**“Brokering Britain, Educating Citizens: Exploring ESOL and Citizenship”**

**Chapter 9 abstract: Migrant mothers: active citizens**

Migrant women, most of them mothers, comprise two thirds of the adult education ESOL population and achievers. Their experiences and perception of themselves as competent users of English and active citizens, however, presents a complex picture as their story is not only about the struggle to overcome structural legal and material obstacles to enter and sustain learning whilst caring for young children. Using a critical feminist lens to examine discourses relating to immigration and community cohesion, it is possible to trace the ideological and social power acted out through them and the gendered and gendering aspects which impact on women learners' lives and learning potential.

This chapter explores two sites where such struggles are played out: the multilingual home and the home-school run, which can be considered as a physical manifestation of a linguistic and cultural border. Into a domestic space of highly intimate relationships, British governments have enjoined women to speak English, especially targeting British Asians and Muslim women. Migrant mothers are acutely aware of the double-bind situation which requires them to sustain a minority home language and culture, whilst facilitating their children's successful entry into the mainstream (Piller & Pavlenko).

I draw on British and Canadian research (Norton, Kouritzin, Macdonald) to illustrate that emotional, embodied and symbolic transitions are significant in women's perception of themselves as successful learners, mothers and immigrant citizens. These are fluid identity shifts, intersecting with external conditions to cause variation in learning investment, ambivalence which changes over time and place. What remain consistent however, are women's reported difficulties in becoming a 'legitimate speaker' who gains the right to be heard within a native-speaker community.

How can these complex findings be used to inform and develop sensitive, appropriate and critical ESOL pedagogy? I conclude with a description of a women-only project, “United Mothers” where learners and native speakers come together as equals to find ways to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers. Meeting as mothers and teachers, working on issues of contemporary interest, this is not integration but an engagement, on all sides, with new citizenship practices.

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(V. Duckworth, Edge Hill University, UK).