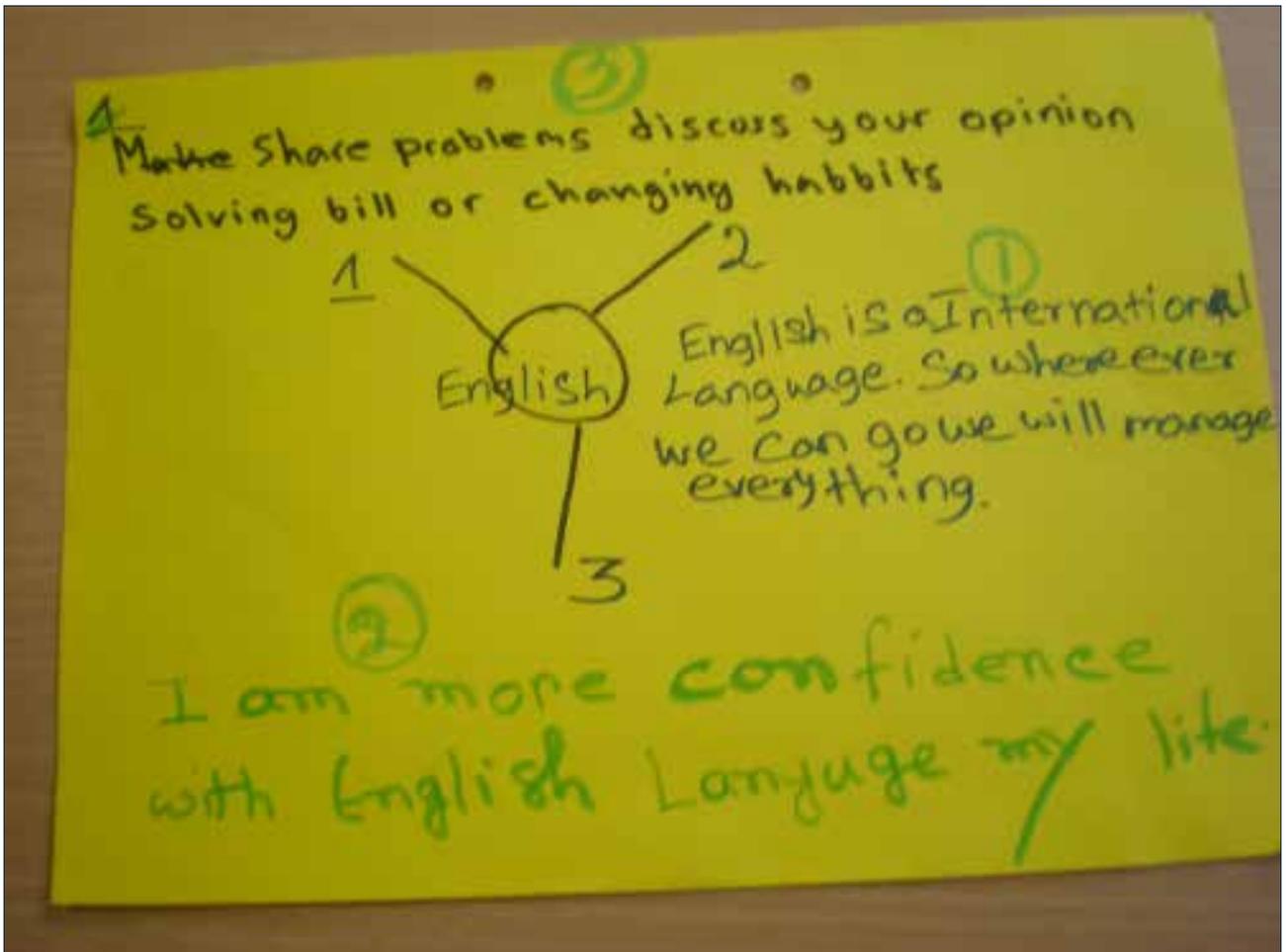
Each question could have a follow up question to elicit stories: can you give us an example?

We are aiming to interview five new respondents at each site, keeping our original respondent profile in mind. For purposes of using standard tools, it would be good to use questions 1, 2 and 3 with all respondents.

Appendix 2: Example of brainstorm data from Shandong

I can communicate to more people with English.

I think English can make my dream come true.

I don't like English, but I will use it forever.

English makes my life richfull

English bring more interesting to my life.
English movies.
games.
stories

English has ~~they~~ it easier when I watching the foreign films, which makes me have greater interest in them

English can ~~produce~~ promove my study and ability.

By learning English, we can (our mind) more foreign culture, which expands our horizon.

English is a day for me to learn other people's live and life that different from mine

English help me to do better in my study

Appendix 4: Sample timeline from Leeds
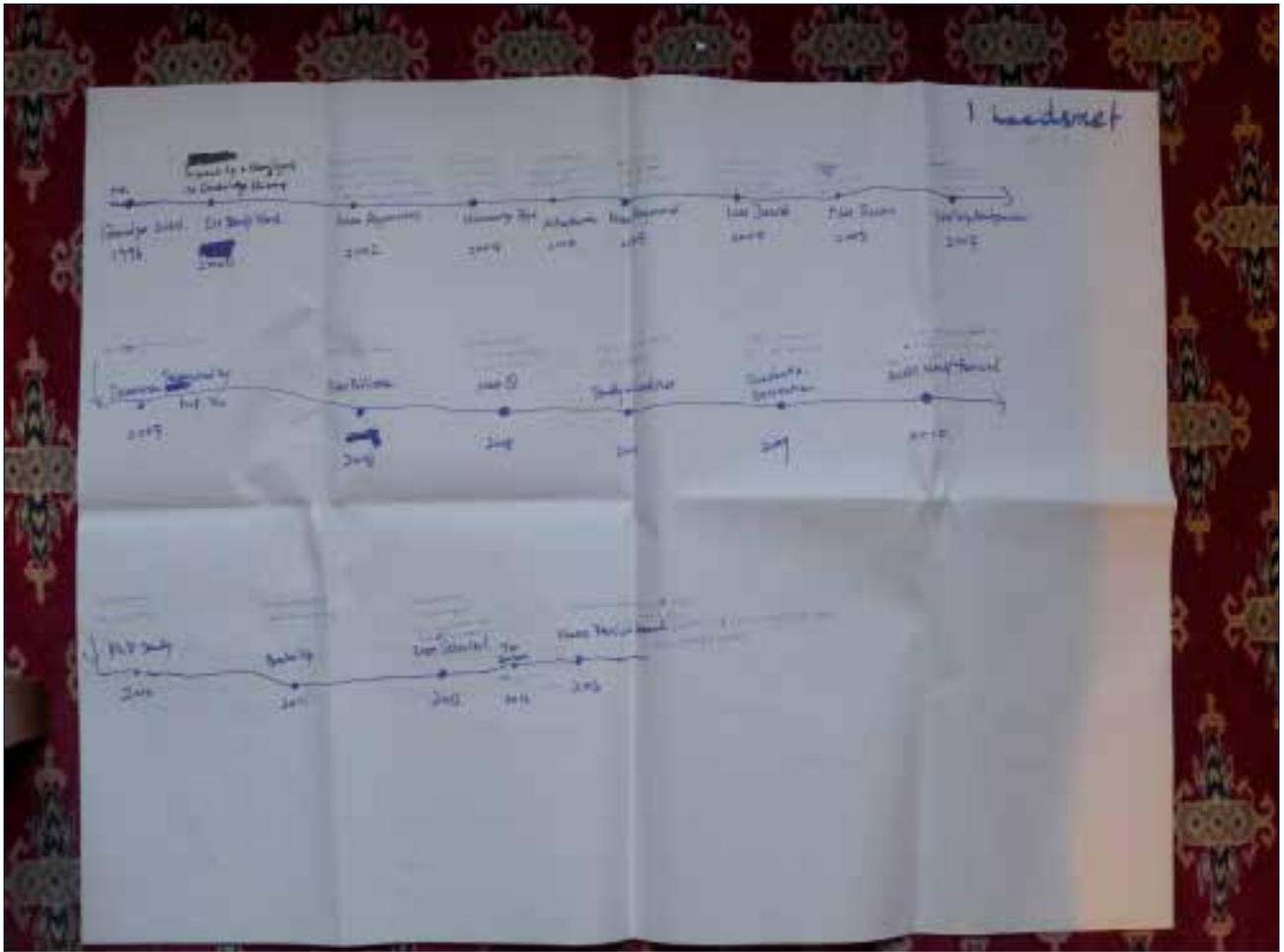
Appendix 5: Impact of English on lives – findings from brainstorm activity

Response themes and comments from respondents when asked 'How has English affected your life?'

Means of communication	Education and work	Travelling	Relationships and leisure, making friends	Technology	World knowledge, attitudes, world view, cognition, self-esteem	Negative impact
Abu Dhabi In multicultural and multilingual city such as Abu Dhabi (more than 100 nationalities) and economical reasons (buying and selling; trade) (21 responses).	Found English useful in their education, affected their educational life in the UAE or in an English speaking country (14 responses). **Future career opportunities** English has impacted their efforts to study hard, i.e., it paved the way to get a job in the future or excellent career opportunities will be awaiting (four responses). **Research** English also played an important role in helping students to do their research from the internet (two responses). **Exhibitions** English helped a student in participating in exhibitions (one response). **Meeting key people** (one response). English can make my dream come true (16 responses).	Travelled around the world and English impacted their travelling life (12 responses).	English helped to have intelligent or good friends (five responses). **Having fun** English impacted through playing online games with other people in different countries (one response).	English helped in dealing with many technological tools (e.g., reading the manuals or understanding the devices; how they work) (four responses).	English has had an impact on reading and understanding in English (e.g., reading books, emails, messages anything) (four responses). **Cognitive impact** English played a role in developing their way of thinking and the way that they solve problems (two responses). **Discovering new things** (one response)	It impacted on their mother tongue, that is, they started to lose the ability to express their ideas/terms using their mother tongue (one response).

Means of communication	Education and work	Travelling	Relationships and leisure, making friends	Technology	World knowledge, attitudes, world view, cognition, self-esteem	Negative impact
China Don't like English but will use it forever (10 responses).	English can make my dream come true (16 responses).	Easier to communicate with people from different nations (two responses).	**Games/films** Makes life richer and colourful (12 responses).	Gives technical ability in a competitive society (one response).	**Knowledge of different cultures and foreign news** Expands horizons, widens sight and mind so I can analyse things in different ways. Fashionable to talk in English (17 responses).	No negative impact reported by respondents in China.
Colombia Enables communication in social functions in and outside Colombia. Also key functions e.g. opening a bank account in an English speaking country (18 responses).	**Key to future opportunities** English will help others to contribute to Colombia 'a country of opportunities'. Opens up global opportunities for employment (20 responses).	[English is] my best tool when I go to other countries. [I] travel with the feeling that no matter where [...] at least one person will talk English (seven responses). Easier to survive [with English] (three responses).	Fun! More friends from different countries. Access to wider and richer range of literature, films and music. Easier to have girl/boyfriend/ partner from another, often non-English speaking country (14 responses).	Engineering software is developed in English (2 responses).	Way to explore other information. Opportunities to know more about English speaking countries. Access to texts not translated to Spanish. Translations not the same as originals. Able to understand trends in social media, music, internet and movies. Access to an interesting universe of cultural and artistic manifestations. Access to research and information from across the world. Could teach gospel to people in Africa (12 responses).	None reported from Colombia.

Means of communication	Education and work	Travelling	Relationships and leisure, making friends	Technology	World knowledge, attitudes, world view, cognition, self-esteem	Negative impact
LeedsMet, UK Universal language among countries (13 responses).	Made me look smarter than I was – sometimes. English ability [is]used as a measure of intellectual ability. Studying English and getting high marks critical to go on to higher education (27 responses).	Easier to survive [with English] (three responses).	Connects people. Opens up another culture. Can communicate with cousins [in another country]. English is our first language of communication (15 responses).	(one response).	[Develops] teamwork skills. [Developed] sense of responsibility and commitment. Motivates to make improvements in life. Improves self-confidence. Develops reflection. Globalisation. Able to read good quality literature, books, magazines etc. Helped learn other languages faster and easier (17 responses).	Makes me feel stranger in my country and here. Confusion (two responses).
Salford, UK English is international language so wherever we go, we'll manage everything. Communication in functional contexts e.g. doctor, as well as social contexts. Good listener (six responses).	Good in job searching. May get full time job (four responses).		Help daughter finish homework (seven responses).		Changing habits. Share problems. Empowerment and confidence. More confidence with [...] my life. Take my in-laws to doctor, I receive their calls. Independence to use public transport, health services etc. (16 responses).	None reported for BS.

Appendix 6: Impact of English on lives. Brainstorm findings from all five sites

	Abu Dhabi	Shandong	Bogotá	Leeds	Salford	Total
Means of communication	21	10	18	13	6	68
Education and work	22	16	20	27	4	89
Travel	12	2	7	3	0	24
Making friends, leisure and relationships	6	12	14	15	7	54
Technology	4	1	2	1	0	8
Knowledge and understanding of world	7	17	12	17	16	69
Negative impact	1	0	0	2	0	3

Impact of English on lives – Abu Dhabi, UAE

Means of communication	21
Education and work	22
Travel	12
Making friends, leisure and relationships	6
Technology	4
Knowledge and understanding of world	7
Negative impact	1

Impact of English on lives – Shandong, China

Means of communication	10
Education and work	16
Travel	2
Making friends, leisure and relationships	12
Technology	1
Knowledge and understanding of world	17
Negative impact	0

Impact of English on lives – Bogotá, Colombia

Means of communication	18
Education and work	20
Travel	7
Making friends, leisure and relationships	14
Technology	2
Knowledge and understanding of world	12
Negative impact	0

Impact of English on lives – Leeds, UK

Means of communication	13
Education and work	27
Travel	3
Making friends, leisure and relationships	15
Technology	1
Knowledge and understanding of world	17
Negative impact	2

Impact of English on lives – Salford, UK

Means of communication	6
Education and work	4
Travel	0
Making friends, leisure and relationships	7
Technology	0
Knowledge and understanding of world	16
Negative impact	0

Impact of English on lives – findings from interviews

Means of communication	59
Education and work	166
Travel	17
Making friends, leisure and relationships	98
Technology	8
Knowledge and understanding of world	138
Negative impact	16