

## **Transcript – Podcast: Episode 5 – English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**

### **Host:**

- Siobhan Mackie, ESOL Lecturer

### **Guest speakers:**

- Iryna Polovska, Higher ESOL Student
- Lara Alsayed, Higher ESOL Student
- Katarzyna Bobru, Higher ESOL Student
- Petra Jiskrova, Higher ESOL Student

### **[Intro music]**

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### **[Siobhan]**

In this episode, we'll be talking about the Level 6 Higher ESOL course. ESOL stands for English for Speakers of Other Languages. I'm Siobhan Mackie, one of the ESOL lecturers at Moray College, and I teach a range of language levels up to Advanced Higher. One of the most rewarding things about my job is meeting and supporting students from all around the world, and our department is truly international with students from Peru, Brazil, Morocco, Turkey, Syria, Albania, Poland and Ukraine to name but a few. I'm joined today by four of our current students who attend the Higher class. We've got Petra, Iryna, Katarzyna and Lara. So, I'm going to talk to them all about their experiences on their ESOL course. So, if I can come to you first Iryna. Can you tell me something about yourself and why you chose to do ESOL at Moray College?

### **[Iryna]**

Yes, I'm originally from Ukraine and I've been here in Scotland for over seven years and I always wanted to do ESOL course, but never had enough time to do it, so I'd been asking several times at both colleges, Inverness and Elgin, but Elgin was more suitable time wise. And due to COVID and excess of free time, I was able to start this course, ESOL, and was very happy finally, to be able to do it after so many years trying to start it.

### **[Siobhan]**

Yeah, well it's good being good to have you on the class Iryna and can I just ask the same question to yourself Lara? Tell us a little bit about yourself and why you chose to do ESOL at Moray College.

### **[Lara]**

Hi. I am originally from Syria. I've been in Scotland since 2014. This is the 2nd time I'm doing ESOL, because I enjoyed very much this course. I think that the language we've been learning and we keep learning during this course is more practical and we can use it on a daily basis. So, this is why I keep going and doing it again and again. I found it very interesting and it improved very much my grammar and my English skills. And I enjoy very much also meeting people, you know, from different countries and different cultures. It's very, it's been very useful.

**[Siobhan]**

Oh, that's good to hear Lara, thanks for that. And Katarzyna what made you decide to come and do ESOL at the college and what has your experience been?

**[Katarzyna]**

Yes, I originally came from Poland. I came to Scotland 16 years ago so that's a long time ago and I never join any professional class, like English classes. I always learn my English on my own with the books, with television. So that was the- then I made my decision to join the ESOL class and I'm very happy with that.

**[Siobhan]**

That's great thank you Katarzyna. It's great to have you on the course. And, uh, Petra, your situations a little different because you're a Moray College student doing another full-time course. So my question to you is, what made you decide to do ESOL in addition to your other course that you're doing?

**[Petra]**

Well I wish to improve my English to brush up my language skills and to widen my vocabulary. And also I'd like to prove my future employer that I do my best to learn and to improve myself. So, if I were lucky enough, and I will get a certificate from this course, I might use it for my CV.

**[Siobhan]**

That's great, thank you. And you mentioned there Petra that you wanted to widen your vocabulary and brush up on your language skills. So do you feel the course has done that for you?

**[Petra]**

Definitely. I've learned so many new words, and I could also improve my vocabulary and grammar. I wasn't able to use the right grammar and now I'm sure that what I say is correct. So, I, I'm actually more confident when I talk.

**[Siobhan]**

Oh, that's great Petra. Yes, no, you're doing extremely well with your English. Iryna I'm just going to ask you, obviously you've lived in the UK for quite a long time and you work here. You've got the opportunity to practice your language in your everyday life. So what do you feel are the advantages of actually attending a course at college rather than just practicing at the work place?

**[Iryna]**

There are many reasons why the ESOL Higher is a must for anyone who wants to improve their English skills. One being that everybody knows that when you speak good English, there's no leeway for you anymore. So when you actually make a mistake, not knowing that you made a mistake, like saying a wrong word or something offensive or rude without knowing it, not meaning it, because all the rest of your English is so good there's no leeway, you're not- no-one will ever assume that you made- you said it by mistake. They will just think this is exactly what you wanted to say, and people get often offended just because you

made a mistake. But once you speak decent English, there's no way back anymore, you just have to constantly improve in order to avoid this problem with customers, because customer service here is very important, so just have to do it and at our best.

**[Siobhan]**

Do you feel it this has helped you to speak to customers at your work?

**[Iryna]**

Oh yes absolutely, absolutely. I've learned so many things like Petra said, I didn't even know I made so many mistakes, so it's nice to know and it helps me feel much more confident at work. It helps me feel that I can actually express myself better. Loads of grammatical mistakes I used to make I'm now more conscious about them and I try to avoid them. And I feel that I'm providing better service for the customer, that's what matters isn't it.

**[Siobhan]**

Oh, that's great. That's great to hear Iryna. And Lara, I just wanted to ask you what you intend to do after the course, are you going to be using the qualification for anything?

**[Lara]**

Yes, of course, I, what I'm planning to do is to do a PGDE (Professional Graduate Diploma of Education) degree to teach business studies in high schools in the UK. So, one of the conditions I should have, I should have ESOL Higher. I also use this ESOL Higher to gain more confidence in my language and I applied and I did a Higher English, you know, just like it helps me to progress and to give me- to encourage me to go into more difficult courses, so I feel that it's very useful for anyone who would like to gain confidence in their language.

**[Siobhan]**

That's great. That's great. Thank you Lara. And Katarzyna what do you intend to do with the qualification moving forward?

**[Katarzyna]**

I would like to join the course next year so that will improve my English, and I also would like to apply for a childcare course, but I'm not sure if that will be in college or in the Open University. So that's going to help me a lot. And now I'm more confident in using my English. I'm more confident when I'm writing when I have to write the letters, and I have to write anything, even the notes for my friends. So that's very good.

**[Siobhan]**

Oh, that's great. Thank you Katarzyna. And Petra just moving on to you finally. What do you think's been the most useful thing for you on the course? And what do you plan to do in the future?

**[Petra]**

I have plans for myself, I have plan B and plan A, plan A and B, the first one is to carry on with my full time study. So this course helps to improve my written English, not only written, spoken as well. That's one thing I can do, the second thing is I applied for a job and if I'll be successful in my job interview, then I'll be able to communicate with adults and with

children better, and I'll be able to actually work with documents and read them and also write them as well. So it gives me confidence and the skills, the language skills, to actually be able to do that.

**[Siobhan]**

Well, that's good to hear. Thank you Petra. So thank you all for speaking to me today about your experiences on the ESOL course. I would like to thank you for listening to the podcast, and if you would like to listen to more podcasts, or explore the courses on offer here at Moray College UHI please visit [www.moray.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.moray.uhi.ac.uk).

**[Outro music]**

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