Language, Education, and Settlement:

A Sociolinguistic Ethnography on, with and for Africans in Australia

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Abstract

This sociolinguistic ethnography explores the interplay between language learning, education and employment experiences of black African migrants in Australia. The black African migrant presence in Australia is recent and their experiences in settlement are poorly understood. Africans from a wide variety of diverse backgrounds tend to be homogenised as 'black' and seen as a monolithic group. It is particularly the refugee and humanitarian visa entry point that predominates in perspectives on Africans in Australia.

The present study seeks to overcome these homogenising perspectives through a focus on diverse pre- and post-migration experiences, particularly as they relate to language learning, education and employment. Data for the study come from extensive participant observation in African communities in urban and rural New South Wales as well as individual interviews with 47 adult African men and women from eight African countries of origin.

Focusing on differences in pre-migration educational opportunities and the status of English in their countries of origin, the analysis distinguishes four groups: migrants from Anglophone African countries who have completed secondary education or above; migrants from non-Anglophone African countries who have completed secondary education or above; migrants from Anglophone African countries who have had no or low schooling; and migrants from non-Anglophone African countries who have had no or low schooling.

Findings indicate that well-educated migrants from Anglophone countries do not think of themselves as second language learners and reject the idea that they should engage in further English language learning in Australia. However, their African English repertoires are not readily accepted in Australia and their credentials do not translate into jobs commensurate with their qualifications. Given this discrepancy between self- and other-perceived language skills and qualifications, participants in this group attribute the underemployment they experience to racism.

By contrast, well-educated migrants from non-Anglophone countries are found to embrace their positioning as second language learners and to engage in learning English. Participants in this group, too, are unemployed or underemployed but they attribute their situation to their limited English language proficiency and their lack of local experience. Hence, they expect their situation to change once they will have acquired these.

Participants with no or low formal education from Anglophone and non-Anglophone countries are found to be keen to learn English, enhance their education and gain employment. However, language learning and further education opportunities are ill-suited to the specific needs of these two groups. Both groups are highly gendered and comprise predominantly women who are pushed into traditional gender roles as housewives, stay-at-home mothers and carers because of the absence of pathways specific to their educational and language learning needs.

Overall, the research demonstrates a persistent mismatch between diverse pre-migration linguistic repertoires and education trajectories, and post-migration language training and education pathways into settlement in Australia. These findings complicate notions of the second language learner and new migrant groups with implications for SLA research and migrant settlement policy.

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled *Language, education, and settlement: A sociolinguistic ethnography on, with and for Africans in Australia* has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee reference number: HE28SEP2007-D05463 on 29 October, 2007.

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List of Acronyms

Acronym

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CE	Creole English
CSWE	Certificate for Spoken and Written English
CRC	Community Relations Commission
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DIS	Department of Industry and Science
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESL	English as a second language
ICE	Information and Cultural Exchange
ISLPR	International Second Language Proficiency Rating
L1	Mother tongue (most people's heritage language)
L2	Second language
LOTE	Language other than English
MoI	Medium of Instruction
NEAC	Newly Emerging African Communities
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLL	Second Language Learning
SPEAKING	Setting participants ends acts key instrumentals norms genre (Hymesian grid)
TAFE	Technical and Further Education (tertiary non-university education)
TPV	Temporary Protection Visa
UIS	Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Transcription Conventions

,	clause final intonation
.	sentence final intonation
…	pause
=	overlap in talk
?	sentence final rising intonation
CAPS	emphatic stress
@@@	laughter (one @ per laughter syllable i.e. @@@@ means hahahaha)
@laughter@	the statement between the two @ is made laughingly
erm	hesitation marker
uhmhu	agreement marker
hmm	attention marker
[…]	researcher omission
[something]	researcher addition
(gesturing)	research notes

Information on the origin of data can be found in brackets following direct quotes with pseudonym of participant and line numbers. For instance (VENUS: 380-390) indicates that quote is drawn from the interview with Venus, a pseudonym.

CHAPTER 1

1. Introduction

1.1 Motivation for a study 'on', 'with' and 'for' Africans in Australia

We don't want to be on the front page in the news. Like Africans are not settling. We want to be able to make a difference. We are from home. We are productive members of society. But what I feel is like, say Africans here have not all come here under the same situation. Some people like, for me I came over here speaking English. Reading and writing in English but there are people from other African backgrounds who have never spoken English prior to coming here ... I think with a research like the one you are doing, people can be able to get a broader knowledge of how we are all here, the differences among Africans here even though we are all black.

Lewis, 27, from Liberia

What complicate life to me in [C-town] is many time of course I'm identified as a refugee. Which increases or put, increases my doubt, how long will I be continue being called refugee with this name. Until when will a person be called a refugee? Because I have what, my, the Australian citizenship and I have what, the so called Australian passport, but still I'm called a refugee.

Franklin, 47, from Sudan

So long as the lions do not have their own historian the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.

African Proverb

In the beginning of 2006, I saw an announcement in the Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University, for a PhD research scholarship that was available to support research in the then Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) Research Centre. The flier had the following brief about the project:

> The scholarship holder will investigate language planning, English language teaching and refugee settlement issues among migrants in Australia. The project will aim to identify and explain the political, economic and sociolinguistic environments that produce language learning outcomes that enhance the settlement experience of all stakeholders. It is expected that the research will provide *a new understanding* of the role of language learning and immigrant settlement. (Division of Linguistics and Psychology. Emphasis added)

It was through that advertisement that for the first time I heard about a language teaching program for migrants in Australia called the AMEP. It has been in existence since 1948. I was intrigued. At the time I put in my application, I was not clear on exactly which refugee settlement issues I might focus on. Then, still waiting to hear from the department, on the 15th of December, 2006, an incident splashed across the media that set me thinking more deeply about refugee settlement issues and African migrants. It cemented the home truth for me that should I be successful in gaining the scholarship I would focus on black Africans as the migrant group whose experiences would offer a truly 'new understanding' of the role of language learning and settlement, and also a new understanding about who they are as a group in Australia. The incident reported in the media took place in Tamworth, a small town in country New South Wales.

On 15 December 2006, Tamworth, the small town known for its yearly country music festival and awards program that brings country music to national and international attention, hit the spotlight in synch with a dispute that was anything but music to the ears. At that time, the City Council rejected a bid by the Department of Immigration to resettle a group of five Sudanese families with refugee backgrounds in Tamworth (Norrie, 2006). Following media

pressure, the City Council eventually chose to rescind its overtly racist decision and accept that the new arrivals be resettled there (Munro & Welch, 2007). But the lingering image for me was that of a cartoon in the media that was crafted to highlight the incident (Figure 1.1).

Decades ago in Europe, Jews fleeing Nazi Germany had faced similar explicit racist rejection as captured in Auden's (1939) classic poem, *Refugee Blues*. Cathy Wilcox (2006) makes that link with a comic presentation titled, *The Tamworth Refugee Blues* (see Figure 1.1) to capture the new refugee plight.
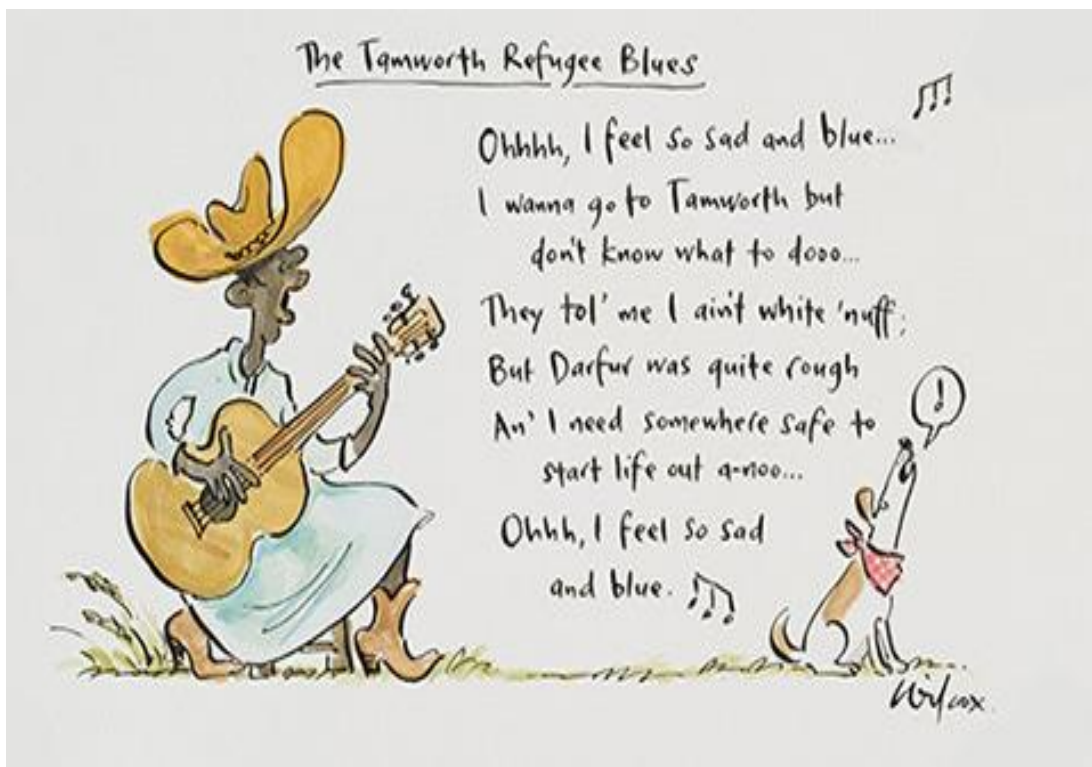
Figure 1.1   The Tamworth Refugee Blues (Wilcox, 2006)

Source: National Museum of Australia "Behind the lines in the year's best cartoons"
http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/behind_the_lines_2007_the_years_best_cartoons/news_of_the_day/slidesho
w_1_3.html

The cartoon of the 'black refugee' plight became a national award winning piece the following year in *Behind the lines in the year's best cartoons* (National Museum of Australia, 2007).

In the aftermath of the 'Tamworth refugee blues' incident, considerable attention has been paid to black African migrant settlement in the media (Doogue, 2008), in academic research (Colic-Peisker, 2009; Dhanji, 2009; Duncan, Rushbrook, Pilotto, & Johnston, 2007), in government commissioned enquiries (Piper & Associates, 2007, 2008, 2009), and political statements about their settlement such as *Minister cuts African refugee intake* (Farouque, Petrie, & Miletic, 2007) have fuelled public debate about black African settlement. Yet not much has shifted in terms of effective policy and practices targeted at black Africans because these are often approached from perspectives which lump them together as a monolithic group with 'integration' difficulties. These primarily focus on 'refugee' issues lead to a reification of humanitarian entry point needs over other aspects of the settlement process for black African migrants. In such public discourses the label 'refugee' takes on derogatory overtones and whatever it is used to connote for black African migrants is made to subsume all other characteristics of black African migrants (Anyanwu, 2009; Dhanji, 2009; Ndhlovu, 2009a).

The ideologies and hidden mechanisms that attach to the label are not only visible to researchers but also to ordinary African migrants. Black African migrants with or without refugee histories do not all see themselves in these discourses. There is evidence of this tension in the comments from Lewis and Franklin that begin this introduction and many others I have heard and also as any informed member of African community groups will attest to. Although Lewis has a refugee history, he does not see himself in most representations about 'refugees' in Australia and would prefer that his linguistic abilities, educational credentials and ability to contribute to Australian society form the highlight of his settlement in the new country. Franklin too has a refugee history, but he would prefer that his identity as an Australian citizen would be the one highlighted rather than being taken back to the entry point identity which lingers even after several years in Australia.

So far, the focus on refugees as the theme of prominence in research and public discourses about Africans in Australia has left unexplored the diversity that characterises this heterogeneous mix of African migrants. No matter where black Africans come from, they are seen as a homogeneous group and most non-Africans are unaware of complexities and differences in terms of language, ethnicities, cultural, sociohistorical and political backgrounds.

The African proverb above points to the importance of paying attention to the world-view and the perspectives which influence how stories get told. From Western dominant discourses and media perspectives, Africa and people with origins on the African continent are represented with constructions and discourse of poverty, disease, famine, war, tribal people committing atrocities against one another, corrupt and despotic leadership. The list goes on. Inevitably, such discourses feed into the conceptualisation of a dichotomised African people: villians to be abhorred or victims to be pitied. In both scenarios, African people are characterised as racially inferior. These conceptualisations underpin ideologies that position them as inferior social participants and legitimise their marginalisation in Western countries.

Many African community leaders have told me that the inability of African communities to organise themselves into a common African-centred group is because some African people who migrated in the family and skilled visa streams did not want to be tagged inadvertently as refugees. In fact some people who were recommended to me as participants for this study, which was always billed as about "African migrants" declined to be recruited on those grounds telling me that: "we are not refugees", "but your study is about refugees", and "I'm a skilled migrant". Indeed, during this study I attended many forums and activities advertised as African and found that most of them were targeted at addressing African 'refugee' settlement issues and needs in spite of being publicly touted as African forums.

The wisdom from the above proverb reminds us that we risk knowing only a part of the story about African migrants within the status quo. Therefore, it is wise to conduct research that is informed by the perspectives of the researched, their narratives and their actual experiences, and particularly so if such pronouncements inform policy. In effect, Africans in Australia see themselves not as a monolithic group but as a heterogeneous group with differences within similarities that need documentation in Australia. The question remaining is how do black African migrants see themselves in Australia? That question raises another one, what qualifies me to be a voice for black African people and why do I take the stance to speak "'on', 'with' and 'for'[1] speakers of minority languages" (A. Blackledge, 2006, p. 23)? I elaborate on that next.

From my own experience as a black African woman migrant and the experiences of my friends and most other black African migrants I know, I have felt the frustration that comes with mainstream perceptions about Africans in Australia. My own story tells me that a lot of lived black African realities are yet to be heard and documented in the Australian research terrain. I will tell my story and how I come to be doing research about Africans in which they will recognise themselves because it is done 'with' them – as the centre of the research, and it is done 'for' them – as it will be a legacy for them and generations to come because it forms part of an era of creating space for representations about African Australians where the subjects speak for themselves.

My journey to Australia started from Ghana where I was born, nine years into the country's independence from British rule. I was born in Osu, a district in Accra, Ghana's capital city. Ghana has several languages – the *Ethnologue* (Lewis, Simons, & Fennig, 2015) records a tally of 68 living languages for Ghana and its ethnic groups, but English is retained as the

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[1] In choosing the stance to speak 'on', 'with' and 'for' Africans in Australia, I assume an 'insider-outsider' positioning in line with recent sociolinguistic methodological debates (see Garner, Raschka, & Sercombe, 2006). I acknowledge similar formulation – 'by', 'with', and 'for' which originates from Cameron et al (1993) and subsequent thinking mainly from the field of language documentation which extends the formulation to research by a community (see Austin, 2010, section 6 and references cited there).

official and national language. My ethnic group is Ga and the language we speak is also Ga. We spoke Ga at home and I learnt to speak, read and write in English in primary school. My first primary school was run by a family of Fante ethnicity. Some of the students also spoke Fante so I picked up Fante during the school bus ride to and from school and also on the playground. Those were the only times we were allowed to speak in vernacular. The main gate to the school had a sign that read: "No vernacular, speak in English". During class time we were punished if we were caught not speaking in English.

When I was eight years old, my father was transferred from our home town in the Greater Accra Region to Koforidua in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The dominant language in Koforidua is Twi. Twi and Fante belong to a group of languages called Akan which are mutually intelligible so it was easy for me to learn to speak Twi. I continued my primary school education in a new school. In this school, we were taught in English and we were taught to read and write in Twi. At school and in my neighbourhood, I made new friends with whom I spoke Twi and I spoke Ga at home with my family and a few families of Ga background who were on transfer like our family. That was my first experience of being a migrant.

In 1992, I joined my husband, also a Ga, in Sydney. The first few months in Australia passed in a haze of confusion. I found it difficult to understand the English people spoke and they could not understand my English, either. I remember the first dinner party we organised for my husband's work friends to come and have a taste of Ghanaian dishes and to welcome me. I met my first Australian friend, Penny, who would become my son's god-mother, on that occasion. We had been writing – in English – to each other when I was in Ghana and looking forward to our meeting. It was a different story face-to-face at the dinner table. I just could not understand what she was saying and she obviously had difficulties understanding me, too. My husband assumed the role of an interpreter for us and became the lead person for all

interactions – inside and outside the home – that involved speaking in English. It was very frustrating. But it was interesting at the same time. It was very interesting that my husband could understand both our Englishes effortlessly whilst we struggled to understand each other. I knew I could never speak like an Australian but I just wanted to speak and be understood.

The hardest part of all was trying to find a job. After several failed attempts I found work as a shop floor packer with a supermarket chain. I later received training as a checkout operator which put me in face-to-face contact with the customers. By this time, it was easy to go through the formulaic routine of greetings. But quite a challenge when I had to speak outside the routine like ask for price checks over the microphone. Serving at the cigarette counter was harder still because I had to listen carefully for the brand names of different varieties and strengths of cigarettes to sell customers who just wanted their cigarettes served in the quickest possible time so that they could head out to inhale their calming effects.

One year into my work at the supermarket, I fell pregnant with my first child and soon the second followed. My mother came to live with us after the birth of my second son. In that year, I went to TAFE to study and completed a course in office practices. When I could not get an office job after that training, I returned to work in the supermarket. In my tenth year of living in Australia, my younger child started primary school. To the surprise of most people in my community, I applied as a mature-aged student to begin fulltime undergraduate study at Macquarie University. And I continued to work part-time at the supermarket.

At Macquarie University, I tried a few subjects in the first year but found that I was naturally drawn towards studying linguistics. My favourite subject was sociolinguistics. It opened my eyes to the hows and whys of language use. I became fascinated with creoles and pidgins and English varieties. In that class, I found meanings, interpretations and terminology to explain my own difficulties with living in Australia. I learnt that the English spoken in Australia is

different from my Ghanaian English in terms of phonological, lexical and syntactical choices made in the different varieties. Phonologically, I learnt that the vowel sounds in my Ghanaian English were short and vowels were fully realised with no schwa intrusion and also that the stress and intonation are quite different. Lexical items and slang words were also a challenge. In time I learnt that what had for long sounded to me like 'dog stacker' was 'dog's tucker', which is Australian for 'dog food'! With a lot of practice, I started to lengthen my vowel sounds. I taught my tongue to use diphthongs and I have incorporated the schwa when speaking to people from outside my community.

Through all that, I use my Ghanaian English when speaking to my family and people from my community. I also found that sometimes it is difficult to separate the two worlds. Like the time when my Ghanaian friend visited and I ordered pizza over the phone. When my exchange with the operator was over, she said to me "*ei εkumaa, εnyε sε wo yε mεkumaa anka mε ka sε wo yε* too known!" which means "wow, my sister-in-law, if I did not know any better, I'd say that you're too known". In the new kinships we have forged and the relational structure we have adopted, her husband is my brother. And that is why she addresses me as her sister-in-law and not as her sister. 'Too known' in Ghanaian parlance means showing off or putting on airs. We laughed. But those words have stuck with me. The point is I risk being seen as 'too known' if my own people do not recognise themselves in me when I speak. But the question is: can I speak and be recognised as an Australian at the same time?

The answer is not simple and neither is the issue at stake that of English proficiency alone. The issue is also about embodied identity and what we signal through our language choices and how we are able to or not able to build solidarity and affect. It is about maturing in a new culture, adapting to married life, bringing up my children and learning to live without the support of my family. It is about living in Australia and wanting to go home (Ghana), and going to Ghana and yearning to go home (Australia). It is about confronting racism and

different skin colour. It is about feeling the pain of a black mother whose child has been excluded from a fair few birthday parties of classmates who return to school on Mondays to discuss how the parties went. It is about having to sit with a teary-eyed six-year-old and explain to him that he is black. And no, even if he peeled the scab on the skin at the back of his black hand to show white underneath, he will still be black. It is also about learning as the years roll by. We are learning to overcome adversity. My children's creative engagement with racism can be found in pieces they submitted respectively as school work (see Appendix V and Appendix VI) and can also be found on http://www.langaugeonthemove.com/ logged under Voices of African-Australian Youth (2010).

In this study, then, I am both an insider and an outsider. I started the research by assuming an insider position on a topic that was close to my heart with a people that I am linked to because of our racialised identity as black Africans. Language learning and settlement is also a topic close to my heart because of my own experiences as a black African migrant woman who spoke a different brand of English from the one that I met in Australia. As a black woman and a mother, I believe my own settlement experiences and my family's history in Australia which have been variously shaped by race, language and power qualify me as an insider and afford me insights that will help to understand the researched group. I am an outsider because my participants own their distinct stories as they alone have experienced them. Together with the participants this thesis will shed light on how we are black and African but also similar in our differences.

In sum, this thesis aims to further understanding about black African migrant subjectivities. Informed by contemporary poststructuralist frameworks, the study makes no claim to objectivity but reorients what is known about black African migrants and how they are seen away from 'objective' perspectives towards subjectivities (e.g., Norton Peirce, 1995b). Within these frameworks, social phenomena are seen as shaped by particular world-views

and the researcher as the main research tool. From that perspective, there is no such thing as objectivity or value-free research as all research is considered value-laden and shaped by our individual selfhood and subjectivities (e.g., Leggo, 2004). On that basis, and as a member of the researched community, I take the stance of centring black African subjectivities and collective voices in their struggles for equity within a race-structured society. Therefore I depart from preconceptions about black Africans which see them as 'the problem' and suggest that this shift in lens will provide clearer and non-stereotypical insights into their experiences.

1.2 African migrants in Australia

This section presents a demographic overview of African-born migrants in Australia. Within the last two decades, although comparatively small in number in relation to the rest of the migrant groups, the African presence has steadily increased. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data reveal that in 2006, 248,699 (5.6%) of the 4,416,020 overseas-born residents recorded were African-born; and in 2011, 337,222 (6.4%) of the 5,290,436 overseas-born residents in Australia were African-born (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2014a, p. 75). The majority of the African-born are, in fact, non-black migrants, particularly from South Africa. Overall, the numbers of Africa-born migrants are relatively low compared to other migrant groups, and within the African cohort the numbers of black African-born migrants are even lower.

In terms of entry pathways, non-black Africans mostly enter via the skilled pathway while the majority in the black African-born cohort arrive through the humanitarian pathway, being eligible for Australia's humanitarian settlement support in line with Australian Government agreement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) principles (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2012). Nevertheless, black Africans are also represented in the skilled entry group not officially regarded as in need of settlement help –

and none exists for them. For instance, when Australia discontinued the practice of explicit racially-based exclusion of black Africans in the 1960s and early 1970s, black African migrants were mainly students from ex-British colonies and Commonwealth countries including Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe. This group's language abilities and settlement issues were not policy targets as they had a high level of education, English proficiency and proof of self-sufficiency for entry into Australia. Table 1.1 shows these numbers of settler arrivals by African countries of birth for the decade in relation to the three main visa streams.

Table 1.1   Number of settler arrivals by country of birth and migration stream, 30 June 1997 to 30 June 2007

	Humanitarian program	Family stream	Skill stream	Total
	no.	no.	no.	no.
Algeria	228	229	42	499
Egypt	1 921	2 063	1 895	5 881
Eritrea	992	408	34	1 434
Ethiopia	2 714	1 948	121	4 783
Ghana	174	1 007	256	1 437
Kenya	1 754	869	3 181	5 804
Mauritius	2	759	2 172	2 933
Morocco	12	352	80	445
Namibia	10	64	340	414
Nigeria	92	540	764	1 397
Other Central and West Africa	3 796	366	358	4 522
Other North Africa	62	161	109	332
Other Southern and East Africa	1 603	457	837	2 897
Sierra Leone	2 477	70	20	2 568
Somalia	2 373	972	24	3 370
South Africa	36	7 995	50 914	58 977
Sudan	22 445	604	85	23 134
Tanzania	854	169	255	1 279
Uganda	681	129	212	1 022
Zambia	59	220	1 103	1 382
Zimbabwe	204	1 176	10 666	12 051
Total	**42 489**	**20 558**	**73 468**	**136 561**

Source: Adapted from the DIAC Settlement Database cited in Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009)
http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/3416.0Main+Features32008#Anchor4

For the period of June 1997 to June 2007 the Australian Department of Immigration records show a total number of 136 561 entrants with African countries of birth. As Table 1.1 shows, within that decade, in terms of their entry pathways, more than half of the total number of African-born permanent entrants were skilled migrants from South Africa and Zimbabwe and mostly non-blacks. In the skilled visa stream South Africa (50,914), Zimbabwe (10,666), Kenya (3,181), Mauritius (2,172) and Egypt (1,895) make up the top five African countries accounting for the highest number of arrivals. The top five countries of origin for humanitarian entrants were Sudan (22,445), Other Central and West Africa (3,796), Ethiopia (2,714), Sierra Leone (2,477) and Somalia (2,373). And finally, the top five countries in the family stream were South Africa (7,995), Egypt (2,063), Ethiopia (1,948), Zimbabwe (1,176) and Ghana (1,007).

Table 1.2   Fastest growing overseas birthplace groups – 2001 and 2006 Census

Rank	Birthplace	2006 Census	% Change 2001-2006
1st	Burundi	754	2,256.3
2nd	Liberia	1,527	1,131.5
3rd	Guinea	333	974.2
4th	Sierra Leone	1,811	398.9
5th	Rwanda	206	347.8
6th	Sudan	19,052	288.8
7th	Congo (R)	519	287.3
8th	Côte D'Ivoire	253	237.3
9th	Congo (DRC)	622	133.0
17th	Cameroon	127	92.4
21st	Zimbabwe	20,158	71.8
24th	Namibia	702	60.6
25th	Ethiopia	5,638	59.1

Source: Adapted from *The people of Australia: Statistics from the 2006 census* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008, p. 17)
https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/01_2014/poa-2008.pdf

Table 1.2 shows an unprecedented increase in the black African migrant presence within that decade as it reflects in the Australian population and census data. The table also shows that 13 African countries ranked in the top 30 fastest growing overseas birthplaces recorded for the 2006 census. Read alone, figures in the percentages column may be misleading and must

be read in conjunction with the number of persons recorded for the country. For instance, considering the population size and percentage recorded for some of the countries (e.g. Burundi in first place with 754 amounting to an increase of 2,256.3%) their large percentage of change simply mean that some of the countries were not present in previous censuses and were making their first appearance in Australian census records. Here, I note Harte's (2013) caution about accuracy and reliability of the census data due to limitations in methods employed in the collection of the data particularly with smaller communities such as the Burundian community in Australia. Nevertheless, the main point of importance for the present discussion is the unprecedented increase in figures and implications for the settlement of these communities. This notable increase in the black African-born presence was brought about by the Australian Government's policy change to increase its intake of humanitarian entrants from sub-Saharan Africa from 8% in 1997 to 70.6% by 2003-2004 (Hugo, 2010).

Table 1.3   Fastest growing overseas birthplace groups – 2011 and 2006 Census

Rank	Birthplace	2011 Census	% Change 2006-2011
2nd	Togo	279	720.6
4th	Congo (DRC)	2575	316.7
5th	Rwanda	640	216.8
8th	Burundi	1730	129.1
9th	Cameroon	227	121.6
13th	Guinea	649	93.7
15th	Congo (R)	982	88.5
17th	Nigeria	4519	80.7
21st	Liberia	2673	75.5
22nd	Cote d'Ivoire	445	74.5
25th	Senegal	337	70.2
28th	Libya	2557	68.6
29th	Sierra Leone	3044	64.7

Source: Adapted from The people of Australia: Statistics from the 2011 Census (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2014a, p. 20)
http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/immigration-update/people-australia-2013-statistics.pdf.

However, by 2007, policy changes resulted in a cut back in the humanitarian African-born intake. In 2007, the then Minister for Immigration, Hon Kevin Andrews, was reported as stating that the number of Africans had been reduced because "some groups don't seem to be

settling and adjusting into the Australian way of life" (Farouque, et al., 2007), and hence the cut to their numbers. From that perspective, black Africans were positioned as the problem in relation to their settlement challenges, leaving systemic structures intact and lack of recognition for how these impact their settlement. Table 1.3 reflects the cut back in the African-born intake. As Table 1.3 shows, once again 13 African countries are represented in the top 30 fastest growing overseas birthplaces although, this time, numbers and percentage increases are not as pronounced as those for the previous census period.

From the demographic picture one thing can be seen with certainty: that the majority of African migrants in Australia are non-black, arrive mainly via the skilled migration stream and are not considered as needing settlement help. For this cohort, visibility is not an issue although they may be audibly different (Venables, 2003). They fall outside the scope of this study. On the other hand, black Africans as well as being visibly different are also the ones presenting to stakeholders and service providers as humanitarian entrants needing settlement help. Therefore, during this period, and for the first time in Australian history, Africa became 'visibly' present and attached to that 'visibility' is "the need of humanitarian assistance" (Robinson, 2011). This image has greatly impacted the settlement experiences of black African migrants not all of whom are humanitarian entrants, and not all of whom are eligible for and have had access to settlement help (see Jakubowicz, 2010).

The majority of black African migrants settle in suburbs in metropolitan Sydney and Melbourne and a few have settled in regional areas where humanitarian settlement programs have been piloted (Kivunja, Kuyini, & Maxwell, 2014; Piper & Associates, 2007, 2008, 2009). Settlement for eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants is managed through the Australian Government's settlement policy and settlement service provision on a needs basis is delivered by community based organisations. Settlement services aim towards "enabling self-reliance, developing their English and language skills, and connecting with mainstream

services and the broader Australian society" (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2012, p. 4). That focus suggests that, in terms of these new entrants, key characteristics such as lack of self-reliance, lack of language skills, lack of systemic knowledge and lack of means to connect to mainstream services and the society are identified as areas in which they need assistance and for which provision is made to help them meet these challenges. This raises questions of whether there are variations within these needs, how well they are understood, and how well the mechanisms that are prescribed to meet these identified needs actually serve their purposes? With regard to the present study's interests in language learning and settlement, and as English and language skills development are provided through the AMEP, I will look in detail at the AMEP in the following section.

In sum, the black Africans in Australia form a new and unique lesser known group whose heterogeneity within a multicultural Australian society is poorly understood. Therefore, this study about black African migrant language learning and settlement trajectories is timely.

1.3 The Adult Migrant English Program

The AMEP is a national settlement program in Australia which provides up to 510 hours of English language tuition to eligible adult migrants and humanitarian entrants to help them learn foundation English language and settlement skills to enable them to participate confidently in Australian society (Department of Industry and Science, 2014). During the period the participants were interviewed for the study (see Chapter 3), the AMEP was overseen by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) but it is currently overseen by the Department of Industry and Science (DIS). The AMEP offers a curriculum based on the Certificates in Spoken and Written English (CSWE) framework and learners are ranked in relation to the International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR) scale. Following an initial assessment of their competency in English in the four skill areas, clients – the preferred label for learners – in the AMEP are placed in one of three CSWE levels

(Level I through to Level III) within the program, and clients with no or little prior competence in English are placed in a preparatory class, pre-CSWE or Level 0.

The AMEP's support, like other settlement support services, is provided based on need. As such, skilled migrants who are expected to be autonomous in their settlement are not eligible for AMEP provision. It is family migrants who speak little or no English and humanitarian migrants who are the main targets of AMEP support to help them learn English and move towards workforce participation and contributing to Australian society. The concepts undergirding language provision for settlement tend to suggest a linear relationship between language learning, equitable participation and settlement within a framework defining settlement broadly within dimensions that encompass social participation, economic wellbeing, independence, personal wellbeing and life satisfaction and community connectedness (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2012).

However, within that framework, little regard is paid to sociocultural differences within learner groups; and little regard is paid to contextual constraints that affect new migrants and disrupt the expected linear process and expected outcome of a quick entry into the workforce. Mostly monolingual ideologies that frame mainstream majority mindsets show the belief in a linear link between learning the dominant language and employment for full participation in the new (Cross, 2011; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). Therefore, in instances when the expected results do not occur, the learners are seen as the problem and their inability to learn English for settlement is usually taken as a blatant refusal to learn English and 'integrate' (e.g., Tse, 2001). Within that construction, sociocultural and contextual constraints that impede their progress to learning and full participation are left intact and unexplored for them (e.g., Butorac, 2014). Yet these are adult learners with histories of previous language learning skills and a wealth of accumulated 'life school' experiences which can be tapped into and used to enhance curriculums to teach them effectively.

In sum, the foregoing provides background into the problem this research sets out to address with African migrants in Australia. The general research problem under investigation in this study is the relationship between migrant language learning and successful settlement in the migration context of Australia.

On the basis of the review of the literature (see Chapter 2) and existing research about black African migrants and their settlement experiences, a lacuna was identified as follows: a dearth of studies of black African migrants in Australia investigate their language learning and settlement experiences in relation to their diverse pre-migration multilingual and sociolinguistic experiences. In view of that, the following research questions were formulated and guided the present study.

> RQ 1: How do African migrants' pre-migration backgrounds shape their language repertoires and English proficiency?

With this question I want to illuminate the sociocultural contexts from which participants have come to Australia. I want to shed light on nuances in identities and experiences because it is important that policy and service provision build on a solid understanding of their clients' diverse pre-migration backgrounds, particularly languages and educational opportunities as key factors that shape their choices in the future. Based on differences in their languages and educational backgrounds, four distinct groups were identified and specific research questions were directed at each of these as follows:

> RQ 2: What are the English language learning experiences and settlement trajectories of well-educated migrants from Anglophone African countries who arrive with English proficiency?

RQ 3: What are the English language learning experiences and settlement trajectories of well-educated migrants from non-Anglophone African countries who arrive without English proficiency?

RQ 4: What are the English language learning experiences and settlement trajectories of migrants who have had no or low schooling from Anglophone African countries who arrive with some English proficiency?

RQ 5: What are the English language learning experiences and settlement trajectories of migrants who have had no or low schooling from non-Anglophone African countries who arrive without English proficiency?

Together these four specific questions and the first, primary question all contribute to a representation of black African migrant experiences that pay attention to their diverse backgrounds and do not lump them together as a monolithic group in terms of their language learning and settlement trajectories.

The following section will present an overview of the research with an outline of the chapters within the thesis and the general structural approach to answering the identified questions the research is designed to address about black African migrants in Australia.

1.4 Overview of thesis

This study offers critical insights into language learning, educational backgrounds and the settlement trajectories of black African migrants in Australia. In this introductory chapter to the thesis, I have explained the research problem and the motivation for conducting this study on, with and for African migrants in Australia. I have explained that much public discourse stereotypes black Africans as a homogeneous group of refugees. African people in Australia do not see themselves in narratives about them. Therefore, it is important that research

explores and explicates the diverse educational and linguistic backgrounds that shape their settlement experiences.

The thesis is organised into nine chapters as follows. Following this introduction chapter, Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature and outlines sociocultural concepts of language and language learning that inform the study and ground it within a poststructural framework. Beginning with the topic of language as symbolic power, Chapter 2 explores the notions of language as capital (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986, 1991), second language learning (SLL) as investment (Norton & Toohey, 2011; Norton Peirce, 1995a), and language ideologies (A. Blackledge, 2000; Lippi-Green, 1997, 2012; Piller, 2011) and discusses how these deepened my understanding about language learning and settlement issues for African migrants in Australia. The chapter goes on to draw on the notion of diaspora to discuss racialised language learning and settlement issues specific with black African migrant populations in Australia and elsewhere.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology. First, the chapter situates the study in the qualitative research paradigm and identifies ethnography as the main approach suited to the study. The chapter goes on to detail the study's ethnographic approach to data gathering during fieldwork in Western Sydney suburbs and C-Town, the pseudonym I use for a country town in New South Wales. It includes details of methods such as participant observations, semi-structured in-depth interviews by themselves or employed in combination to gather 'rich' data for 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) of participants' lived realities. It details the interpretive methods of analysis employed to document and draw *etic* meanings out of the participants' *emic* experiences (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3 for the explanation of *etic* and *emic*).

Chapter 4 through to Chapter 8 comprise the findings of the study relative to the research questions that guided its exploration of the pre-migration sociolinguistically diverse

backgrounds that shape the multilingual repertoires that move with black African migrants into the diaspora (Chapter 4); migrants from Anglophone African countries who have completed secondary education or above and their post-migration language learning and employment experiences (Chapter 5); migrants from non-Anglophone African countries who have completed secondary education or above and their post-migration language learning and employment experiences (Chapter 6); migrants from Anglophone African countries who have had no or low schooling and their post-migration language learning and employment experiences (Chapter 7); and migrants from non-Anglophone African countries who have had no or low schooling and their post-migration language learning and employment experiences (Chapter 8).

The findings for Chapter 4 focus on repertoires and migrant identities. They show that using repertoires as a lens offers a unique way of illuminating the different languages, social practices and histories that have shaped the migrants' learning and use of languages and how they see themselves vis-à-vis relationships carved out by the use of these languages. The chapter highlights education and medium of instruction as intricately linked to English proficiency and these provide an explanation for the different levels of English proficiency that migrants report and how they define their identities in relation to English or otherwise.

The findings in Chapter 5 indicate that well-educated migrants from Anglophone countries do not think of themselves as second language learners and reject the idea that they should engage in further English language learning in Australia. They retain strong identity ties with the English they speak. However, their African English repertoires are not readily accepted in Australia and their credentials do not translate into jobs commensurate with their qualifications. The participants in this group attribute their experience of underemployment mainly to racism.

With regard to Chapter 6, the findings show that by contrast, well-educated migrants from non-Anglophone countries embrace their positioning as second language learners and engage in learning English. They do not claim identities in English as do their Anglophone background counterparts. Participants in this group, too, are unemployed or underemployed but they attribute their situation to their limited English language proficiency and their lack of local experience. Their beliefs about language learning coincide with institutional ideologies and monolingual perspectives on the recognition of skills and credentials in languages other than English (LOTEs). They are mostly engaged in language learning and acquiring local knowledge with the expectation that their situation would change once they will have acquired them.

In Chapter 7, participants with no or low formal education from Anglophone countries are found to be keen to learn English, enhance their education and gain employment. However, language learning and further education opportunities are ill-suited to their specific needs. This is a highly gendered women-only group who are pushed into traditional gender roles as housewives, stay-at-home mothers and carers because of the absence of pathways specific to their educational and language learning needs.

With regard to Chapter 8, participants with no or low formal education from non-Anglophone countries are similarly found to be keen to learn English, enhance their education and gain employment. Language learning and further education opportunities are here, too, found to be ill-suited to the specific needs of this group. This group is also highly gendered and comprises predominantly women who are pushed into traditional gender roles as housewives, stay-at-home mothers and carers because of the absence of pathways specific to their educational and language learning needs.

Finally, a conclusion to the thesis is offered in Chapter 9. It begins with a brief summary of the thesis, revisits the research questions and outlines the overall findings of the study as

demonstrative of a persistent mismatch between diverse pre-migration linguistic repertories and education trajectories, and post-migration language training and education pathways into settlement in Australia. The chapter furthers our understanding about how these complicate existing notions of the second language learner and new migrant groups with implications for SLA research and migrant settlement policy. It goes on to outline the implications for SLA research and settlement policy, and then provides directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

2. Theoretical framework and literature review

2.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study is to explore the intersection of language, race and gender in the second language learning (SLL) experiences and settlement trajectories of African migrants in Australia. The literature on this topic spans multi-disciplinary areas including international migration studies, language and racialised identities, and social inclusion of migrants. This review takes a poststructural lens to the literature and reports from that perspective on notable studies that have deepened my understanding of the topic at stake.

According to what Block (2003) terms the 'social turn' in language learning research, since the 1990s, a poststructural approach "has become the approach of choice among those who seek to explore links between identity and L2 learning" (Block, 2007, p. 864). Sociocultural theoretical approaches have overtaken traditional second language acquisition (SLA) approaches as better able to capture crucial identity and contextual inequities that mediate SLL processes (Gibb, 2008; Norton, 2000, 2010, 2011; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004b; Pavlenko, Blackledge, Piller, & Teutsch-Dwyer, 2001). This burgeoning poststructural scholarship in the SLL research is characterised by the shift from individual cognitive (McGroarty, 1998) and sociopsychological approaches (Pavlenko, 2000) which employed structuralist and mostly classroom based enquiries to look at "correlations, statistical significance, operationalisation, control of variables and other features of the scientific method" (J. M. Miller, 1997, p. 43), to sociocultural theoretical frameworks and ethnographic based approaches (discussed further in the methods chapter). That approach informs the review of literature and the following discussion of sociocultural theoretical conceptualisation

of language, identity and language learning, and how issues are reflected in studies with contemporary African migrants.

The chapter is organised as follows. I first trace key sociocultural conceptualisations of language, identity and power that helped my understanding of issues with language learning and race (Section 2.2). Next, I look at what is known about African migrant language learning and employment in Western countries. The chapter concludes by identifying the lacuna it aims to fill and the research questions that guide the study. The lacuna to be filled is as follows: there is an absence of sociolinguistic research that systematically investigates language, identity and settlement issues relative to African migrants from different migration pathways that highlight differences and similarities in their settlement trajectories in Australia.

2.2 Language as symbolic power

Sociocultural conceptualisations posit that language "cannot be developed apart from an understanding of social relationships and that social relationships are rarely constituted on equal terms" (Norton & Toohey, 2002, p. 118). From that perspective, social interactions are considered to be shaped in part by assumptions or ideologies about people based on languages differences or language varieties with different accents in hierarchical societies (Kroskrity, 2005; McGroarty, 2010; Woolard, 2010; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). According to Bourdieu (1991), "speakers lacking the legitimate competence are *de facto* excluded from the social domains in which this competence [in the dominant language varieties] is required or are condemned to silence" (p. 55).

In this section, I discuss the topic of language as symbolic power by looking at sociocultural conceptualisations of language as capital, SLL as investment, and language ideologies that shaped my understanding about language learning and settlement issues for African migrants in Australia.

2.2.1 Sociocultural theories of language as capital

Sociocultural perspectives conceptualise language not as a system and a linguistic matter only, but also as "capital" and as an interactional resource intricately linked to identity, ideology and social relations (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986, 1991). More recently Heller (2007) defined language as "a set of resources which circulate in unequal ways in social networks and discursive spaces, and whose meanings and value are socially constructed within the constraints of social organizational processes, under specific historical conditions" (p. 2) to capture succinctly the concept of language as capital as well as its role in social dimensions.

In his notion of forms of capital, Bourdieu's (1977) posits a sociological critique on language conceptualisation in the field of linguistics by proposing three changes as follows:

> … in the place of "the" language (*langue*), the notion of the *legitimate* language. In the place of *relations of communication* (or symbolic interaction) it puts *relations of symbolic power*, and so replaces the question of the *meaning* of speech with the question of the *value* and *power* of speech. Lastly, in place of specifically linguistic competence, it puts *symbolic capital*, which is inseparable from the speaker's position in the social structure. (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 646 [italics in original])

The notion of legitimate language and relations of symbolic power, as Bourdieu (1977) suggests, opens up space for looking at the power inequities between interlocutors – "speech always owes a major part of its value to the value of the person who utters it" (p. 652). This means also that speech is an 'embodied' symbolic capital (discussed further below) that speakers command in social relationships. Such capital, Bourdieu explains, is not in equal supply and its acceptance is contingent on the speaker having legitimacy as a speaker and the "power to impose reception" (p. 648). Bourdieu explains the politics of the language and power relationship as follows:

Language is not only an instrument of communication or even of knowledge, but also an instrument of power. A person speaks not only to be understood but also to be believed, obeyed, respected, distinguished. Hence the full definition of competence as the right to speech, *i.e.* to the legitimate language, the authorized language which is also the language of authority. Competence implies the power to impose reception. (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 648)

In the context of language learning for settlement, this understanding of language as symbolic power and speech as embodied has a number of implications as shown below (Section 2.2).

2.2.2 Second language learning as investment

Norton (2000) developed the notion of investment in her study of migrants' SLL experiences in Canada drawing on Bourdieu's economic metaphors and cultural capital in particular. With the theory of investment in SLL, Norton suggests that:

If learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital. Learners expect or hope to have a good return on their investment – a return that will give them access to hitherto unattainable resources. (Norton, 2000, p. 10)

In that suggestion, Norton makes clear the distinction between investment in SLL and the traditional SLA notion of 'instrumental motivation'. She points out that, while the latter "presuppose[s] a unitary, fixed, and ahistorical language learner who desires access to material resources that are the privilege of target language speakers" (p. 10), her notion of investment views language learners as "having a complex social history and multiple desires" (p. 10). She argues that an investment in the target language is an investment in the learner's own identity and one that is also always in flux. This notion was particularly useful for considering participants' diverse pre-migration backgrounds in relation to their post-migration language learning decisions and choices.

2.2.3 Language learning and language ideologies

Language learning, or the demand that migrants learn the dominant language, and its supply – language teaching, are inextricably connected to monolingual ideologies (A. Blackledge, 2000, 2005; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004b; Rahman, 2001). Monolingual ideologies reflect the "larger macroideological order, which is increasingly hostile to multilingualism and multiculturalism through its insistence on monolingualism in society" (A. Creese & Blackledge, 2010, p. 104). Monolingual ideologies imagine English speaking countries as one nation-one language societies in which other languages are considered a threat and, therefore, that proficiency in the dominant language or its learning is a requirement for membership in these nations (Pavlenko, 2002). Warriner (2007) draws on Lippi-Green's (1997, 2012) influential work to emphasise this point and how it pertains in the US context:

> To become insiders, the master narrative says, "outsiders" must learn English. Not only must they learn English, they must learn a particular kind of English (unaccented, "standard" English). If this belief is not expressed explicitly, it is conveyed implicitly through policies and practices that exclude those who do not speak "Standard American English". (Warriner, 2007, p. 345)

Furthermore, the notion of language being embodied (Bourdieu, 1977) and perceptions about racialised identities complicate the language learning and settlement processes for migrants of 'colour' such as the African migrants that are at the centre of the present study.

Learning and speaking English may not be enough for some people to be heard so far as language proficiency and racial preconceptions are at play. For example, Piller (2011) has drawn on a variety of research most notably in fields such as "auditory perception" (McGurk & MacDonald, 1976) and "multimodal perception in experimental acoustics" (Rubin, 1992; Rubin & Smith, 1990) to demonstrate how "people delude themselves into thinking they are making a judgement about language proficiency when they are really doing nothing but

reproducing a stereotype" (Piller, 2011, p. 130). She draws on the studies to remind us about how our eyes, ears and brains collude in our perceptions: "it is possible to hear with our eyes and see with our ears" (p. 130); and in relation to language proficiency and race, "our brains make similar compromises" (p. 130). In her review, Piller (2011) highlights how in their study of undergraduate students (Rubin, 1992; Rubin & Smith, 1990) the researchers found that the students reacted differently to a taped recording of a native speaker of American English speaking with a 'standard' American accent depending on the picture accompanying the recording and which they were given the impression was that of the speaker. One image was of a Caucasian woman and the other was of an Asian woman. Not only did the students who saw the Asian lecturer hear a 'foreign', 'non-native' or 'Asian' accent despite none presenting in the recording, reportedly the 'perceived accent' also resulted in 'reduced comprehension' and, according to their rating, adversely affected the quality of their learning experience as the students rated it lower compared to their rating of the other recording. As Piller points out in the review:

> The students must have thought they were making an objective assessment of accentedness, linguistic proficiency and their learning experience when in reality, their brains were making a compromise between expectations created by the embodied identities of the lecturers they saw in front of them and the lecture they heard. (Piller, 2011, pp. 130-131)

Such experiments are clearly invaluable in underscoring language being embodied and the complexities that accompany the interplay of language and race and practices within a sociocultural world saturated with linguistic hierarchies (Piller, 2011).

The studies discussed above, together with the sociocultural concepts they apply, complicate any perceptions of a linear relationship between SLL and its link to settlement of racialised minority migrants. On that basis, the following sections look at specific issues that confront African migrants in relation to SLL and settlement in Western countries from the literature.

2.3 The language learning experiences of 'black' Africans in 'white' Western societies

Increasing migration from non-European countries to Europe and European settler societies in recent decades is central to the topic of SLL by adult migrants in a globalising world. Issues of language learning in migration contexts are by no means unique to African migrants and have been explored previously with other migrant groups in Australia (e.g. Butorac, 2011; Colic-Peisker, 2002; Kimie Takahashi, 2006; Kimie Takahashi, 2013) and elsewhere (e.g. A. Blackledge, 2001; Valtonen, 1998). Therefore, this literature review follows themes already developed but it is also timely for unravelling issues relating to contemporary 'black' African diaspora settlement in Western societies.

This section reviews the literature and reports on what has been documented in studies about contemporary 'black' diaspora Africans in 'white' Western countries with the following objectives: first, it provides an overview of diaspora as a key concept for the discussion of racialised language learning experiences and of issues specific to 'black' African migrant populations in English speaking contexts of Canada, the UK, the US and Australia (Bigelow, 2010; Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; Cooke, 2006; G. Creese, 2010, 2011; G. Creese & Kambere, 2003; Grossman, 2010; Gunn, 2003; Obeng & Obeng, 2006; Warriner, 2007, 2009). The focus here is on contemporary diaspora Africans who are racialised ideologically by skin colour as 'black' and as 'other' in predominantly 'white' migration societies historically founded on "the ideological coupling of national identity and Anglo-Saxon racial identity" (Leeman, 2004, p. 514). Racialised language learning is used to denote shared perceptions and hegemonic ideologies of language in relation to race (Leeman, 2004). Secondly, it provides an exploration of such white societies where a relatively small number of studies focus on black African migrants' language and settlement experiences. Therefore, the review gathers and discusses knowledge about a collective group about whom knowledge is still sparse in Western societies, and brings their language learning experiences into spaces

such as the field of SLA research which is very much in need of theorising about them (Craats, Kurvers, & Young-Scholten, 2006). Thirdly, the review provides a background and historical explanation of the diversity of language learning situations, adult migrant learners' prior education, their sociohistorical, cultural and political backgrounds that influence their language repertoires vis-à-vis post-migration structural, sociocultural constraints and contradictions that affect their language learning and settlement experiences. Thus the review attempts to provide a base for what is known about adult African migrant learners, and how to approach the topic with questions of relevance for the present study with 'black African' migrants in the Australian context.

The section is organised as follows: first, it discusses the concept of diaspora and its application to African experiences with a focus on race and beliefs about race in white contexts. Next, it discusses formal education in African contexts. Then it looks at how education links to African migration pathways into Western contexts. Finally, it looks at what is known about racialised language learning and black African migrants from Anglophone African countries and non-Anglophone countries respectively.

2.3.1 Contemporary black diaspora Africans and race in white societies

The concept of diaspora and its application to research on 'black' African migrants in 'white' societies has garnered prominence in recent times (e.g. Arthur, 2012; Arthur, Takougang, & Owusu, 2012; Bigelow, 2010; G. Creese, 2011; Konadu-Agyeman, Takyi, & Arthur, 2006; Koser, 2003; Lampert, 2009; Ndhlovu, 2014; Okpewho & Izegwu, 2009; Page, Mercer, & Evans, 2009; Puplampu & Tettey, 2005; Schramm, 2008). These studies consider the relationship between African migrants as transnationals and their individual and collective language practices and language choices, to help unravel their settlement trajectories.

The origin of the concept of diaspora and its theorising is traceable to descriptions about Jewish, Greek and Armenian dispersions (see Brubaker, 2005; Clifford, 1994; Cohen, 2008)

to explore "experiences of displacement, of constructing homes away from home" (Clifford, 1994, p. 302). Over the years, drawing on the pioneering work of Paul Gilroy (1993), diaspora has been adopted by studies on black Africans in white Western societies. For example, in her study of Somali youths in the US, Bigelow (2010) draws on Gilroy's (1993) notion to argue the following point:

> … it [diaspora] breaks the dogmatic focus on discrete national dynamics … is cherished for its ability to pose the relationship between ethnic sameness and differentiation: a changing same …. In other words, Diaspora communities retain unifying cultural or historical threads among them but change to adapt in innumerable ways across places where those communities evolve around the world. (Bigelow, 2010, p. 3)

In her study, Bigelow (2010) exemplifies that notion by considering and engaging her participants' unifying linguistic and sociocultural practices within and beyond the US. Drawing on that key feature of the concept of diaspora allowed Bigelow to delve into explorations beyond the nation-state geographical boundaries to highlight what Zeleza (2005) refers to as "the multiplicity of their [African migrant] destinations and networks" (p. 57). This feature also points to the importance of African migrant transnational identities in settlement (discussed further below see Section 2.4).

Another feature of diaspora for researching African migrants is that it allows for a temporal distinction between 'contemporary' and 'historical' African migrant groups' experiences in migration contexts. The distinction allows space for exploring differences and similarities in how 'contemporary' and 'historical' black African diasporas experience life in various contexts rather than a monolithic black African diaspora (Zeleza, 2005). As exemplified in the literature, in doing so, the theme of race becomes a central concern of African migration in a broad spectrum of migration contexts (Green, 1997; Palmer, 2000; Patterson & Kelley,

2000; Zeleza, 2005). These dimensions of diaspora guide the rest of the discussion in the section.

Before going any further it is important to define two key terms as they used here: 'contemporary' and 'black'. The qualifier 'contemporary' is used to designate African "diasporas formed since the late nineteenth century" while historic diaspora refers to "old diasporas formed before the construction of colonial states" (Zeleza, 2005, p. 55). Contemporary African diasporas are also referred to in the literature as 'continental Africans' (see Puplampu & Tettey, 2005). Within that colonial and geographical demarcation perspective, African migrant issues have extended from those framed on historical African diaspora experiences of ethnic or racial identities. Within these perspectives, contemporary African diaspora studies "contend with the added imperative of the modern nation-state, which often frames the political and cultural itineraries of their travel and transnational networks" (Zeleza, 2005, p. 55). Given that contemporary black African diaspora research is more recent compared to historical African diaspora research and also compared to other migrant groups within the same contexts, contemporary African diaspora studies are sparse. Therefore the present study attempts to add to knowledge about contemporary black African diaspora experiences of settlement in the context of Australia.

The prefix 'black' as adopted from the literature designates African migrants who have 'traceable genealogical links to Africa'. Some attention has already been drawn to the need to pay attention to such differences when considering experiences of 'black' people as minority migrants in 'white' societies (e.g. Ogbu & Simons, 1998). This distinction is necessary because discourses around African migrant identities indicate that 'African migrants' cannot be taken as synonymous with 'black' African migrants (Tettey & Puplampu, 2005). As Tettey (2001) explains, not all contemporary diaspora Africans are black and not all black people consider themselves as Africans. Furthermore, a commonly supported view is that:

while most of the immigrants from Western African countries … are likely to be Blacks, the same cannot be inferred about immigrants from Northern, Southern, and Eastern African countries. North Africans … usually consider themselves, and are best described as Arabs. Also immigrants from South Africa are just as likely to be White, Indian, or Coloured as they are to be Black. The situation among Eastern Africans is equally complicated by the large number of Europeans, Arabs, and Asians, particularly East Indians, in that part of Africa. (Mensah, 2002, pp. 60-61, cited in Tettey & Puplampu, 2005)

Given the complexities in these groupings, researchers argue for "African diasporic and Black identities [to be seen] as historically textured and politically determined constructs, constructs which rely on particular understandings of time, memory, and race" (Kanneh (1998), cited in Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 11). Following that call to disambiguate any reference to black, Tettey and Puplampu's (2005) research, for instance, focused on "first generation, Black, continental Africans who have immigrated in the last forty years and who have traceable genealogical links to the continent" (p. 12). That model has helped to define the group of Africans for the focus of the present study.

From these clarifications, the rest of the section will discuss the key themes identified in contemporary black African diaspora research by looking at transnational identities as an integral part of the definition of settlement, race and racisms, and racialised gender.

2.3.1.1 Transnational identities and settlement
Diaspora researchers of black African migrant experiences represent explorations of African migrants' transnational identities, that is, identities that they demonstrate as not limited to the confines of nation of origin boundaries and cultures, or those of the new settings. Within that transnational identity perspective, diaspora researchers explore African migrants' experiences of a fluid sense of connectedness in a continuum of home country and current country as well as several other parts of the global world in which they have forged social networks of the

kind that Sheffer (2003) succinctly describes as "elaborate, sometimes labyrinthine, intra-state and trans-state networks" (p. 82).

Transnational identity theorising within diaspora studies also enables the definition of African migrant settlement in relation to how contemporary African migrants imagine and position themselves with regard to migration and post-migration narratives in these ensuing "in-between" spaces (Bhabha, 1998). For instance, drawing from that theory, diaspora Africa research has shown that mainstream monolithic expectations stipulate that, "in order to succeed, they [minority migrants] have to turn their back on everything that they brought from their home country, including their language" (Rovira, 2008, p. 70). However, that is not how these migrants, particularly Africans, consider settlement success. As Ogbu (1990) has earlier argued, abandoning cultural and identity markers leads to minority migrants' risk of isolation from their communities and so they find a cline between old and new ways of living:

> … the minority group members [African migrants] take on new cultural features and reinterpret old ones to cope with their domination or oppression. The resulting cultural forms, behaviors, and meanings (including language) become the minorities' new cultural frame of reference or preferred ways of guiding their behaviour. Moreover, the minorities begin to feel strongly that their ways of behaving are expressions of their group identity. (Ogbu, 1990, p. 48)

Furthermore, as people constructing a 'home away from home', African migrants define success in settlement in relation to their connectedness with all the spaces to which their lives are aligned. Within that frame linking 'back home' or places where they originate from, their evaluation of success is based on comparisons between themselves, and their family and friends in those contexts and, whether they see more opportunities for themselves and their children in the new context (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). As Ogbu (2004) has pointed out, this is

more so because, even when blacks embrace the strategy of "acting white", obstacles such as social status, racism and discrimination continue to stand in their way.

2.3.1.2 Race and racisms

The African presence in Western European migration contexts is inextricably linked to race and issues of racism. Race, in everyday discourse, "invokes phenotypical features such as skin color, eye shape, hair texture, facial features, and so on. However, scientists generally agree that race is not a concept determined by biological evidence" (Kubota & Lin, 2009, p. 2). Social scientists also agree that racial categories are social concepts "given concrete expression by the specific social relations and historical context in which they are embedded" and which may be different across contexts (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 11). Among contemporary African diaspora studies, Green's (1997) *Globalization and survival in the black diaspora: The new urban challenge* is an exemplary, comprehensive volume which spans African communities across the globe and on the continent itself. This notable volume explores the concept of race and documents how it manifests in the various settings that the contributors report on, arguing as follows:

> It is important to keep in mind that the contemporary Black urban plight is a historical reality that is linked to their history of racial subjugation and exploitation throughout the world, which has been exacerbated by the present global economic transformation. Race, therefore, is an important factor in explaining the Black urban condition in the diaspora with observed differences based on such aspects as the colonial legacy, and the existing ethno-racial mix. (Green, 1997, p. 6)

Therefore, race thrives in "a social system of dominance of one group over other groups" (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 8). That dominance is realised in racism and racialisation processes.

Racism is conceptualised by social scientists as a social process with a biological basis with consequences for minority migrants including Africans who are racialised as belonging outside the dominant white mainstream. According to Essed (2004), "[r]acisms have always

included biological and cultural dimensions, ideologically embedded in what David Golberg calls naturalism and historicism – philosophical underpinnings in the shaping of racial states" (p. 122). Reisigl and Wodak (2000) offer further insights into the manifestation of racisms in social processes:

> Racism is based on the hierarchising construction of groups of people which are characterized as communities of descent and which are attributed specific collective, naturalized or biologised traits that are considered to be almost invariable. These traits are primarily related to biological features, appearance, cultural practices, customs, traditions, language or socially stigmatized ancestors. They are – explicitly and implicitly, directly or indirectly – evaluated negatively, and this just is more or less in accord with hegemonic view. (Reisigl & Wodak, 2000, p. 275)

Contributions in the literature about African diasporic experiences of race and racism in the context of Australia are quite recent compared to European and North American contexts. It is interesting to note also that Australia was not included in Green's (1997) above mentioned comprehensive volume on the African diaspora.

In the Australian context, Africans were not in national narratives about race and racism until midway into the 2000s when explorations of contemporary black African settlement in Australia started to shed some light on how racialised identities matter and shape the experiences of black African migrants (Colic-Peisker, 2005, 2009; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2008; Djité, 2006b; Hatoss, 2012; S. Khan & Pedersen, 2010; Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2013; Mapedzahama, Rudge, West, & Perron, 2011; Ndhlovu, 2014; Wakholi, 2008; Windle, 2008; Zwangobani, 2008). Their relatively short history in comparison to the literature from the US, the UK and Canada is due in part to those contexts being older black African migration destinations. Until its abolition in the 1970s, the racist White Australia Policy largely precluded the admission of black Africans.

One key point that studies in the Australian context highlight is that black diaspora Africans do not share racialised realities with "non-black (white) African migrants in Australia" (Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2013, p. 62). This is also exemplified in Venables' (2003) study of 'white' migrant women from South Africa living in Australia for whom "racial markers which symbolise difference are absent" (p. 3) and, as such, their experiences are markedly different from their compatriots with visible African racial markers. Mapezdahama and Kwansah-Aidoo (2013) make the point that, before migrating, some black Africans take their colouring for granted and in spite of their other identity markers and accrual of social and cultural capital in Australia, they found that "by virtue of our dark skin, we had now been racialised into a racial category – 'black' – complete with all of the inferiorisation that is embodied within it in the Australian context" (p. 69). Skin colour comes to serve as the indelible primary avenue for their categorisation as black that mediated their experiences.

2.3.1.3 Racialised gender

A great deal of feminist scholarship has shown that gender like race is a social category constructed to maintain social hierarchies, and produced and maintained through social interaction (Deegan, 1987). Multi-racial and black feminist scholars argue that rather than race and gender being approached as separate and independent factors, these must be viewed as an "interlocking system of privilege and disadvantage" in groups where power inequality is prevalent and privilege is informed by one's social location (Hill Collins, 1999). Feminist scholars apply intersectional approaches to consider constructions of men and women of colour in the labour market. In the literature emanating from the US, Browne and Misra (2003) summarise the experiences of Latino/a migrants as follows:

> women have different experiences from men and Latino/as have different experiences from Whites. Yet, to understand the experience of a Latina in the labor market requires more than understanding the experience of women and Latino/as. An intersectional perspective instead

posits that the experiences of Latinas in the labor market reflect social constructions of gender that are racialised and social constructions of race that are gendered to create particular experiences. In addition, there is a relational aspect of these experiences; the experiences of Latinas in the labor market are connected to the experiences of white women. For example, White women are more likely to be viewed as professional workers than Latinas, and White women benefit from this privilege. (Browne & Misra, 2003, pp. 490-491)

More recently, drawing on evidence from Australia, Piller and Takahashi (2010) remind us about how race and gender intersect and offer "a fusion of subjectivities" (p. 1) how racialised migrants navigate and make sense of transnational identities. African feminist scholars (e.g. Ampofo, Beoku-Betts, Njambi, & Osirim, 2004; Atanga, 2013; Oyewumi, 2002) also remind us that it is instructive to explore how race and gender intersect to inform African women's biological and social roles as mothers and wives and the reproduction of social and power dynamics, and their "articulations and translations of black/African diaspora" (Sawyer, 2008). For instance, within that conceptualisation, diaspora African women's features such as different hair and skin colour mark them as different and have significance for their experiences as women migrants of African origin (Ifekwunigwe, 1999). Engaging with the notion of racialised gender within contemporary diaspora African research provides deeper understanding of issues pertaining to black migrant women's experiences as well as the strategies they employ to cope in their new settings. This means also that the women's issues and strategies of coping thus identified are centred in discussions rather than being subsumed under 'normalised' white migrant women's experiences or even black men's experiences. Studies taking such perspectives with migrant African women have documented such experiences and their consequences in domains such as education and employment (G. Creese & Wiebe, 2009; Hatoss & Huijser, 2010; Jack, 2012; Warriner, 2004). These studies call for more research with racialised gender concerns for the settlement of migrant African women and to highlight disparities in those experiences.

Clearly women have different experiences from men and racialised women have different experiences from white women; as such "any analysis of women that ignores race will be incomplete and may very well simply describe patterns of White women" (Browne & Misra, 2003, p. 487).

In sum, the studies referred to above, taken together, suggest that race and racialised intersections in constructions of migrant identities are pervasive and worth exploring for diaspora African migrants. However in the context of Australian scholarship, such studies have only recently emerged. In addition to race, educational experience is another background worth acknowledging for further insights into African migrant identities during settlement. I will now look at the pre-migration educational backgrounds of African migrants (Section 2.3.2); then I will consider educational influences on their migration pathways (Section 2.3.3). These will highlight how black Africans arrive in Western contexts through different pathways and not as humanitarian stream migrants only, a discourse that reifies them at entry point as 'refugees'.

2.3.2 Pre-migration educational experiences

Education is considered essential to individual development in migrants' home countries as well as in the settlement contexts as it provides a fundamental link to workforce participation which is essential for people's social wellbeing and economic independence. In African contexts, education is largely shaped by colonial influences on most nation-states' language-in-education policies (Djité, 2008; Kembo, 2000) and is a mark of status and a resource for upward social mobility. Modelled on the institutional and administrative policies of a nation-state's respective former colonial powers, these language-in-education policies privilege colonial languages over local and indigenous ones especially at higher educational levels (see Kembo, 2000; Nyamnjoh, 2012; Phillipson, 1996). In turn, they influence the knowledge and language repertoires, that is, the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) that diaspora Africans

accumulate before migrating and bring into Western migration contexts. Therefore, when African people move to Western contexts, these diverse African linguistic as well as sociocultural situations including education are bound to affect how they negotiate their ways of life in these contexts (Dei, 2012; Nyamnjoh, 2012).

More recently, global events have led to the unprecedented increased intake of humanitarian migrants from African into Western contexts where governments and their agencies take charge of helping with their settlement. The expectations are that these African migrants like all other migrants will take part in migrant educational programs that will equip them with the dominant language and with skills for quick labour market participation (Cobb-Clark, Connolly, & Worswick, 2005; Dustmann & Glitz, 2011). As such their previous education or lack thereof and its link to settlement issues have become the focus of policy and research and research attention has been gradually drawn to what happens to African migrant youths and adults arriving through other migration pathways. Studies explore the realities of two groups of African youths and adults – those with no or low schooling and those with secondary and higher education – and how the educational factor intersects other identity markers such as race and gender to shape their settlement experiences.

The section is organised as follows. It will provide a brief outline of what the literature says about education in African contexts. Following that, it looks at the post-migration context and issues with two broad groups of Africans: those who arrive with no or low schooling, and those who arrive with secondary school and above qualifications.

2.3.2.1 Education in Africa
Formal education in African contexts is known to be modelled on the curricula and pedagogies of African countries' respective former colonising nations (Dei, 2012; Tikly, 2011). The international three-tiered structure of primary, secondary and tertiary levels is typical of African education systems, too (Shabani, 2006). Generally, formal education in

Africa is shown to not affirm local and indigenous ways of knowing (Dei, 2012; Nyamnjoh, 2012). In line with African countries' colonial education perspectives, their language-in-education policies (Djité, 2008; Kaplan & Baldauf, 2005) typically place a high value on the former colonising nations' languages as the medium-of-instruction (MoI) and privilege them over indigenous languages, particularly at the tertiary level of education (Kembo, 2000; Nyamnjoh, 2012; Phillipson, 1996). Therefore, education received in a former colonising nation's language – be it English, French or Portuguese – is widely seen as desirable and a marker of social status and progress. According to Nyamnjoh (2012), "the values acquired during the colonial era that teach the superiority of the colonizer set the tone for imbibing of knowledge and continue to dominate education and life in postcolonial Africa" (p. 2).

Even so, outside formal education, there exist African ways of knowing (Gyekye, 1996). These include "multiple forms of literacy situated within community social, cultural and discursive practices beyond the borders of formal educational settings, such as schools or adult education programs" (Ndhlovu, 2014, p. 143). African epistemologies such as '*ubuntu'* inform African cultural knowledge and practices which differ from Western concepts of knowledge (Kamwangamalu, 1999; Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005). Such "[i]ndigenous knowledge is handed down from one generation to another through symbols, art, oral narratives, proverbs, and performances such as songs, story telling, wise sayings, riddles, and dances" (Owuor, 2008, p. 24). Furthermore, "in Africa, speaking more than one language and being literate in more than one culture is the rule rather than the exception" (Djité, 1994, p. 60). As such, African ways of knowing acquired outside formal education and through African languages also inform African ways of living and knowledge which are quite different from those practised elsewhere. However, given the "hegemonic nature of Western thought and ways of conceptualising the world, it is difficult if not impossible to operate outside of this [Western] episteme" of what designates education (Tikly, 2011, p. 4). Thus the prevalence of hegemonic colonial ideologies has led to the practice of formal education

continuing to hold a place of tremendous value over local and indigenous world-views and ways of knowing in most postcolonial African countries (Djité, 2008; Nashon, Anderson, & Wright, 2008; Owuor, 2008).

Nevertheless, there is ongoing debate about the continued embrace and emphasis on the Western concept of formal education in African states. One side sees it as desirable and a key driver behind institutional advancement and the development of whole economies and societies (Kembo, 2000; McGrath, 2010). For example, the often cited Dakar summit themed "Education for all" in 2000 is noted to have advocated for and laid emphasis on developing primary and also secondary education as a means to improve the economy and promote growth (Paul, 2013, p. 384). The counter position does not see the benefit of continuing to privilege Western education in African contexts. In line with that side of the debate, Nyamnjoh (2012) draws on Bourdieu's theorising about relations of power and argues the following:

> Far from being a 'liberating force' that celebrates 'achievement' over 'ascription', education 'plays a critical role in the reproduction of the distribution of cultural capital and thus in the reproduction of the structure of social space'. It is drawn upon by the elite to stake claims 'in the struggle for the monopoly on dominant positions' (Bourdieu, 1996: 5). In Africa, the real victims are ordinary men and women and their endogenous alternatives. (Nyamnjoh, 2012, p. 2)

As that debate unfolds, the theme of education received in African contexts as a topic of enquiry also continues to be addressed in the literature from a wide range of perspectives with much of the attention being paid to individual progress and economic development, including participation and access to education (Lewin, 2009), gender disparity (Egbo, 2004; Shabaya & Konadu-Agyemang, 2004) and brain drain (Boeri, 2012; Kotey & Mihret, 2013; Nyamnjoh, 2012). Typically, diaspora Africans enter discussions when the lenses turn to the issue of brain-drain (see e.g. Kotey & Mihret, 2013, p. 20; Teferra & Altbach, 2004, p. 41).

Now studies employing sociocultural frames have brought education into focus to show how pre-migration access or lack thereof to education reaches beyond African home countries to intersect host countries' structures that shape African migrants' identity negotiations and their post-migration realities (G. Creese, 2010, 2011).

2.3.2.2 African education and Western migration contexts

Having come from various educational experiences, African migrants face the task of translating these into currency in the new settings. Migration discourses about Africans show their pre-migration educational experiences or lack thereof feature prominently in relation to quick entry into the workforce particularly in respect to those who enter via the humanitarian stream. Education and its link to migration pathways are discussed elsewhere (see Section 2.3.3). The importance of education to migrant settlement is particularly accentuated in host contexts such as Canada and Australia where government funded migrant educational programs are in place to help these new migrants' development and to provide leverage for easier workforce transition (G. Creese & Wiebe, 2009; Spinks, 2009).

In the last two decades, Australia has seen an increased intake of African migrants needing government funded settlement assistance. They have come from 'new and emerging African communities' such as Burundi, Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo, or former Zaire, henceforth Congo (DRC)), Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Liberia and Togo. These countries have mostly low educational attainments recorded for them. Figures show low percentages of secondary school participation. Table 2.1 reflects these trends with the nine African countries represented in the top 10 nationalities within the humanitarian intake in Australia for the period between 2003-04 and 2012-13. The countries are Burundi, Congo (DRC), Congo (Republic), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2013, p. 11).

Table 2.1   Levels of schooling and literacy in African countries of origin represented in the top 10 nationalities within Australia's offshore humanitarian intake between 2003-04 and 2012-13

Country of origin	Some secondary education (% aged 25 and above)		Adult literacy (% ages 15 and over)
	Female	Male	Both sexes
Burundi	5.2	9.3	86.9
Congo (DRC)	10.7	36.2	61.2
Congo (Republic)	43.8	48.71	n.a.
Eritrea	n.a.	n.a.	68.9
Ethiopia	7.79	18.24	39
Liberia	15.7	39.23	42.9
Sierra Leone	9.5	20.43	43.3
Somalia	n.a.	n.a	n.a.
South Sudan	n.a.	n.a	n.a.

Source: United Nations Development Programme (2013) (downloaded 10 September, 2014)
http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/adult-literacy-rate-both-sexes-ages-15-and-older
Definition: Adult literacy rate – percentage of the population ages 15 and older who can, with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement on their everyday life.
n.a.: data not available

Table 2.2 also shows the educational levels and the extent of literacy in African nationalities enrolled in the AMEP (see Section 1.3 for an overview of the AMEP).

Table 2.2   Extent of previous schooling and literacy among African target groups

Country of origin	Literacy		Primary schooling (% of population)
	Female (%)	Male (%)	
Eritrea	39	66	31
Ethiopia	32	43	28
Somalia	14 (est.)	36	9
Sudan	45	69	51

Source: Yates (2002, p. 1)

While a loose definition of literacy is used, the tables clearly show that the rate of schooling and literacy is low for the countries represented. However there is still some level of secondary school and tertiary level participation. This means that there may be people within the humanitarian stream from middle class backgrounds with higher formal educational credentials. Some Africans also arrive as skilled migrants from middle class and professional backgrounds. These are discussed in detail in Section 2.3.3.

Based on pre-migration educational access and attainments two broad groups of Africans can be identified: one is made up of those who did not attend school or who attended school at the basic level prior to migration. The second is made up of those who had secondary schooling. These two groups with their different experiences and status regarding education in Africa usually have different experiences and expectations post-migration. In the remainder of this section the literature about these two groups and their post-migration experiences will be reviewed.

No or low schooling is often connected to the experience of interrupted schooling. No or low schooling is a condition of pre-migration educational disadvantage mostly attributable to home country conditions such as poverty, rural existence, gender, and the refugee status imposed on people's lives by the same civil unrests that disrupted their schooling in the first place. As such, the fact of no or low schooling does not say anything about the group's linguistic or cognitive abilities (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). Furthermore, people with no or low formal education may have been socialised into African ways of knowing and cultural world-views that are excluded from hegemonic conceptualisations of education (as explained above).

Studies of the post-migration experiences of Africans with no or low schooling illuminate gaps, ideologies and hierarchical positioning that the people they describe must navigate in their settlement processes in culturally different high-literacy migration contexts. Many researchers have pointed out that the needs and abilities of this population are not fully understood from normative Western lenses and imposed 'deficit discourses' (e.g. Bigelow, 2010; Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; Grossman, 2010; Gunn, 2003; Lindberg, 2003; Shapiro, 2014; Tarone & Bigelow, 2005; van de Craats, Kurvers, & Young-Scholten, 2005). Consequently this population has been found to struggle in terms of post-migration educational development efforts to make the expected transition into workforce participation

as has been documented in the context of Australia (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2003, 2007; Gunn, 2003; Hillier, 2002; Yates, 2002).

Studies grounded in sociocultural frameworks discuss the relationship between pre-migration educational backgrounds and a quick entry into the workforce (e.g. (Egbo, 2004; Hatoss & Huijser, 2010; Jack, 2012). Within that approach, studies taking a feminist epistemological stance argue that because no or low schooling involves a gendered process of educational marginalisation in most sub-Saharan African countries, whereby girls and women are often the ones hindered by educational barriers, they are the ones that suffer the most and their experiences need to be highlighted. The studies trace the subordination of the girls and women to African countries' pervasive history of colonial educational structures and patriarchal conditions. Egbo (2004) explains how these intersect to exclude the girl-child and women from participating in formal education:

> A colonial homogenizing view of the role of women in society as exclusively located within the domestic sphere – a role that the colonialists argued did not require formal education – was ideologically motivated and contributed significantly to the diminution of their status in their respective communities. Even in contemporary contexts, there is compelling research in support for the view that gender inequity in access to literacy continues to be one of the major causes of women's marginal status in sub-Saharan Africa. (Egbo, 2004, p. 244)

In the settlement contexts, these backgrounds are shown to further intersect contextual barriers to impact women in domains such as education and employment. For example, in the context of the US, Jack (2012) observes the interplay between education and gender and its reach beyond sub-Saharan Africa to impact girls and women as follows:

> Education plays a significant role in reproducing gender values, identities, relationships, and stereotypes; in schools, children construct their ideas about femininities and masculinities. Institutions such as the school, the family, the community, refugee camps, and national and

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international actors play a key role in forming gender perceptions and stereotypes. (Jack, 2012, p. 22)

According to Jack (2012) these values and stereotypes not only carry over into the settlement contexts but in these contexts, gender further "intersects other power relations such as social status, language, educational backgrounds and trauma to impact the women's access to higher education" (p. 26). She goes further to argue that because these women and girls experience pre-migration disadvantaged positions with far reaching post-migration influences, these experiences and processes must be made visible and documented in discussions.

Educational gaps are not easily bridged for people from no or low schooling backgrounds (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; Gunn, 2003; van de Craats, et al., 2005). Studies show that the newcomers with no or low schooling must learn oracy and literacy in the dominant language, as well as navigate high literacy contexts in the new language and at the same time make sense of life in these settings. Grossman (2010) succinctly captures the complexity of the process that no or low schooling entailed for the newcomers:

> … simultaneously trying to negotiate a new culture, a new language, and a new set of communication skills and modalities. The threatening nature of having to turn back the clock educationally, and experience the feelings of childish helplessness when trying to make yourself heard and understood by people not always willing to listen or be patient …. The average time for a non-literate adult learner to gain moderate proficiency in English reading and writing is about ten years. It is daunting and dispiriting, and many are unable or unwilling to complete the journey. (Grossman, 2010, p. 146)

On the level of "simultaneously trying to negotiate a new culture, a new language and new sets of communication skills", the newcomers find that learning a new language in this context is quite different from their previous experiences where language learning was mostly based on oral tradition and people learnt as they interacted with people from various other

language backgrounds. By contrast, in the new contexts, language learning typically happens in classroom settings and both youth and adult learners may find these daunting.

Studies with young adult learners in classroom contexts show how the needs and abilities that the learners bring tend to be approached from mostly monolingual normative perspectives which have not fully understood the enormity of the task facing the newcomers (e.g. Cross, 2011; Kanu, 2009; MacNevin, 2012; J. Miller & Windle, 2010; Woods, 2009). For example, in the US, a five-year-long qualitative study with recently arrived Somali youth in Minnesota (Bigelow, 2010) uncovered difficulties that many of the young people face as they arrive in school settings and how available programs do not have an adequate understanding of the needs as well as the abilities they bring. Bigelow (2010) describes how the youth may arrive with low literacy skills but may have strong 'assets' including prior learning experiences in other languages, in this instance Amharic and/or Swahili, although stereotypes in relation to the high incidence of no or low schooling and perceptions of educators may cause these resources to be overlooked and not utilised to benefit them. Bigelow (2010) points out that one practice that legitimises how these learners are marginalised and inferiorised is "by a constant comparison to their same-age, U.S.-born peers as well as other immigrant youth who have not missed any schooling" (p. 42). Bigelow and Watson (2013) use 'abyss' as a metaphor for the gap between the highly oral world-view and the high literacy world-view that characterises the new reality that the youths must navigate. Bigelow and Schwarz (2010) point out that one way of bridging this gap is through flexibility and allowing alternate ways of learning because learners "permitted – even encouraged – to learn in culturally familiar ways" are known to show persistence and better performance (p. 12). They further articulate that flexibility could also mean having "homogeneous classes, where all students are becoming literate for the first time, [and] adult learners do not risk losing their social status among more literate peers" (p. 13).

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Research also shows that another way of offering flexibility to both adult learners and youth in such daunting situations is by pedagogical adjustments through the use of 'culturally relevant pedagogy', that is, pedagogy that takes cognisance of learners "intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 108). Grossman (2010) provides a practical example of engaging with an adult learner through using culturally relevant pedagogy to teach a concept successfully where traditional pedagogy had failed to do so previously.

> I was trying to explain the concept of a refund to Amaya, but we were getting nowhere; the receipt I'd brought along and the little skit of shopping and returning an item to get your money back that I had put together just didn't cut it. Right after this, we went together to a community talk on Australian laws surrounding domestic violence and intervention orders. The talk centred for a little while on divorce, and the presenter mentioned that in Australia, unlike Sudan, when a man divorces his wife he doesn't get his dowry payment of cattle to the wife's family back after the marriage dissolves. I forgot myself entirely at this point and bellowed, 'NO REFUND!' Amaya looked at me with sudden comprehension in her eyes, the spark of connection flared, and we collapsed laughing. (Grossman, 2010, pp. 145-146)

Ollerhead (2012) also calls on teachers of adult learners to "draw on learners' unique backgrounds, situated knowledge and life experience to inform their lessons and teaching practices and classroom management" (p. 5). More such interpretive and socioculturally informed research is needed to illuminate these backgrounds in Australia.

As a group, African migrants who completed secondary schooling or even tertiary education in African home countries before migration into Western contexts have received even less attention in the literature than those with no or low schooling. In the literature that exists, this category of African migrants is described as those who were "eager for opportunities to study and … have achieved a level of secondary education that qualifies them for postsecondary

study" (Teferra & Altbach, 2004, p. 26). However, very little is known about this population and very little is known about their post-migration experiences.

Some attention has already been drawn above to the fact that, in most African contexts, receiving secondary or tertiary formal education where the majority of the population lack access to this valued resource confers a degree of privilege and social status on the well-educated African in their home countries. The literature also suggests that settlement success in Western migration contexts has educational credentials as fundamental to how migrants adjust to their new country – "[l]abour market integration is a central measure of successful settlement for new migrants" (G. Creese, 2011, p. 60). In Australia, for instance, settlement success is defined in terms of economic independence which hinges on prior education, post-migration workforce participation and occupational opportunities as well as participation in other domains (Spinks, 2009). In these contexts, educated African migrants' backgrounds should place them in the population that is more associated with post-migration education, job search and labour force participation compared to those with no or low schooling backgrounds (Cobb-Clark, et al., 2005; G. Creese & Wiebe, 2009).

However, the literature shows that notwithstanding the social leverage and social status that education may have provided them in their home countries, well-educated Africans who move to Western countries frequently experience a gap in the ways in which their credentials used to be valued in their country of origin and the ways in which they are valued in the destination society. Hence, what needs to be understood for them and their settlement processes in these destination is how and whether they successfully navigate their main challenge of translating their educational credentials as cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) into local currency (G. Creese, 2011; Obeng & Obeng, 2006; Warriner, 2007).

The growing literature that exists on this population of African migrants shows that unlike the former group whose challenges were linked mainly to language learning and literacy learning

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from scratch, this group already had such skills even to advanced and professional levels and some may have also had several years of professional experience. For them, post-migration challenges were mainly linked to the negotiation of their identities as educated people in the midst of public perceptions, stereotypes and prejudices that cast them in the mould of an inferiorised minority group based on their 'visibility' as black Africans. Thus their education and skills are often devalued and not recognised (G. Creese, 2010, 2011; G. Creese & Wiebe, 2009; Djité, 2006b; Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2013; Mapedzahama, et al., 2011; Obeng & Obeng, 2006; Warriner, 2007, 2009). Also, in these contexts, educated African migrant identities were racialised and often conflated in research about "'refugee' lived experiences" (Kwansah-Aidoo & Mapedzahama, 2011)

Emerging studies from African academics in Australia (e.g. Dhanji, 2009; Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2013; Ndhlovu, 2009b) show them making a case for unravelling distinctions among African populations. They argue that one consequence of not differentiating the lived realities of skilled black African migrant experiences from other realities is that the racisms they experience as 'negative by-products' of policies may continue to go unnoticed. Recent research on African Australian women in higher education has been gender based and has noted how African women are entering tertiary education with educational challenges that are "both distinct from their male counterparts, and also bear class- and culture-based distinctions at risk of being elided by a singular discourse about the liberatory role of education" (Harris, Spark, & Watts, 2014, p. 4). In Australia, the Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE) in conjunction with the Sudanese Filmmaking group (2007) has made progress in creating awareness of some of the specific difficulties that educated black Africans face in accessing employment. They developed short films including one entitled *The Applicant* (also sold on DVD), to help raise community and mainstream awareness of the first hand Australian job market experiences of black African migrants who have foreign qualifications and professional skills from sub-Saharan Africa. In *The Applicant*,

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(Makeny & Gamba, 2007) an employer shortlists an African for an interview. Over the phone, it seemed that the applicant had what they were looking for. At the interview, the employer finds that the applicant is a black African – "Everything changed when he saw me in the doorway" reports the narrator whose story is depicted in the film. In the ensuing interaction, the employer is not happy to give him the job for which he is qualified. Instead, he ends up being taken on as a cleaner. The film raises the key point about employer perceptions of what jobs black Africans are fit for and Africans being overlooked for skilled positions because of their skin colour. In addition, it points to the pervasive ignorance about black Africans as capable of having achieved professional qualifications before migration and their capabilities in using such skills, as well as such acts reeking of racism. A 'Fatal Error' warning caption on the employer's computer puts across the following message to discriminating employers as follows:

> An illegal operation has been attempted
>
> User stupidity, bigotry or greed may have caused
>
> the system to stop working.
>
> Any unsaved changes will be lost. (Makeny & Gamba, 2007)

Nevertheless, black Africans on their part take low-skilled jobs for which they are over qualified out of desperation.

Relevant research in Canada by Gillian Creese and her associates (G. Creese, 2010, 2011; G. Creese & Kambere, 2003; G. Creese & Wiebe, 2009) has focused on well-educated African migrant experiences in relation to their educational identities and entering the workforce. The studies show educated African migrant experiences to be complicated by contextual structures, revealing that "racial and gender discrimination, social isolation, and the devaluing of foreign credentials by potential employers often contribute to downward mobility for African immigrants" (G. Creese, 2011). Creese (2011) conducted semi-structured and open

ended interviews with sixty-one participants (thirty-one women and thirty men) from sub-Saharan Africa living in Vancouver. The participants were mostly highly educated, professionally employed in their home countries and already fluent in English before arriving in Canada. In terms of labour market participation, the study found that both men and women experienced 'devaluation' of their educational credentials and professional experiences which was evidenced in a "general downward mobility in relation to the jobs and the status held in their countries of origin" (G. Creese, 2011, p. 17).

The study also found that prevailing gendered labour market conditions left women with fewer 'survival employment' options compared to men who could readily at least find labouring jobs which were below their qualifications. For the women, entry level jobs required them to take up local tertiary level qualifications in order to access those jobs which in time improved their labour market status in comparison to their men who in the long term "tended to get trapped in low-wage, insecure 'survival jobs' and thus experienced sharper downward mobility" (G. Creese, 2011, p. 17). Creese and Wiebe (2009) draw on Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) concepts of capital and contend as follows:

> Forms of cultural capital most relevant to immigrant integration into the labour market include institutionalized cultural capital (academic credentials), and embodied cultural capital (accents and other local cultural competences). … academic credentials are also embodied, since the body of the possessor shapes how educational credentials are converted into jobs in the local labour market. For immigrants, failure to have their educational credentials recognized, alongside the absence of other forms of embodied cultural capital (like the ''right'' accents, work experience and cultural knowledge) are central to deskilling and downward occupational mobility in Canada. (G. Creese & Wiebe, 2009, p. 7)

Creese and Kambere (2003) have demonstrated that an 'accent border' based on perception of African Englishes was firmly in place, forming a site for racial power negotiation and

which allowed only 'partial passing' into the workforce for educated African migrants who also arrived with proficiency in English (discussed further in Chapter 5).

In sum, African educated youths and mature adults with varied years of expertise and skills in their fields of education arrive in Western contexts with a broad range of educational credentials. Their specific experiences have been marginalised in the research. As such little is known about them in studies on African migrants and even less is known about their experiences in Australia.

The section that follows will look at the interplay between education and pathways for African people's international migration.

2.3.3 Prior education and links to migration pathways

The review here examines the issues raised above about education and its link or otherwise to the three broad migration pathways – skill, humanitarian and family – to highlight what is made visible or invisible about African migrants in relation to the pathways. In doing so, it will illuminate some of the differences between African migrants whose identities are otherwise homogenised and conflated as 'refugees', racialised and essentialised as 'uneducated', and "reified as generic 'black' by the white gaze" (Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2013, p. 62).

People from Africa arrive through different pathways into Western contexts. Education has had a long history of providing an incentive for international migration of people from sub-Saharan Africa into Western contexts before the 1960s (see Nesbitt, 2007; Odhiambo, 2005; Rumbaut, 1994). These studies highlight education as a 'push' factor that links to African migration into Western migration contexts and focus on the 'brain drain' dimension of Africans in migration contexts. However, the literature suggests that little attention is paid to African migrant identity and settlement experiences "as an autonomous focus of academic enquiry" (D'Alisera, 2003; Tettey & Puplampu, 2005, p. 5). In addition, education is also the

least considered attribute that drives academic research on African migrants in relation to the different pathways by which they enter Western contexts. In Australia, for instance, what is prominent in the literature on African migrant experiences are research and policy concerns with 'refugee' settlement challenges. This continued application of a single identity label attached to a singular migration pathway has been applied for African migrants in a way that is not seen for any other migrant groups. Its application to African migrants even after years of being in these host countries, works to exclude them as it reifies this entry point as permanent. In the end, not much is known about educational influences on how different African migrant groups who enter through various pathways navigate the "vicissitudes of identity formation" (Suarez-Orozco, 2001). That is, very little is known about black African migrant 'identity options' and 'positioning' (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004a) beyond those who are attached the 'refugee' label and who are particularly characterised by their limited education.

In Australia, African people enter via all of the three broad migration pathways: the skilled migration stream, the humanitarian stream and the family stream (Commonwealth of Australia, 2014). Prior education is linked directly to skilled migration. The other pathways do not include educational requirements in their conditions for entry. Even so that does not necessarily mean that Africans and others who enter via those pathways enter without prior education and are unskilled because both humanitarian entrants and family reunion entrants may have prior education, even if it is irrelevant to their visa. The education and professional skills of Africans entering via pathways other than skilled migration have been found to be masked by their mode of entry (Marlowe, 2011). In fact, it has even been suggested that some African migrants may themselves actively opt to present themselves as uneducated in an attempt to avoid scrutiny, particularly if they may be entering their destination country illegally (Anyanwu, 2009). The fact that some pathways mask education is not unique to African migrants, as previous studies with other migrant groups have found (e.g. Ho &

Alcorso, 2004; Kofman, 2007; Krajewski & Blumberg, 2014). These studies also found that it is widely assumed that those who arrive in dependent positions are not only unskilled but also usually women. In reality, dependent migrants may or may not have prior education and professional skills and they may be male or female (Aure, 2013).

2.3.3.1 Mobility education and skill migration

As a push factor, education is identified with two broad pathways for entry into Western contexts. These are 'mobility education' or 'cross-border higher education' (UNESCO-UIS, 2013), and skilled migration (Takyi, 2002; Teferra, 2008). 'Mobility education' or 'cross-border higher education' is "characterized by the movement of people … programmes … and providers … across national borders" (Chien & Kot, 2012, p. 1). This included student mobility where African students move from their home country to pursue post-secondary education in a different country and academic mobility where African academics move from their home country to pursue their academic profession and/or academic activities in a different country (Chien & Kot, 2012; Daniel, Kanwar, & Uvalic-Trumbic, 2006; Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2013).

African student mobility has existed as a 'push factor' that has driven black African people into Western countries since the 1960s when African governments sent students abroad for advanced studies to help boost their economies (Jakubowicz, 1989; Rumbaut, 1994; Takyi, 2002). Initially, these were mainly European destination countries with which their countries had colonial ties and so were historically, linguistically and culturally connected (Takyi, 2002). Over the years, and mostly in African countries' post-independence era, the US became the main destination for these African students. Most African students whose migration into the US was shaped in this way came mainly from English speaking countries, notably Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana and Kenya. Most of them were highly educated and had few language difficulties (Rumbaut, 1994). Over the years, some of the students may have overstayed their visas due to economic pressures in their host countries but later most became

lawful residents as Rumbaut (1994) reports for the context of the US. However, the literature is scant on their settlement experiences (Tettey & Puplampu, 2005).

More recently, both student and academic mobility have been used by Africans as ways in which education could afford a lawful mode of entry into Western destination countries. Most sub-Saharan Africans who use this pathway come from middle class backgrounds with high levels of education and knowledge about Western cultures. As van Dalen, Groenewold and Schoorl (2005, p. 761) explain about this mode of African emigration, "[t]hose with a higher level of education are perhaps the ones that are better informed about making a move abroad, and they may also generally be the ones who are sponsored by their family to go abroad because they are believed to have a better chance of making a living".

In 2008, nearly one-quarter of a million of internationally mobile students from sub-Saharan Africa were reported to have studied outside their home countries. South Africa was the most popular destination with twenty-one percent of these international African students enrolled in institutions there. In addition to South Africa, the top ten destinations are shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3   Top ten destination countries of international students from sub-Saharan Africa in 2008

Country	Percent
France	20.6
United States	14.2
United Kingdom	12.7
Portugal	5.2
Germany	3.8
Australia	3.1
Canada	2.3
Morocco	2.0
Italy	1.5

Source: (UNESCO-UIS, 2010, pp. 4-5)

Tertiary education in these countries offers internationally mobile African students the opportunity to become permanent residents in their study destination or the potential for

future migration to other Western countries (e.g. Djité, 2006b; Kotey & Mihret, 2013; Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2010, 2013). There are, to the best of my knowledge, no specific figures available on migrant African academics in Australia.

The skilled migration mode of entry into Western contexts is another pull factor which brings educated Africans to Western destinations. Skilled migration schemes work on selective entry requirements that applicants must satisfy. Requirements include individual attributes such as a specific level of education, and skills and experience in targeted professions. Additionally, applicants under these schemes must usually meet health, character, age, and language proficiency requirements. Some host countries such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand, require these to be satisfied in the form of points or a points based system. These entry restrictions ensure that the migrants in this group would be independent in their settlement processes, contribute to labour and the economy and not depend on social welfare.

In Australia, migrants in the skill stream must satisfy a points test, have particular work skills, meet English language requirements, have other links to Australia or be nominated by particular employers, or have successful business skills and/or significant capital to establish a business of benefit to Australia. For example, farmers, entrepreneurs, and people with technological and engineering skills migrated to Australia following the end of the apartheid system in South Africa. In addition, the skill stream component of the African migrant intake is the largest in comparison to humanitarian and family reunion streams. And according to figures provided by the Immigration Department, and as can be seen from Table 2.4,

Table 2.4   African migrants granted visas in Australia in 2008-09

Pathway	Number of visa grants
Skill	8,025
Humanitarian	3,493
Family	2,290
Total	13,808

for 2008-09, more African people were granted visas and arrived in the skill stream compared to in the humanitarian and family visa streams (Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade, 2011, p. 206).

However, the majority of the skilled migrants from Africa are most likely to be non-blacks from countries such as South Africa and Zimbabwe. For instance, during the decade to 30 June 2007, South Africa (50,914 persons), Zimbabwe (10,666 persons), Kenya (3,181 persons), Mauritius (2,172 persons) and Egypt (1,895 persons) were the five main sources of skill stream settlers born in Africa (ABS2006). Even so, there is a black African migrant component within the skilled migrant population. Records for the highly skilled migrant programme applications approved for 2002, 2003 and first half of 2004 included sub-Saharan African nationalities such as Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sudan and Zambia (Birrell, Hawthorne, & Richardson, 2006, p. 269). A few studies also attest to the skilled black African migrant presence (e.g., Djité, 2006b; Kwansah-Aidoo & Mapedzahama, 2011; Mapedzahama, et al., 2011). Mapedzahama et. al.'s (2011) study of skilled black African migrants in the nursing profession in Australia highlights their participants' neglected dynamics of their experiences of racialisation as educated Africans in the workplace. In a self-reflexive study (Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2013), the authors, both of whom are black African academics who migrated through the skill stream, highlight their position as academics to differentiate their experiences from the population of newcomers described as 'African refugees' and subjects of studies on visibly different Africans in Australia (e.g. Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007). The authors point to their "differential positioning and relative privilege as skilled academic migrants who have not directly experienced the structural racism in the labour market that other black African migrants (may) have" (p. 68). Comments in consultations such as "there are no clear policies designed to integrate Africans into Australia as there were during the previous waves of migration" (Odhiambo, 2011, cited in Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade, 2011, p. 213) also attest

to the presence of Africans entering through the skill pathway as well as others and to their neglect in settlement programs. In addition they provide indications that there are skilled African migrants who are solely in charge of their own settlement processes. Yet their experiences may be subsumed under what is known about Africans arriving from refugee backgrounds through humanitarian pathways, the majority of whom are less well-educated and have linguistic, literacy and educational challenges which are addressed via settlement programs and policies (Hatoss, O'Neill, & Eacersall, 2012; Yates, 2002). As a result, more studies are needed to engage with the differences in these experiences and what they say about African migrant identities.

2.3.3.2 Education and humanitarian migration

Humanitarian migration entered Australia's immigration policy discourse in the early 1990s as changes in policy were made to include a "conceptual distinction between offshore and onshore applicants for refugee status" (Neumann, Gifford, Lems, & Scherr, 2014, p. 9). This was also the period that the sub-Saharan African intake into Australia mainly through the *offshore* program became prominent. In the literature, those who arrive as offshore applicants are referred to as 'refugees', a bureaucratic label which shows that they have satisfied UNHCR conditions for resettlement in a third country such as Australia. However, a few studies (e.g.Schroeter & James, 2014) now document 'refugee backgrounds' and 'refugee experiences' to highlight that a diversity of identities characterises the people entering within this category.

In Australia, it is has been well-established in the literature that the majority of sub-Saharan Africans entering via the offshore category come from refugee backgrounds and some experienced extended periods of living in refugee camps with limited access to education. The literature tends to be mainly concerned with perceptions of settlement issues that confound existing settlement agencies and programs and so the focus is on the individual and collective 'deficiencies' of this group. In fact, their lack of access to prior education, their

disrupted schooling and their struggles in the margins of highly literate and highly structured Western contexts have largely come to define African migrants (e.g. Hillier, 2002). Even so, the educational needs and abilities of African learners are not yet adequately understood (Bigelow, 2010) as "some of them may be have had educational experiences in their first culture" (Yates, 2002, p. 1). For instance, Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007) found that all the migrants in their study, including those from refugee backgrounds, reported having at least secondary level education (see Table 2.5).

Table 2.5   Highest level of education (%; N=150)

	Ex-Yugoslav	**African**	Middle Eastern	Total
High School 12 years	28.0	**10.0**	2.0	13.3
TAFE* diploma	38.0	**22.0**	32.0	30.7
University degree	26.0	**42.0**	46.0	38.0
Post-grad qualification	6.0	**26.0**	20.0	17.3
No response	2.0	**0.0**	0.0	0.7

Note: *Technical and Further Education (tertiary non-university education)
Source: Colic-Peisker and Tilbury, (2007, p. 66)

In fact, as Table 2.5 also shows, the African migrants in this study were the most highly educated group compared to two other migrant groups, namely, those from ex-Yugoslav and Middle Eastern backgrounds. However, at the same time, the study found that the Africans were more frustrated and experienced more disadvantage in the job market. This was particularly marked in contrast to the relatively lower educated Yugoslavs such that it must be assumed, on the basis of the findings presented by Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007), that race, that is, the advantage of whiteness, overrides educational achievement when it comes to entry into the Australian labour market and overall settlement outcomes.

2.3.3.3 Education and family migration

Family migration is structured on dependency. Within that structure, partners, children, parents and other family are allowed to join their family member already resident in the host country. As Table 2.4 has shown, Africans migrate through this stream into Australia but less so compared to figures recorded for the skill and humanitarian pathways. The five African

countries of birth accounting for most family stream settler arrivals for the 10 years to 30 June 2007 – the period within which the participants in the present study migrated to Australia – were South Africa (7,995 persons), Egypt (2,063 persons), Ethiopia (1,948 persons), Zimbabwe (1,176 persons) and Ghana (1,007 persons) (ABS2006).

In the public mind the proverbial family reunion migrant is the 'unskilled' dependent woman (Aure, 2013; Ho & Alcorso, 2004; Kofman, 2000, 2007; Krajewski & Blumberg, 2014). Studies such as these have observed that family migration has been noticeably marginalised in research and it has been suggested that this may be because it is not directly connected to labour market participation and gender politics due to its "association with female migration based on a dichotomy of male producer and female reproducer" (Kofman, 2007).

Indeed, there were no readily available records of the qualifications and skills of the African migrants who arrived in the family pathway. If, indeed, it is mostly women who arrived in this stream to join family who are domiciled in these contexts, regardless of the educational inequality that has been highlighted as prevalent in most African contexts and fuels ongoing debate (see Section 2.3.2), their experiences in these contexts cannot be ignored. For instance, African women have a strong track record of engaging in paid and unpaid work in their pre-migration countries (Aina, 1998; Beoku-Betts, 2005; Dolphyne, 1991; Obbo, 1980). Therefore, how they translate these into work in the migration contexts as well as juggle expectations in the complementary roles they are expected to play in respect to their sponsors are matters awaiting further research. For the African women and the few men who arrive as 'love migrants', as Aure (2013) calls people within this category, it is important that research addresses their experiences and some of the differences and similarities with Africans, skilled and unskilled, educated and uneducated, who use other pathways.

In sum, education as a migration pathway predates the humanitarian and family stream pathways as a mode of entry for African migrants including black Africans. However with

the recent unprecedented intake of Africans through the humanitarian pathway, it is the label of the refugee that has become tied to black African identities and black African experiences in Western contexts. Ongoing concern with the settlement issues with this group has worked to reify this entry point for black Africans in a way in which it does not do for migrants from other ethnic groups. Exploring education and its link to pathways helps to explicate and highlight identity differences and issues with diaspora Africans and identify the way forward in researching this group of people from diverse backgrounds. For instance, different pathways provide ways of differentiating diaspora Africans among themselves. That is, pathways are likely to be used as reference points, e.g. "s/he came to do her/his PhD" or used to show disenchantment with job positioning as with Creese and Wiebe (2009) reporting the following comments from one of their participants: "When you are coming here, they say they cannot accept people who are not educated. They are accepting people who are educated, and when they come here, they treat them like uneducated people. What's the use?" (p. 12). The authors add that pathways are also linked to expectations, choices and attitudes of migrants towards settlement.

Despite all various pathways existing as entry points for the sub-Saharan African presence in Western migration contexts, ongoing negative stereotyping persists of Africans as humanitarian entrants, while other people arriving within that pathway from other geographical locations fare better. What is equally clear from the literature is that the ongoing focus on the humanitarian stream as an entry point for sub-Saharan African migrants overshadows any educational credentials and skills educated Africans entering in that pathway bring with them. Furthermore, many find that their struggles in the margins of a highly structured Western society feed into stereotypical entry point constructions of them which they are unable to shift even after years of naturalization and citizenship.

The African migrants whose primary pathway is education have selected to be in the destination countries out of their own choice. Therefore, they are in charge of their own settlement processes, having satisfied requirements including proof of qualifications, skills and proficiency in the dominant language to enter these countries. In addition, they have expectations that their educational credentials – which for some have even been enhanced by further study in the new settings – will allow them easy translation of this capital into local currency. Creese and Wiebe (2009) explicate a process of racialisation that excludes sub-Saharan Africans and relegates them to the margin of society in the context of Canada. More of studies like theirs are needed to understand these processes for African migrants in Australia.

In this section I have shown the important role that formal education has in African contexts and how access to educational achievement in the pre-migration context does not translate easily into Western contexts. Another prominent area that is in need of critical attention for African migrant research is to do with language learning and African identities in relation to English learning and use prior to migration and how these influence migrants' post-migration language learning decisions and choices.

2.3.4 Language learning of African migrants

In addition to general education, as discussed in the previous section, language learning constitutes a specific educational challenge for adult migrants. As adults from multilingual societies, African migrants usually take multilingualism as the norm and they often expect that they will learn and increase their 'linguistic repertoires' as they interact in the new contexts (Blommaert & Backus, 2011, 2012). As Blommaert and Backus (2012) explain, repertoires "are individual, biographically organized complexes of resources, and they follow the rhythms of actual human lives" (p. 8). They point out that repertoires are new linguistic skills and resources we accumulate in a variety of ways with the most obvious being through

formal learning, and that both formally and informally learned language meld together into repertoires that people draw on. Therefore repertoires as well as being complex also reflect the different learning environments and resources that people accumulate in language – pre-migration and post-migration.

In contrast to African contexts, Western English speaking countries are typically characterised by monolingual language ideologies, which may include the belief that African migrants' proficiency in their heritage languages and cultures goes hand in hand with a lack of proficiency in English. Therefore, African migrants often find themselves positioned as English language learners, a position some Africans may reject or embrace depending on how English functioned in the pre-migration country or countries they lived in (Kachru, 1991) and how they perceive their identities in English before migration (Mazrui, 2006; Obeng & Obeng, 2006). In this section, I first discuss how Africans may have English in their linguistic repertoires. Then I discuss how African migrants from Anglophone and non-Anglophone African countries see themselves in relation to the 'Englishes' they bring or do not bring, and how these influence their identities and post-migration second language learning choices and decisions.

2.3.4.1 African Englishes in migration

People originating from Anglophone African countries where colonial histories underlie the use of English as the national and/or official language of government, administration and higher education may already have proficiency in English (McArthur, 1998; Mesthrie, 2008a; Svartvik & Leech, 2006). Studies within a world Englishes perspective alert us to African experiences embedded in British influenced colonial histories and their sociocultural links to the indigenization of English in Africa (Higgins, 2003; Jenkins, 2006; Kachru, 1991, 2006; Kamwangamalu, 2007; Omoniyi, 2006). 'African Englishes' is used in the world Englishes literature to describe the varieties of English that African people speak within the context of English in a globalised world (Kirkpatrick, 2010; Mutonya, 2008; Omoniyi, 2006). World

Englishes scholars' linkage of a geographical identification to 'Englishes' allows space for discussions about African Englishes, Asian Englishes and so on (Tollefson, 2000). World Englishes explorations highlight Africans as multilingual and varied users of Englishes in African contexts as well as in the diaspora where they bring their heritage languages and cultures into predominantly 'inner circle' English spaces (Jenkins, 2006; Kachru, 2006).

The work of Blommaert (2005; 2011) and collaboration with his colleagues (Blommaert & Backus, 2011, 2012; Blommaert & Rampton, 2011) explains how languages and language varieties fare when they travel, in the case of English from a functional 'outer circle' – English as a second language (ESL) contexts – and 'expanding circle' – English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts – to 'inner circle' English spaces (Jenkins, 2006; Kachru, 2006). Blommaert and Rampton (2011) explain that mobility entails a movement across norms as migrants move through spaces, "spaces filled with codes, customs, rules, expectations and so forth. … these spaces are always somebody's space" (p. 4). Blommaert (2005) further explains: "Whenever discourses travel across the globe, what is carried with them is their shape, but their value, meaning, or function do not often travel along" (p. 72). Therefore what remains and needs to be explored within migrant communities is how they negotiate recognition in the new contexts in regards to the building of repertories and perhaps even the shedding of repertoires.

Blommaert and Rampton (2011) point out that taking a repertoire approach to looking at languages marks a shift in concerns from "*a priori* assumptions about the links between origins, upbringing, proficiency and types of language" (p. 4) to concerns about individuals' differences "within biographical trajectories that develop in actual histories and topographies" (p. 5). This means that the functions and value of a language in one context may change with a move to another place. For instance, Blommaert (2005) observes the following about English and their African speakers:

The English acquired by urban Africans may offer them considerable prestige and access to middle-class identities in African towns. It may be an 'expensive', extremely valuable resource to them. But the same English, when spoken in London by the same Africans, may become an object of stigmatisation and may qualify them as members of the lower strata of society. (Blommaert, 2005, p. 72)

Creese and her colleagues' ethnographic studies (G. Creese, 2010, 2011; G. Creese & Kambere, 2003) offer notable examples in the Canadian context of how African Englishes are perceived in an 'inner circle' English speaking context. For example, Creese (2011) shows that the majority of the 31 women and 30 men she interviewed, self-described as fluent English speakers from Commonwealth African countries, believed that their 'African accent' was a key barrier to their equal treatment and social inclusion in Canada. Creese (2011) draws on scholars (e.g. Bourdieu, 1986; Lippi-Green, 1997; Phillipson, 1992) to theorise about accent and its interplay with race to highlight how African English accents have become a 'proxy for their racialised body' and 'markers for inclusion and exclusion' and a way around explicit racisms that are no longer socially acceptable. She argues with Lippi-Green (1997) that:

… the myth of unaccented English is part of 'standard language ideology' in North America that 'provides rationalization for limited access to discourse.' One way of speaking English is perceived as superior, while other forms of English … are perceived as threats that undermine and debase the language. (G. Creese, 2011, pp. 35-36)

Thus, "British and Australian English accents are heard in the local environment without difficulty" (G. Creese, 2011, p. 37). In contrast, "those attached to migrants from former British colonies in sub-Saharan Africa, are more likely to be defined as undesirable or incomprehensible" (G. Creese, 2011, p. 37). Consequently, and on the basis of such perceptions, African English speakers may be seen in deficit terms in these contexts as needing to learn English for settlement. However, that is a positioning they are likely to resist

(Mazrui, 2006; Obeng & Obeng, 2006) especially when they "take this former colonial language to be of their own" (Mufwene, 2012, p. 368). I elaborate on this point next.

2.3.4.2 African migrants from Anglophone and non-Anglophone countries

Tensions in the indiscriminate positioning of African migrants as English language learners in English speaking Western countries beg to be unravelled (G. Creese, 2011; Kamwangamalu, 2007, 2010; Mazrui, 2006; Obeng & Obeng, 2006). A few studies use distinctions between African migrants from Anglophone African countries and non-Anglophone African countries vis-à-vis English to highlight the differences in the linguistic resources or 'capital' (Bourdieu, 1991) they bring, and how they see these in relation to their identities and post-migration English language learner positioning (e.g. Obeng & Obeng, 2006).

In an ethnographic study that contrasts the experiences of Anglophone and non-Anglophone African migrants in Atlanta, USA, Obeng and Obeng (2006) make the following point about their participants' perspectives of African migrant positioning vis-à-vis English:

> … perceptions were influenced by the historical background and its affiliated identities of the immigrants' home countries-European colonization of Africa with its attendant linguistic legacy of making the immigrants view themselves as either English (that is, Anglophone and therefore their children needing no remedial or ESL classes), or as French or Portuguese (and therefore seeing themselves as 'foreign' in the American English-oriented linguistic context and hence in need of ESL). (Obeng & Obeng, 2006, p. 114)

Their ethnographic study was conducted with twenty families from Anglophone and non-Anglophone (Lusophone and Francophone) African countries to understand their views "in support for or protest against" the provision of ESL classes for newly arrived migrant children in schools (Obeng & Obeng, 2006, p. 107). The views of the parents from the two groups provided insights into the adults' "personal contexts, and of their reaction to their own social, political, and educational actions" (p. 107). The authors draw on the parents'

experiences to show that most participants from Anglophone African countries, who made up about seventy percent of the data set of the twenty families, were the ones who reported reacting with resistance towards their children being placed in ESL classes. Those parents felt that the ESL classes were not necessary and that "their children were put in ESL classes because they were seen either as foreigners, as Africans, or as people with an accent different from the American accent" (p. 108). Furthermore, the parents understood their children's placement in these classes to be on the basis of the parents' accents and not the children's and "felt it would be more fair and appropriate if the program specialists based their selection on the children's competence in English, not the parents" (p. 113). However, the study found that the parents from non-Anglophone African countries embraced a foreign identity in English and were happy for their children's placement in ESL classes. The twenty families that were in favour of the ESL classes for their children were mostly from non-Anglophone African countries. Some of those parents, particularly those from Francophone backgrounds, were happy that the ESL teachers were bilingual in English and French as they found that instrumental in rapport building and the improvement in their children's English proficiency.

For those with origins in non-Anglophone African countries who learn English there is also a status of 'foreignness' attached to its function for the speakers. As Mufwene (2012) explains, the "practitioners of English in the Expanding Circle do not use it to communicate with each other within their respective countries" (p. 368). As such, they may not share the sense of 'ownership' and sociocultural sentiments and identification in the language as indicated for their counterparts from Anglophone African origins. Furthermore, some may have it in their repertoire having learnt it formally but may lack fluency in it and therefore may worry "about being understood by the outsiders with whom they communicate, especially those who speak it natively or are expected to speak it fluently" (p. 368). Others may consider "learning English as quickly as possible [as] an essential part of their settlement" (G. Creese, 2011, p. 40) whereas their Anglophone peers may not. Such differences in how Africans identify vis-

à-vis English add another layer to be considered in relation to policies and language training provision.

In sum, the situation with language learning and for settlement is rather complex for African migrants who have come from multilingual societal norms and may or may not have English (Higgins, 2003; Jenkins, 2006; Kachru, 1991, 2006; Kamwangamalu, 2007; Omoniyi, 2006) in their linguistic repertoires (Blommaert & Backus, 2011). With racist attitudes masquerading as judgements about language proficiency (Piller, 2011), and accent and race borders firmly in place in Western countries' gate keeping practices (Lippi-Green, 1997, 2012), the studies discussed above remind us that language and race continue to play a vital role in how African Englishes and their speakers are perceived in Western societies. Exploring how African migrants see themselves in relation to English in the migration contexts and some of their language learning decisions and choices can inform language training programs (see the section on language training programs).

Another key domain of importance in relation to migrants perceived as arriving for settlement without the dominant language is employment. In the section that follows, I will look at what the literature reveals about black African migrants' employment experiences in Western countries.

2.4 Black Africans, employment and settlement in Western contexts

In the previous section, I outlined key language learning and identity issues in relation to African migrants' diverse backgrounds including their race, educational backgrounds, and migration pathways, and also as people who come from Anglophone or non-Anglophone African countries with various levels of pre-migration English language use. This section explores African migrant employment, identity and the politics of place. In Australia, there is a bias in what we know about black African employment and settlement. What we know is largely that of black Africans with refugee backgrounds in rural resettlement. As a result, we

know little about black African migrants outside that category. This section argues that there is a wide array of differences in migrant employment experiences and that studies are needed that illustrate these with various categories of black African migrants in Australia.

Migrant employment concerns have been studied in various academic fields and from neo-classical or critical perspectives. Studies following the neo-classical approach rely "on competitive market theory which holds that the market is blind to ethnicity/race and functions on the basis of a single rule, maximization of profit, consequently minimizing prejudicial actions by employers" (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007, p. 76). By contrast, critical studies focus on "labour movements in response to demands of international capital, and the consequent discrimination and disadvantage migrants experience in the host country" (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007, p. 77).

Germane to explorations working within sociocultural frameworks are issues arising from interconnected factors of migrant employment opportunities and workforce participation in destination countries and the subsequent translation of capital into full or partial interactions in the new societies and transnationally (e.g. Castagnone & Nazio, 2014; Goldin, Cameron, & Balarajan, 2010; Goldstein, 1997; Heller, 2003; Piller & Lising, 2014). Studies highlight macro-level concerns to show how governments and settlement agencies use employment as a measure of migrants' wellbeing and economic independence and as a key indicator of settlement abilities and success (Hawthorne, 1997, 2005; Ho & Alcorso, 2004). At the micro-level, the migrants themselves are also shown to rate employment highly for their wellbeing, independence and dignity especially when their skills match their employment levels – "an individual with an engineering degree will have a higher level of job satisfaction if they are employed as an engineer than if they work as a taxi driver" (Laryea & Hayfron, 2005, p. 125).

In this section, the review touches on three areas: employment challenges with a focus on newly emerging African communities which ties in with refugee resettlement in rural Australia and has been a major focus of government policy and research. Then, I will look at how the intersection of race and class impact the employment experiences of African migrants. I will also look at the intersection of race, gender and class in relation to employment and black women migrants.

2.4.1 Employment challenges and newly emerging African communities

"Newly emerging African communities" (NEAC) is a term used in the Australian literature to describe African community groups that are new, small in size, with refugee histories and "characterised by weakness of support structures and difficulty in accessing mainstream services" (Abdelkerim & Grace, 2012, p. 106). Studies of NEAC employment issues are usually bound up with the broader theme of humanitarian resettlement with a focus on rural locations (Kivunja, et al., 2014; Nsubuga-Kyobe, 2003, 2004; Piper & Associates, 2007, 2008, 2009; Shepley, 2008; Taylor & Stanovic, 2005). For example, Abdelkerim and Grace (2012) focused on Horn of Africa nationalities, that is, African migrants from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan, to explore employment challenges of NEAC and refugee resettlement in Australia. According to their review, which looks at 60 local and international studies undertaken within the last ten years, employment issues identified for the group include the following: issues with gender and NEAC women in particular facing more compounding gender related challenges compared to their male peers; poor proficiency in English; discrimination; pre-migration and post-migration trauma and lack of emotional stability; problems with getting recognition for their overseas qualifications; lack of local knowledge and local work experience; lack of specialist employment services; lack of transport particularly in the case of those who do not have enough English to sit and pass the drivers' knowledge tests. Their review concludes that there is a lot of scope for further study with women from NEAC, and specific challenges with youth and seniors in NEAC groups.

Another study (Kivunja, et al., 2014) focused on issues with NEAC groups in three rural towns in New South Wales – Armidale, Tamworth and Coffs Harbour of New South Wales. The study draws on the notion of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) to shed light on their participants' labour market experiences in those locations. The study notes that although employment is critical for the new migrants most of the African migrants in their study were unemployed or under-employed. In addition, their study highlights tensions between current economic pressures and pressure into work that poses additional challenges to work and life balance.

> For those that did get jobs, the capitalist market economy means that many people are spending more time at work today than in the past and the African migrants are finding it rather difficult to adjust to life that is more aligned to work. And for those who do work, the social dimension to community life is hard to maximize when people have to work long hours and on weekends such as in the fruit picking industries. (Kivunja, et al., 2014, p. 77)

The previous study supports most of the findings in Abdelkerim and Grace's (2012) comprehensive review on NEAC and their members' employment experiences. However, within the scope of NEAC studies, not only is there a bias towards rural employment but, in addition, issues of race and class differentials are notably absent in most of these discussions. NEAC employment issues remain relevant in current migration and socioeconomic trends and they are still less-researched in terms of the literature in Australia (Nsubuga-Kyobe, 2004; Okot & Moi, 2007). In addition, other African migrant categories including their urban employment issues are even lesser-researched. Discussions of literature on African migrant employment that rein in broader issues emerging from the intersection of race and class; and the intersection of race, gender and class and their respective influences on African migrant employment follow next.

2.4.2 Intersections of race and class

Aside from NEAC specific issues with employment, the literature also sheds light on issues in relation to the intersection of race (see definition in Section 2.3.1) and class impacting black African migrant employment experiences as minority migrants. My understanding of class draws on that of Bourdieu (1986, 1989). Bourdieu defines class within his model of capital which encompasses economic, cultural and social dimensions of symbolic power (see Section 2.2.1) and his notions of *habitus* "a class-specific way of producing forms of practice" (Bourdieu, 1982, p. 277). For Bourdieu, class is produced within spaces where there is unequal capital distribution and people act within categories of social inequalities. Bourdieu's framework enables me to see how on the one hand pre-migration experiences of education, income and family wealth may serve as notable proxies used to inscribe class and social hierarchies, and on the other hand, these class dimensions may differ and may not hold the same cultural meaning for migrants in the post-migration contexts. Within that framework, post-migration contexts denote spaces where class and its intersection with key variables including race can be explored to provide evidence of social stratification in relation to minority migrant employment experiences and how they may differ from their pre-migration ones.

Studies discuss race and class as intersecting to inscribe differences in employment experiences. Studies highlight 'racialised other' and ethnic minority migrant issues and racisms arising from locals and employer attitudes in these contexts (Cahill, 2007; Forrest & Dunn, 2013; Fozdar & Torezani, 2008; Missingham, Dibden, & Cocklin, 2006; Tilbury & Colic-Peisker, 2006). For example, Forrest and Dunn's (2013) study conducted in South Australia rightly brings to the fore issues with racialised migrant experiences and mainstream attitudes towards them. Another exemplary study was conducted into the labour market experiences of three 'visibly different' migrant groups – ex-Yugoslavs, black Africans and people from the Middle East – into the extent to which experiences of disadvantage were

linked to their type of visibility and levels of racism (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007). In that study, Africans were the most visibly different among the three minority groups and ex-Yugoslavs were less visibly different from the 'white' mainstream. Colic-Peisker and Tilbury, (2007) define visibility as being:

> recognizable as different from the white, Western-clad, and English-speaking Australian majority in various ways: by their non-English speaking background and therefore "accent" when they speak English; by skin colour and bodily and facial features; by dress and attire, often connotative of religious denomination; or by a combination of these "visibilities", together with various degrees of cultural difference. (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007, p. 61)

The study showed that 'whiteness' provided cultural capital that was not available to those seen as visibly different. For example, the study found that despite their lower education and lower English proficiency the "employment status and income of ex-Yugoslavs in our sample are significantly better than those of Africans and Middle Easterners" (p. 78). Their study concludes that cultural capital factors significantly structure migrants' experiences and they call for closer attention to be paid to the experiences of different migrant groups.

This phenomenon is further exemplified, for instance, in comparisons between black African, locals and other migrant groups based on census data and documented in the context of Canada (e.g. Laryea & Hayfron, 2005) and the US (e.g. Rumbaut, 1994). Drawing on data from Canada's 1996 population census, Laryea and Hayfron (2005) point out that "[b]y all accounts, African-born immigrants have a higher level of education than either the native-born Canadians or the other immigrant groups" in their research sample (p. 117). However, their comparatively higher qualifications did not match their labour market performance. Measuring African migrants' labour market performance in terms of earnings and economic attainment, the study found that "African immigrants working full-time earned less on average than Canadian-born workers; $28,750 compared to $29,461" (Laryea & Hayfron,

2005, p. 116). Similarly, Rumbaut (1994) made the following observation in a comparison of locals and foreign born including African migrants in the US:

> The foreign-born as a whole have the same proportion of college graduates (20%) as does the native-born population, as well as an equivalent rate of labor force participation and self-employment. They are, however, more likely than natives to be poor and to work in low-status jobs. (Rumbaut, 1994, p. 612)

Research in Vancouver, Canada, highlights race and structural issues in relation to African migrants' under-employment in urban settings (G. Creese, 2010, 2011; G. Creese & Wiebe, 2009). These studies found that despite research participants being highly qualified their identities as black African migrants mediated their abilities to find jobs commensurate with their skills. Consequently they felt the full impact of the erasure of skills as they ended up with low-skilled jobs and without employment mobility.

In some UK research (Wills, et al., 2008), in which the authors compare labour market participation for employees from sixty different countries, it was found that, "black Africans were the lowest paid ethnic group, concentrated in cleaning jobs, forming the majority of workers on London's underground stations and trains" (p. 19). Their findings were in line with themes consistently highlighted in relation to African migrant employment in studies conducted in London and urban areas in the UK and summed up as "loss of status, alienation and invisibility" (Fumanti, 2010, p. 14). Loss of status is emphasised in research with particular national migrant labour market experiences such as Ghanaians in London (Vasta & Kandilige, 2010) and Zimbabweans in various British cities (McGregor, 2007, 2008). The term 'levelling' or 'London as the leveller' is the metaphor that Vasta and Kandilige (2010) report as capturing the sense of loss of status experienced by highly skilled Ghanaians in London as social constraints, exploitation, and racial discrimination force them into low-

skilled and low-paid jobs that they would have declined in their home countries. As Akyeampong (2000) explains further:

> It [London as the leveller] erases all class distinctions African immigrants brought from their homelands. The educated and the semi-literate, the highborn and the lowborn, rub shoulders as they vie for the same menial jobs. 'Success' in the immigrant community comes to depend on one's exertions, and material accumulation is open to all. (Akyeampong, 2000, p. 186)

For Zimbabweans in the UK, "BBC (British Bottom Cleaners)" is another adage that captures this phenomenon whereby highly qualified professionals have to work in low skilled aged-care work and the class clashes involved (McGregor, 2007, 2008, 2009).

In addition, ethnic small business and street vending have often been a route out of menial jobs for some African nationalities in urban areas. As self-supporting migrants, urban migrants may also create employment niches or ethnic enterprises within their networks in response to mainstream marginalisation from the labour market to cater to an ethnic clientele (Arthur, 2000; Chaumba & Nackerud, 2013; Stoller, 2002). Stoller (2002) portrays this phenomenon with the African adage 'money has no smell' which captures the preparedness of Africans to renegotiate mores and norms in the processes of economic gains from migration for the benefit of their local and transnational families. It is important to explore if such ethnic business niches exist for black Africans in Australia and what this phenomenon means for their settlement processes and inclusion in Australian society.

2.4.3 Race, gender and class

Feminist researchers advocating intersectional approaches also point out how race, gender and class factors fuse to further complicate black African men and women's employment experiences (Osirim, 2008; Oyewumi, 1997; Warriner, 2004; Yesufu, 2005). Yesufu's (2005) study in Edmonton, Canada, revealed that educated black African women were more likely to

receive lower salaries and be located in lower status service industries compared to other migrant groups. Black women were also marginalised because of stereotypical views that employers held about black women. In addition, and similar to what Warriner (2004) finds for women migrants in the US urban context, their lack of local networks or low social capital to draw on means a lack of vital links to jobs commensurate with their qualifications and expertise.

However, black women migrants have been shown to negotiate racialised gender roles and employment over time. For example, Osirim (2008) draws on the notion of transnationalism to highlight how black women migrants have contested various inequalities by engaging in employment for their individual and collective as well as their hometown development. This study is an in-depth qualitative study conducted with 15 well-educated black African women in Greater Philadelphia and metropolitan Boston areas in the US. The study demonstrates how the women were dedicated to education and improving lives for their local contexts and transnational families. The study shows that although the women experienced racism and discrimination they "were quite focused on improving the lives of their families, their communities and the broader society in the US" (Osirim, 2008, p. 388). Drawing on the concept of transnationalism, the study shows how the women forged linkages that "benefitted the development of their businesses in the US" (p. 392) and at the same time they forged "relationships with other black populations and in fact, contributed to the development of a new Pan-Africanism" (p. 392). The study found that the women were more likely than the men to be involved in community organizations to make a difference in the lives of others in the diaspora. Like this one, other studies employing feminist perspectives draw attention to issues of race, gender and class and call for more studies to explore such differences with a focus on women migrants (G. Creese, 2011; G. Creese & Wiebe, 2009; Hatoss & Huijser, 2010; Osirim, 2008; Yesufu, 2005).

In sum, there are crucial differences in how black African migrants experience employment in relation to their migration pathways, their identities and their places of settlement. The relationship between NEAC employment and the politics of place of settlement dominates the Australian literature. While acknowledging the need to highlight the nuances in NEAC experiences which have been the focus of policy, government reports and studies in small town living, it is prudent that studies about African migrants' employment also includes those from other backgrounds. The status quo perpetuates the notion of a homogeneous African migrant in need of settlement help and this masks power inequalities and identity issues that black African migrants face and which until recently have gained very little attention in the literature. Furthermore, there is also a notable absence of research in the literature that makes relevant systematic distinctions between diaspora African migrants in urban and rural employment experiences. That situation raises the question of how best to capture and show such differences in black African migrant employment experiences as well as broader issues of differences in their settlement trajectories. The situation has only began to change with recent publications which engage with skilled African migrant employment experiences in the nursing industry in Australia (e.g. Johnstone & Kanitsaki, 2008; Mapedzahama, et al., 2011) and others which engage more broadly with African migrant issues in Australia (e.g. Ndhlovu, 2014).

2.5 Summary

This chapter began with a discussion of concepts and theories within the poststructural paradigm that frames the study. Together, the studies discussed above show ways in which African migrants' language learning for settlement is mediated by issues of identity, power and ideologies in the settlement contexts. My research hopes to make a contribution to research on, with and for African migrants in Australia, an understudied group, especially because the focus of the limited work in the area has rested predominantly on the *a priori*

category of 'refugees' without an ample critique of the use of the category and the heterogeneity of the people it subsumes.

The chapter that follows will look at the methodology and research design employed in the conduct of the study.

CHAPTER 3

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines how the study was conducted. I begin by presenting the research paradigm and philosophical underpinnings in the design of the study. Next, I present ethnography as the selected method that guided the study. Then, I describe details of the data collection and present the participants. Following that, I reflect on my own position as a researcher who is simultaneously a member of the researched community before looking at general ethical issues arising in the conduct of the study. Finally, I describe how the data were analysed.

3.2 Qualitative research

In the early stage of my PhD candidature, Alexandre Duchêne (2007) impressed me with his statement that "method does not come out of the blue". At that time, I was in the process of finalising the research design and I was getting acquainted with social scientific concepts and terminologies as well as the logic of how those concepts link up to inform a coherent research design. His words impressed upon me that research designs are shaped by theoretical underpinnings and these must be relevant and also appropriate for the chosen methodology – ethnography –, and methods – ethnographic methods – should be applied to gather micro-level data; and other methods as necessary to gather macro-level data. With this flow effect, theories link to methods and methods point back at theories. I also understood that a chosen method "is not simply a means to an end. It is a meaningful and conscious enactment of learning from and entering into an ethnographic domain of immense possibilities" (Madison, 2005, p. 40) and these possibilities are constructed in a continuum of subjectivism and objectivism. Prus (1998) argues that subjectivism has the following underlying principles:

people have the capacities to (a) use language (symbols) to communicate with others regarding [the world] around them; (b) assign differing meanings to [objects]; (c) take themselves and others into account in acting toward the world; (d) deliberately invoke specific behaviours in engaging the world; (e) influence and resist one another; (f) develop selective affiliations or associations with other people; (g) attend to notions of emergence, sequence, or temporality. In other words, this requires that scholars of the human condition attend to the (a) intersubjective, (b) multiperspectival, (c) reflective, (d) action-oriented, (e) negotiable, (f) relational, and (g) processual dimensions of human community life. (Prus, 1998, p. 26)

Subjectivism fits well with the stance taken to delve into the research participants' own perspectives of their settlement experiences. Subjectivism also allows individual participants' stories to be used as case studies to further illuminate issues as I will do in Chapters 5-8 with eight women participants' stories.

In proposing a study that would explore black African migrants' language learning and settlement trajectories in Australia, and in which I would gather data from black African migrants of which group not much is known in terms of their settlement in Australia and of whom what little is known is investigated from the *a priori* category, 'refugee', I position my research within the qualitative paradigm. Denzin and Lincolns' (2000) often-cited definition of qualitative research informs this study as follows:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including fieldnotes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their

natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, pp. 4-5)

From that definition the four key aspects of qualitative methodology can be summarised as follows: (a) exploratory – delves into situated human activity in a natural setting; (b) context sensitive – looks holistically at the context and does not isolate the social setting within which the phenomenon occurs; (c) participant centred – is sensitive to people or participants' perspectives and seeks their representations; and (d) interpretive – the researcher makes interpretations of the 'emic' perspectives that are reflected in participants' talk and actions by representing them with the appropriate 'etic' labels. These principles guided me to adopt ethnography as the method best suited to the realization of the aims and objectives of the study which is to explore black African migrant language learning and settlement experiences in Australia (see Chapter 1).

3.3 Ethnography

The previous section has identified ethnography as the methodology employed in the present study designed to explore the language learning and settlement trajectories of black African migrants in Australia. Ethnography in sociolinguistic research is traced to Dell Hymes and his SPEAKING grid, an acronym and mnemonic he developed for delving into communicative events in natural settings and how individuals understand their worlds. Following on from that approach to understanding people's world-views as context based, Hymes outlines a further description of ethnography being participant centred as follows: "of all forms of scientific knowledge, ethnography is the most open, … the least likely to produce a world in which experts control knowledge at the expense of those who are studied" (Hymes, 1980, p. 105, cited in, Blommaert & Rampton, 2011, p. 15). Thus ethnography views researcher positionality not as 'experts' but as research instruments working to ensure "a deeper understanding of how individuals view and participate in their own social and cultural

worlds" (Harklau, 2005, p. 179). These principal tenets of ethnography fit the primary objective of the present study which is to present black African migrant language learning and settlement trajectories from their perspectives and with representations that show participants in control of knowledge of their own experiences.

Specific ethnographic methods such as participant observations and semi-structured in-depth interviews, by themselves or in combination, enabled the gathering of 'rich' data for 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) of participants' lived realities. Such data produced in relation to lived linguistic realities allowed the exploration of differences and interpretation of dynamics between individuals' realities and broader contextual ideologies and positionings in the settlement context.

As identified in Chapter 1, the research questions that my study addresses are as follows:

RQ 1: How do African migrants' pre-migration backgrounds shape their language repertoires and English proficiency?

RQ 2: What are the English language learning experiences and settlement trajectories of well-educated migrants from Anglophone African countries who arrive with English proficiency?

RQ 3: What are the English language learning experiences and settlement trajectories of well-educated migrants from non-Anglophone African countries who arrive without English proficiency?

RQ 4: What are the English language learning experiences and settlement trajectories of migrants who have had no or low schooling from Anglophone African countries who arrive with some English proficiency?

RQ 5: What are the English language learning experiences and settlement trajectories of migrants who have had no or low schooling from non-Anglophone African countries who arrive without English proficiency?

With these questions I seek to investigate the language ideologies and pre-migration sociolinguistic backgrounds that are embedded in participants' repertoires of languages, how they interpret these to have meaning for their post-migration language learning and practices, and what they understand in terms of their experiences and the new context. I am looking to unravel gaps between the micro – researched perspectives – and, the macro – contextual definitions of their settlement – that is, their post-migration positioning as language learners with power inequities embedded in that positioning.

Based on differences in their languages and educational backgrounds, I address how four distinct groups of African migrants fare differently in relation to their language learner positioning in settlement. In doing so, I query the homogenization effects of differences usually being subsumed under one mode of entry category – refugee – and show how that reification process masks contextual constraints that militate against black African migrant settlement in Australia regardless of their pathways. Throughout the research and in keeping with researched subjectivities, I was constantly reflexive of my own specific subjectivity as researcher and also as a member of the researched community seeking to interpret representations of participants' lived realities in which they are able to identify a portrayal of themselves. This means that, as the research tool, I was constantly conscious of *emic* – insider perspectives – and also co-constructions with the participants and *etic* – outsider perspectives including using labels that were appropriate and allowed light to be shed on the participants' views and how they themselves feel about their lives in Australia. For example, an *a priori* 'etic' label may lead to a blanket interpretation of African people's lack of formal education in deficient terms with little regard to cultural knowledge that has been acquired outside of

Western defined knowledge. However, my own experiential relationship with African people and my observations of African community interactions enables me to understand that there are people without formal education but who have acquired rich 'world school' knowledge which no formal classroom situation will be able to teach. That would lead to selecting a better informed label. This is the kind of embedded *emic* knowledge that I have tried to explore with some of the participants.

3.4 Data collection

The previous section has identified ethnography as the methodology employed in this study. I will now present the specific ethnographic methods which were employed to explore the language learning and settlement trajectories of 47 research participants from eight different African countries. Following Delamont (2007), I use ethnographic methods as an inclusive term for fieldwork which involved sampling, participant recruitment, interviewing participants and participant observation. In addition to these micro-domain data, I gathered naturally occurring macro-domain data which included public documents and audio-visual materials for a small pre-fieldwork analysis as well as ongoing analysis. Each of these procedures is presented starting with participant sampling (Section 3.4.1), recruitment (Section 3.4.2), interviews (Section 3.4.3) and participant observations (Section 3.4.4). Finally I also outline how I gathered publicly available macro-domain data (Section3.4.5)

3.4.1 Sampling

Wadsworth (1997) notes that sampling ensures that the findings of a social study that draws on techniques such as interviews and observations "will be useful as valid representations of the thoughts and actions" of the target population being studied (p. 36). Sampling can be probability sampling, convenience sampling or purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990). Of those three, purposeful sampling is the one I used. Purposeful sampling is defined as "a strategy in which particular settings, persons or events are deliberately selected for the important

information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices" (Maxwell, 1998, p. 87). The target sample population for the study is adult (eighteen years and above) first generation migrants from sub-Saharan Africa who live in Western Sydney suburban areas or a small country town in the State of New South Wales which I have given the pseudonym C-Town. Within that cohort, they must have arrived in Australia from the late 1990s and onwards. That period of arrival in Australia was set as a criterion for participant selection because it falls within the period in which the black African presence in New South Wales and Australia increased significantly and attracted attention to their settlement issues (Community Relations Commission, 2003, 2009, 2010). It was also the period within which African settlement became topical for political and public rhetoric which questioned their integration abilities (see, Anyanwu, 2009; Dhanji, 2009; Dick, 2005).

Another criterion for the target sample was that they must be phenotypically visible as coming from sub-Saharan African countries of origin. Excluded from the sample to be recruited for the study as primary participants were my circle of friends within the Ghanaian community and there were no Ghanaian primary participants in the study. This was mainly for ethical reasons. That is, I wanted participation to be voluntary without anyone needing to feel pressured to participate because they were part of my personal network. However, I consulted with my Ghanaian network as stakeholders and often discussed my research with my Ghanaian family and networks and these conversations provided me with a secondary data source. Also, excluded from the sample were African migrants who are not phenotypically 'visible' as having sub-Saharan African origin, for example, Africans in Australia with Indian or European ancestry.

3.4.2 Recruiting participants

The above sampling led to the recruitment of 47 men and women who came from eight African countries, namely, Burundi, Ethiopia, Congo (DRC), Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone,

Sudan and Zimbabwe, and who were interviewed as primary participants for the study. Recruitment is the process of finding "knowledgeable informants" for the study and scheduling interviews with them (Rapley, 2007, p. 17). Recruitment logically follows after decisions have been made on the research setting(s) and the criteria for who must be included and excluded from the study. Informants can be found by the researchers themselves or by employing the help of their network. This study used both techniques. Recruitment of primary participants commenced after I had satisfied ethical requirements as approved by the university's Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee in October 2007, and was done in two phases in two different settings, namely, Sydney and C-Town.

3.4.2.1 Recruitment in Sydney

Recruitment of participants for interviews in Sydney occurred between December 2007 and August 2008. Through direct approaches and with the help of my network, a total number of twenty-four primary participants were recruited in Sydney (see Table 3.2). Although I was confident that being a black African woman living in Sydney and seeking to recruit participants within African community groups would be easy, I found that it was very difficult to convince people to be part of the study. For example, some of the people I approached told me that they were not interested because they were not refugees and my study was not applicable to them. Another challenge was that people agreed to be interviewed but then called at the last minute to cancel. But finally the breakthrough came in December 2007, two months after receiving ethics clearance for the study, through a chance meeting with the first primary participant recruited for the study, Abenet (all participants' names are pseudonyms). I stopped to have a chat with him on 24 December during the last-minute Christmas shopping rush at the local butcher's where he nearly ran down one of the customers when he went to drop off his teenage daughter who worked there as a shop assistant. I had observed the near miss and his look of surprise at the tirade of expletives that had flown from the person who almost became an accident victim. I could see he was quite

shaken and the Red P-Plate on his green Toyota Camry told me that he might be new in the country and he would fit the sample I had identified. After striking up a conversation with him with some ice-breaking comments, we found common ground about African migrant issues and that led me to ask him if he would like to be a part of a study that I was working on. He accepted. After visiting his house and interviewing him, he led me to his wife and three others in his network. Once the drought was broken other leads emerged. Yet scheduling interviews took time and people were very busy. Ending up with 24 primary participants in Sydney far exceeded the number of 10 primary participants that I had initially thought would be an ideal sample size for the study. However, the increase in number was a welcoming adjustment as it provided rich data with a broader mix of people from different African national and ethnolinguistic backgrounds.

3.4.2.2 Recruitment in C-Town

Recruitment in C-Town took place in the period from 15 to 25 September 2008 and within that period 23 participants were recruited and interviewed (see p. 98, Table 3.2). As it was with Sydney, nicely-laid recruitment plans for C-Town did not work out the way I had envisaged. Before leaving for C-Town I had obtained permission from the AMEP to be present during class time for classroom observation and recruitment during the first couple of days. Interviews were expected to follow in class time during the rest of the week. On arrival, the teachers told me that they were not comfortable with me observing their classes and would not allow their clients to be interviewed during class time. However, they agreed that I could come into class in the first instance for a few minutes and give a talk to the class so that participants could indicate interest by putting their details on paper and then I could follow them up in their homes in the evenings. I had a total of eight names to follow up. But what that meant also was that after the initial classroom visits I had whole days to myself. So, with the help of African community leaders who themselves agreed to be interviewed, I was also introduced to mothers who were home during the day and who were very happy to talk to me

then. In the final week one of the teachers who was not present that first day allowed me to observe her class (details below). Spouses of some of the lead people from the AMEP class also agreed to be part of the study and in the end I was very happy with the tally of 23 primary participants in C-Town (see p. 98, Table 3.2).

3.4.3 Interviews

Interviewing gives researchers access to experiences, observations and knowledge that people possess (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003; Weiss, 1994). The merits of interviewing in qualitative research are summed up by Weiss (1994) as follows:

> We can learn what people perceive and how they interpreted their perceptions. We can learn how events affect their thoughts and feelings. We can learn the meanings to them of their relationships, their families, their work and their selves. We can learn about all the experiences, from joy through grief that together constitute the human condition. (Weiss, 1994, p. 1)

Interviewing in qualitative research is also called 'in-depth' interviewing. In-depth interviewing involves what Rapley (2007) describes as "a style of interviewing that encourages interviewees to produce 'thick descriptions' – where interviewees are specifically encouraged, by questions and other verbal and non-verbal methods, to produce *elaborated* and *detailed* answers" (p. 15). This style departs from traditional interviewing where the interviewer is seen as detached from the interview. In this style of qualitative research, interviewers are seen as co-constructive agents of the interview together with the interviewees (Talmy, 2010). Therefore, interviewing is both process (method) and product (data) to be considered for how participants reflect on their own experiences from their infancy in their home countries compared to their circumstances at the time that I met them. Interviews with the 47 primary participants were all semi-structured and in-depth interviews. During the study I also conducted informal conversations with secondary participants, people

who were not recruited formally for the study but who had informed knowledge about African migrants.

3.4.3.1 Interviews with primary participants

The interviews were conducted in English. Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with all the 47 participants in the study. I prepared questions that guided the interviews (see Appendix I). I followed the structure of the questions in Appendix I which started with gathering demographic information about all the primary participants followed by three overarching questions adapted from Madison (2005, p. 26) as follows:

   1. Oral history question

   How was your life before you came to Australia?

   2. Personal narrative

   How has your life been so far in Australia?

   3. Topical interview

   Describe how you feel about learning English to live in Australia.

These three overarching questions were guided by the interests of the main research questions to elicit participants' responses in terms of their perspectives and experiences as migrants and L2 users of English. Based on the participants' responses to these questions and a careful listening for themes, I asked further questions and probed more deeply into participants' experiences. For example, when participants said to me in fluent English that they do not speak English, I would lead inquire further into their pre-migration backgrounds, what access they had to English and literacy in that context, and what speaking English means to them now.

All interviews were audio-recorded. Initially, I also took notes during interviews. However, because of the need to listen actively, I found that note taking tended to interrupt my listening and also interrupted the flow of participants' stories as they waited for me to complete jotting

down points. So, from the fifth interview onwards, I stopped taking notes during the interview but continued to write fieldnotes immediately after each interview.

The interviews were arranged at each participant's convenience and availability. This made most of the interview settings the homes of participants. With the exception of women with carer responsibilities who were available during week days, interviews took place mainly in the evenings and on weekends. This means that with most of the interviews were conducted in the homes of participants other family members were usually within earshot.

The interviews lasted between forty minutes and one and a half hours. All but one participant consented to have their interview audio recorded. With the one participant who did not consent to an audio-record, Vida from Sudan who lived in C-Town, I took comprehensive notes. All audio-recorded interviews were transcribed (broad transcriptions) by myself and professional transcribers (see Transcription Conventions). I checked all the interview transcripts from the professional transcribers for misunderstandings and corrected them. I tried to stay as close as possible to a verbatim representation of the talk. However, I am also conscious that "[a] transcription is always partial partly because it is an inadequate record of non-verbal aspect of the interaction … For some verbal utterances, there are simply no written translations!" as pointed out by Mason (2002, p. 77).

3.4.3.2 Informal conversations with secondary participants

Secondary participants are significant others or stakeholders who have informed knowledge. In this study I consulted with various secondary participants within my network in the Ghanaian community. Mostly these were informal conversations. I also consulted with other African and non-African professionals specialising in African settlement and people who worked as staff within various African communities. The latter is made up of social service professionals working in areas including Centrelink, Migrant Resource Centres, Ethnic Community Agencies, AMEP service providers and teachers, African community leaders and

pastors. Most of those consulted were originally from sub-Saharan Africa. Through these informal conversations I was able to generate a large amount of data which were useful for finding out about issues in African communities, and language learning in general and specific to African migrants. These provided me with their perspectives on African migrants' language and settlement needs and a holistic view of the phenomena under consideration. At the same time, it also offered me the opportunity to give non-African professional social workers insights into alternative African knowledge that may not have been considered, especially for older women African migrants who were stuck in classroom learning and seemed to be making little or no progress in their language proficiency.

3.4.4 Participant observations

Participant observation refers to "methods of generating data which entail the researcher immersing herself or himself in a research 'setting' so that they can experience and observe at first hand a range of dimensions in and of that setting" (Mason, 2002, p. 84). In this study, the "research 'setting'" for participant observation included the following: participants' homes and public locations at various interview dates; an African hair dressing salon in Sydney; an AMEP classroom, a participant's work place in the NSW country town; and formal settings for African themed public forums in Sydney including a community forum in a racism themed conference, a fire safety forum for migrants, an African Women's group forum, a Southern Sudanese Night celebration, a Burundi Association forum, an annual African women's Dinner Dance which I have been attending since 2008, a community meeting with the NSW Police Force, and a community consultation about racism. In addition, I regularly attended various African community gatherings including funerals, birthday parties, a circumcision ceremony in the Sudanese community, christenings and child dedications at churches, and marriage celebrations.

Observations in the settings identified above fall in the type identified as 'specific observation' (Duchêne, 2007). Specific observation occurs in set locations and they are usually prepared in advance by the researcher who takes detailed notes. Another type of observation is general observation. With general observation, the researcher may not have advance knowledge and may observe and produce reflective notes on such events.

During specific participant observations, I took notes of the setting, and of interactions occurring in them: who is doing what with whom, and at what time, as well as who is being excluded, how interactions outside of the setting shape the interactions taking place in the setting and whether there are hidden agendas. General observations were noted down and I recollected and reflected on events and interactions as I found them to be interesting. While these data provided background to the research, they were not specifically analysed for this thesis. Similarly, public material gathered (Section 3.4.5) also provided background knowledge about the research topic but these were not specifically discussed in the analysis chapters.

3.4.5 Gathering public material

Public material is naturally occurring macro-domain data that were collected and analysed at the beginning of the research and also during the course of the research for discursive constructions of Africans. According to Spencer (1994), ethnographic research benefits from the analysis of naturally occurring discourse in a social setting. Spencer (1994) points out also that "using analysis of discourse data to inform collection and analysis of fieldnotes and interview data" provides valuable insights into the issues of salience in the research context (p. 270). As naturally occurring data, public domain documents and materials are easy to collect and can be analysed for contextual insights before commencing fieldwork and analysis can be ongoing as more data becomes available during the course of the study. Naturally occurring data gathered in the macro-domain included government documents and

policy texts, settlement resources as well as media reports and fliers that targeted African migrants. Some of these documents and materials were already available in the early stages of the study. I analysed a small amount of these naturally occurring data which were gathered prior to fieldwork for contextual discourses and mainstream perceptions and understanding of the group being researched.

Gathering public domain material as evidence of mainstream discourses involved two main methods. One method was to actively conduct database searches in the university library and in the public media and collecting materials identified by them. African settlement issues were found with key word searches such as "regional settlement", "refugee language learning Australia", "African Australian", "sub-Saharan health Australia" or "African integration Australia". The other method was to collect any items and texts of interests about migrants in general and Africans in Australia in particular. Some of the materials were given to me by my networks in emails and some were handed to me physically because someone within my network who knew about my research interests found them important and felt I would find a use for them in my research. For example, one of my friends brought me a flier that her son had found in their letter box. This is a racist flier from a right wing political party depicting a caricature of a black African male captioned under the label of a welfare cheat.

In addition to the discourse in that data, discursive constructions of Africans were also analysed from the following sources: (a) a DVD resource produced by DIAC titled, *Australia – a new home, settlement information for newly arrived African refugees* (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2007), (b) the Australian Bureau of Statistics website, (c) the Department of Immigration website, (d) proceedings from AMEP National Forums on adult African migrant learners, (e) the Community Relations Committee's (CRC) 2003 report on settlement (Community Relations Commission, 2003), (f) Prime Minister John Howard's 2006 Australia Day Address (Howard, 2006), and (g) media reports and articles on African

settlement in Australia. Table 3.1 shows a summary of micro-domain and macro-domain data that were generated and collected for the study.

Table 3.1   Domain, methods and data types

Domain	Methods	Data Types
Macro	Gathering public documents and materials; online key word searches	Fliers, pamphlets, media discourses, political speeches etc.
Micro	Interviewing participants	Interview data – transcripts of audio recordings; fieldnotes
	Significant other conversations	Fieldnotes
	Participant observations	Fieldnotes

Data analysis is discussed in Section 3.8. Before that, I will introduce the participants (Section 3.5), then I will discuss some of the researcher/researched issues that emerged (Section 5.6) and ethical considerations for the study (Section 5.7).

3.5 Participants

As mentioned above, fieldwork in Sydney and C-Town led to a total of 47 primary participants being recruited and interviewed. Their eight African countries of birth were Burundi, Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Zimbabwe spanning the four broad geographical ranges of the continent, namely, West Africa (Liberia, Sierra Leone), Central Africa (Congo (DRC)), East Africa (Burundi, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan) and Southern Africa (Zimbabwe). Some of them also lived in a second country before resettlement in Australia as shown in Table 3.3.

Twenty-four participants were Sydneysiders, 15 female and 9 were male. Their age range was 20 to 56 years. All of them were legally resident in Australian and the majority were citizens. Their routes of entry into Australia were through the humanitarian stream (21 persons), family stream (one person), and onshore applications (two persons). They had lived in Sydney since they arrived between 1999 to 2007.

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Table 3.2   Participants by country of birth and place of residence

Country of birth	Sydneysiders		C-Towners		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Burundi	0	0	0	1	1
Ethiopia	1	3	1	0	5
Congo, DRC	1	0	1	1	3
Kenya	1	0	0	0	1
Liberia	0	1	2	0	3
Sierra Leone	6	0	0	1	7
Sudan	5	5	10	5	25
Zimbabwe	1	0	1	0	2
Total	15	9	15	8	47

Twenty-three participants were C-Towners. Fifteen were female and eight were male. Their age range was 20 to 51 years. All of them were legally resident in Australia and less than half were citizens. Their route of entry into Australia was mostly through humanitarian stream with the exception of one participant who arrived on a family visa to join her husband. They had lived in C-Town since 2001 to 2008. Some had lived in urban areas such as Perth, Sydney and Melbourne before choosing to relocate to C-Town.

Africa's colonial history has influenced most nation states' choices of national and or official languages reflected in categories used to describe them as Anglophone, Arabophone and Francophone and these in turn influence the language-in-education policies and medium of instruction. A profile of participants based on their origin country's national and or official language(s) as Anglophone, Arabophone and Francophone is provided in Table 3.3. The map of Africa below (Figure 3.1) also shows the locations of the participants' various countries of origin and other countries that have provided contexts which shaped their experiences.

Figure 3.1   Map of Africa

Table 3.3   **Demographic characteristics of participants grouped according to national and/or official language(s) of their country of birth as Anglophone, Arabophone or Francophone**

Group	Anglophone (n=18)		Arabophone (n=24)		Francophone (n=5)	
Gender	Women (n=13)	Men (n=5)	Women (n=14)	Men (n=10)	Women (n=3)	Men (n=2)
Age range (years)	20-56	27-39	20-50	24-55	29-42	27-44
Birth country	Ethiopia Liberia Sierra Leone Kenya Zimbabwe	Ethiopia Liberia Sierra Leone	Sudan*	Sudan	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Burundi Democratic Republic of the Congo
Migrated from another country	Yes (n=10)	Yes (n=5)	Yes (n=15)	Yes (n=10)	Yes (n=2)	Yes (n=2)
Country of migration other than birth country	Ghana Guinea Kenya	Guinea Kenya	Egypt Kenya Uganda	Egypt Kenya Uganda	South Africa Uganda	South Africa Tanzania
Level of education	0yrs – Univ	12yrs–Univ	0yrs – Univ	0yrs – Univ	6yrs – Univ	8yrs – Univ
Worked before migrating	Yes (n=7)	Yes (n=4)	Yes (n=9)	Yes (n=7)	Yes (n=1)	Yes (n=2)
Languages other than English spoken	Amharic Anuak Arabic Dinka Lao Kikuyu Kissi Kiswahili Kono Krio Madingo Mende Oromo Pidgin Shona Shona-Karanga Susu Themne	Amharic Anuak Kissi Kiswahili Kpelle Krio Madingo Mende Themne	Arabic Acholi Bari Dinka Madi Moro Kakwa Kiswahili Luo Luku	Arabic Acholi Bari Dinka French Madi Kakwa Kiswahili Lugbar Shilluk	Arabic French Lingala Kakwa Kikongo Kiswahili Lugbar	French Lingala Kirundi Kikongo Kiswahili Tshiluba
Pre-migration English	Yes (n=7)	Yes (n=5)	Yes (n=5)	Yes (n=7)	Yes (n=0)	Yes (n=2)
AMEP (completed or ongoing)	Yes (n=2)	Yes (n=2)	Yes (n=13)	Yes (n=5)	Yes (n=3)	Yes (n=1)
Years in Australia	1– 9	1– 9	2– 7	1-7	2– 6	0.5– 2
In paid work	Yes (n=8)	Yes (n=3)	Yes (n=2)	Yes (n=7)	Yes (n=1)	Yes (n=0)
Pre & school age children at home	Yes (n=8)	Yes (n=3)	Yes (n=15)	Yes (n=7)	Yes (n=1)	Yes (n=2)

*Sudan has had a complex colonial history with previous Turkish, Egyptian and British control (James, 2008) and the participants grew up in the period when Sudan had undergone *ta'rib* or Arabization which had influenced major language policy in Sudan (Sharkey, 2008).

Table 3.3 shows the number of the participants that came from Anglophone, Arabophone and Francophone African countries of birth and the various social characteristics in the participant sample for the present study. For example, the table shows that regardless of their countries' characteristics as Anglophone or non-Anglophone, gender shows prominence in relation to English with more men than women recording a higher percentage of having had English before migrating to Australia.

3.6 Researcher positioning

DeLyser (2001) notes that "[b]eing an insider is not simple" (p. 442). Maxwell (1998) agrees that "[y]our relationships with the people in your study can be complex and changeable, and these relationships will necessarily affect you as a 'research instrument'" (p. 86). Breen (2007) also argues for researchers to take the 'middle' ground and negotiate out of the insider-outsider dichotomy. All these thoughts mean that the researched/researcher position is complex. I started the research by assuming an insider-outsider position on a topic that was close to my heart with a people that I am linked to because of our racialised identity as black African people. Language learning and settlement is also a topic close to my heart because of my own experiences as a black African migrant woman who spoke a different variety of English from the one that I met in Australia. As a black woman and a mother, I believe my own settlement experiences and my family's history in Australia, which have been variously shaped by race, gender, language and power, qualify me as an insider and afford me insights that will help understand the researched group's emic experiences.

Yet there were times during interviews with participants that I found that I had to negotiate the insider position. That was not always easy depending on how the interviewee felt in relation to my line of questioning. This happened a few times with different participants. For example, Sylvia, a woman in her forties, felt that I had enough insider knowledge as an African woman to ask about her difficulties with getting a job. My reason for asking about

her job situation was to elicit her response, in her own words and her own voice, but she mistook my intention telling me tersely: "You know African women want to work, we want our own money". In other words, she expected that as an African woman and an insider, I had informed knowledge and did not need to inquire, and it shows also that her response would have been different if she did not consider that I had insider knowledge. On the contrary, there were instances when she saw it necessary to position me as an outsider. One example is by drawing on her refugee experiences and telling me that I did not understand her experiences of surviving war and living in a refugee camp. The extract below is an example of our conversation in which she explains how she wanted me to understand the relationship between her and the father of her six children, and the life that girls and women had faced.

Extract 3.1

VTW: Oh, okay you said I shouldn't say husband, he's not your husband?

SYLVIA: He is my husband, but we met in the bush. How can you marry in the war zone? No marriage.

VTW: So in war you just come together, you agree that you are?

SYLVIA: No, we didn't agree, we have all these children with him.

VTW: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Yeah it is ... you can't understand. You will not understand it how women ...

VTW: You have to explain to me, because I respect your position.

SYLVIA: Yeah I even though I explain it, you not understand, because it is in the war zone, girls are forced to marry, girls are whipped, you find many girls were raped. Many people died. You choose you take whatever whom yeah you don't know what will happen to you, but many people die, many women die because of marriage not a marriage, I don't know how to call it even.

VTW:	Okay so.
SYLVIA:	You live ... just you take someone if you are using, you live.
VTW:	Yeah.
SYLVIA:	Keep on living. If you want to, you, if you want your life to be there, just accept what is there.
VTW:	Okay.
SYLVIA:	Yeah.
VTW:	So is it for your safety that you find someone? You find somebody that you're together and this is the two of you and this is your children?
SYLVIA:	Yeah, yeah.
VTW:	And so you've got that security?
SYLVIA:	Yeah, no if not, God is ... God ... this just what I just say. Because many, many, many women die. Many women die, I can't explain it and you'll not understand it and then I don't think you can understand. Yeah it was very confusing.
VTW:	Yeah.
SYLVIA:	Yeah. Many ... I mean one of my friends, I have all of my friends are dead, which you are with them girls and so ... yeah it is hard to explain it, yeah. (Sylvia: 294-335)

As mentioned above (Section 3.4), before embarking on fieldwork in the second research setting, I was conscious that as a Sydneysider I was an 'outsider' in that research setting and needed to negotiate my way into a country town community with newer African migrants. One strategy I adopted for rapport building was to take along my younger son, who was then thirteen years old, during the data collection. Taking my younger son and leaving behind his older brother and my husband highlighted my identity as a mother and allowed me to show the participants how I was managing the challenge of balancing the demands of motherhood

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and work. Most of the participants commented on the difficulties of working mothers. Having my son with me was also helpful in letting them see that aspect of my insider role that drives the need to document African lived experiences to leave a legacy for future generations of Africans in Australia. At the same time, it created space for participants to extend hospitality towards us in the form of dinner invitations which I managed to squeeze in with the evening interviews and allowed me to get to know them. On these occasions my son and I interacted with the families, especially those with children around his age. Since returning we have kept in contact with those families.

Considering Watson-Gegeo's (1988) concerns about 'blitzkrieg ethnography', the term she used to describe the situation whereby a "researcher 'dive-bombs' into a setting, makes a few fixed-category or entirely impressionistic observations, then takes off again to write up the result" (Watson-Gegeo, 1988), I know that ten days of fieldwork in C-Town could be seen in those terms. The depth of rapport and relationship built with the people, however, absolves my visit from that label. When my son and I were leaving C-Town, we were told by at least three families that next time we were there we were welcome to come and stay with them. Serena in her thirties from Sudan was the most adamant:

> Extract 3.2
> When people come to talk to us in C-Town, it is always white people. We feel very proud that you are doing this work. You should come back again. When you come back you don't have to stay in the hotel. You have to come and stay with us. (Serena: fieldnotes)

Franklin and Shirley were the husband and wife team who invited us to dinner most nights and on our last evening in C-Town. When we were leaving, they told us we were always welcome in their home. Franklin explained that they had wanted to send us away with presents which would have been the traditional farewell and he said that "if we had been back

home in Sudan we will be seeing you off with a goat and someone will be carrying it with you". We all laughed. Overall, having my son was an extra cost that our family had to bear during my fieldtrip but it paid off because these were mostly family units and having him helped me not only to build rapport but also to portray me as not exempt from the struggle with juggling motherhood and work.

3.7 Ethical considerations

The conduct of social research like any other research involves ethical issues and requires meeting ethical requirements before proceeding (De Costa, 2014). For the present research, ethical issues that needed consideration were in relation to three main areas including those of informed consent, anonymity and protecting the privacy of participants, and respecting the rights of participants to choose to not participate. In this study the body concerned with monitoring ethical requirements is the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). My study satisfied all the ethical requirements set out in the ethics clearance application form and all the issues that were raised during the application process.

The written consent form for individual participants (see Appendix III) explained the research and what would be required of participants as well as what the researcher would be doing during and after the interview. It explained to participants that confidentiality would be maintained at all times and that they would be assigned pseudonyms so that data gathered would not be traceable to them. I went through individual consent forms with each participant and they all signed them before they were interviewed. All but one participant who signed the form agreed that their interview would be audio-recorded. This particular participant was apprehensive and raised issues of anonymity preferring that I take notes rather than audio-record her interview. Her concern was that certain things she had to say might have repercussions for her and her family because of the small size of the community (see Section 3.4.3).

At all times I was conscious of the ethical need to protect the identity of participants. Participants were given pseudonyms and after each interview audio-recordings were downloaded under that code name and kept in password-protected computers. Pseudonyms were also used when the data were transcribed and, similar to the audio files, all transcriptions were kept in password-protected computers.

In ethnographic research the place of interviews is also a significant site for observation. Most of the interviews took place in participants' homes in the evenings when their families were also present. Alternatively, we agreed to meet in quiet public places. This means that I was also an observer in those settings. As an observer in people's homes, I was conscious of the ethical requirements of anonymity and protecting the identity of my participants at all times. To ensure that the privacy of a participant is preserved, I refrained from taking pictures of participants, their families and their homes that could be linked back to them. In public places interviews took place in quiet areas where third persons were not within earshot.

3.8 Data analysis

In keeping with the ethnographic methodology of the study, the data gathered were primarily 'unstructured data' (Bornat, 2007) and rich for analysis. Data analysis commenced as the first few interviews were conducted and continued throughout the data collection stage. Analysis of the information gathered and generated is what gets done to the data in order to make sense of it (Maxwell, 1998). It is the process of taking the data apart and making sense of categories, themes, trends, patterns and deviations which evolve from macro-domain data, and which emerge from micro-domain data. The study generated a considerable amount of empirical data for analysis. The nature of the data, as data gathered through ethnographic methods, was rich but also challenging. I ensured that analysis was conditioned by the purpose for which data were collected, that is, the questions being addressed and the methods that enabled the sorts of data collection. The analytical procedure employed on the macro-

domain data is a broadly interpretive analytical approach and draws specifically on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is an analytical tool developed to enable the understanding of "the relations between discourse, power, dominance [and] social inequality" (van Dijk, 1993, p. 249). In regard to micro-domain data, interviews were all transcribed and analysed using a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A grounded theory approach is the analytic "method of choice for most people working with life history data and oral history data" (Bornat, 2007, p. 42). Guided by my research questions and themes including race, gender, language learning, and employment, I explored the connections between language use at the micro-level in in-depth interviews and social issues at the macro-level. For example, I read and reread transcripts for emergent themes in the interviews embedded in interviewee practices and performance and against themes in mainstream broader discourses and perceptions about black African migrants. Emergent themes were also identified in the data (Agar, 1986; Barrett, 2006; Madison, 2005). Themes were then categorised by drawing on sociocultural theories in SLL as identified in Chapter 2. For instance, with regard to the theme of language learning in relation to participants' prior education, I looked at the participants' perspectives of pre-migration and post-migration conditions that position them as L2 learners, and how they affirmed and or distanced themselves from those conditions.

3.9 Summary

The chapter has provided details of how the study was conducted. The chapter presented an overview of the paradigm and philosophical underpinnings of the study and outlined the rationale for a qualitative study with ethnography as the main approach to data gathering. The chapter included detailed descriptions of the fieldwork conducted to gather micro-domain data in two settings: Western Sydney suburban areas and C-Town, a country town in New South Wales. Details of techniques for gathering macro-domain data were also presented. The chapter concluded with a description of the methods employed in the data analysis.

The chapters that follow next are the data analysis chapters. These are divided into five chapters. Each chapter addresses one of the research questions that guided the present study.

4. African linguistic repertoires on the move

4.1 Introduction

One of the key objectives of this study is to shed light on the diverse sociolinguistic backgrounds of African migrants that inform their settlement trajectories in Australia. Linguistically, Africans are a heterogeneous group both on the continent as well as in the diaspora. As multilingual people, African migrants bring oracy in their heritage languages and socially learnt lingua francas. Some African migrants arrive with literacy and proficiency in English and a language other than English (LOTE) and have confidence in their ability to translate these resources into employment and economic independence in Australia. Others arrive without having learnt how to read and write in any language or without proficiency in English and they are usually eager to obtain these resources. In spite of their many differences, African migrants to Australian are mostly perceived as a homogeneous group in terms of language learning and settlement needs with very little regard to their linguistic differences and the linguistic resources they bring (see Chapter 2). To bridge that gap between lived heterogeneity and perceived homogeneity, this first analysis chapter draws on data gathered in the interviews with the participants (see Chapter 3) and addresses the research question:

> *RQ 1: How do African migrants' pre-migration backgrounds shape their language repertoires and English proficiency?*

The analysis reported in this chapter is focused on interpreting data gathered on participants' pre-migration language experiences through the notion of "linguistic repertoires" (Gumperz, 1964) and subsequently exploring how these play out for participants' choices to access or

not to access formal English language learning in Australia. The chapter argues that Australian language-in-migration policies which portray LOTE speakers in deficient terms (see Chapter 2) fail to do justice to the language learning and settlement needs of African people.

The chapter is organised as follows: first, it considers the research participants' pre-migration sociolinguistic backgrounds including their language learning and multilingual language usage. It highlights participants' language repertoires in relation to their sociohistorical backgrounds including their countries' language-in-education policies (Section 4.2). Next, it discusses languages in relation to participants' oracy skills and the relationships and identities they link with these languages (Section 4.3). Following that, it explores the pre-migration experiences with formal education and medium of instruction (MoI) (Section 4.4). Finally, the chapter looks at on-arrival English language proficiencies as self-assessed by the participants (Section 4.5) before outlining the four groups that emerge as analytical units for this exploration of black African migrants' language learning and settlement trajectories in Australia (Section 4.6).

4.2 Linguistic repertoires

Linguistic repertoire is a sociolinguistic concept that is typically employed in explorations of how individuals conceive and present their sets of languages and heterogeneous identities. I approached participants' repertoires from Blommaert and Backus's (2012) definition as follows: "[r]epertoires are individual, biographically organized complexes of resources, and they follow the rhythms of actual human lives" (p. 8). The origin of the concept is usually traced to John J Gumperz's (1964) notion of 'verbal repertoire' as follows:

> the totality of linguistic forms regularly employed in the course of socially significant interaction … The verbal repertoire then contains all the accepted ways of formulating

messages. It provides the weapons of everyday communication. Speakers choose among this

arsenal in accordance with the meanings they wish to convey. (Gumperz, 1964, pp. 137-138)

Three decades on, Schiffman (1996) referred to repertoire as "an individual's particular set of

skills (or levels of proficiency) that permit him or her to function within various registers of

(a) language(s)" (p. 42). More recently, Blommaert (2010) refers to "multilingual repertoire"

as resources acquired through language learning (p. 105). Used in conjunction with Dell

Hymes' notion of ethnography of communication (as noted in Section 3.3 Ethnography, the

concept enables the investigation of participants' language resources, communicative

competence, and speech communities (Blommaert & Backus, 2012)).

Language repertoires are actual and observable. As Blommaert (2010) points out, "[o]ur real

language is very much a biographical given, the structure of which reflects our own histories

and those of the communities in which we spend our lives" (p. 102). My participants come

from pre-migration African contexts in which their histories and biographies have been

inscribed with culturally diverse and dynamic multilingual norms (Bamgboṣe, 2000; Batibo,

2006; Djité, 2008; Laitin, 1992). How participants navigated those socioculturally and

historically conditioned contexts are reflected in the multilingual repertoires which they

reported to include the African languages and colonial languages (Bamgboṣe, 2000; Obeng

& Obeng, 2006) which they used before migrating to Australia. Table 4.1 provides a

summary of these characteristics.

As Table 4.1 shows, participants came from eight African countries with histories linked

mainly to European colonial regimes with the exception of Liberia, the only country with

African-American colonial links due to the country's unique history.

Table 4.1   Sociohistorical backgrounds of participants by country of origin

Country of origin	Colonial history	Number of Participants (n=47)	Languages included in the participants' multilingual repertoires
Burundi	French	1	Kirundi, Kiswahili, French
DRC	French	4	Arabic, English, French, Kakwa, Kikongo, Kiswahili, Lingala, Lugbar, Tshiluba
Ethiopia	Italian	5	Amharic, Anuak, Arabic, Dinka, English, Kiswahili, Oromo
Liberia	African-American	3	English, Kpelle, Krio, Kru, Liberian Pidgin English, Themne
Kenya	British	1	English, Kikuyu, Kiswahili
Sierra Leone	British	7	English, Kissi, Kono, Krio, Lao, Madingo, Mende, Susu, Themne
Sudan	Turkish Egyptian British	24	Acholi, Arabic, Bari, Dinka, English, Juba Arabic, Kiswahili, Kakwa, Luku, Luo, Madi
Zimbabwe	British	2	English, Shona, Shona-Karanga

The colonial influences in participants' countries have led to colonial languages entering their repertoires as shown in the column that lists participants' multilingual competencies. In this column, the languages presented are languages that are known to the participants. This is in line with the objective of showcasing the complex set of resources that participants have accumulated in various pre-migration contexts or communities in which they lived. The languages listed reflect participants' sociolinguistic backgrounds and from that perspective these may not necessarily reflect languages that are known to be languages spoken in their countries of origin. As we will see below, some participants have invested identities in languages entering their repertoire through interactions with people from countries other than their own.

Interrogating repertoires pre-supposes an understanding of a language user's knowledge and various levels of competence in language use. In the interviews, participants' responses to questions about their linguistic competencies show that these languages ranged in number from two to as many as seven languages, with the majority claiming at least three. These languages as listed in Table 4.1 include heritage languages or mother tongue languages (henceforth L1s), vernacular African languages and colonial languages. A content analysis of

our talks about their multilingual repertoire based on the modes of usage of their languages led me to identify two useful 'subcategories' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) – oracy and literacy. The participants attach oracy mainly to languages they learnt informally at home and through social interactions (Section 4.3); and they attach literacy to languages they learnt formally and which were MoIs in classroom settings (Section 4.4). I discuss these next.

4.3 Oracy and linguistic identity development

This section explores oracy or oral competence in relation to participants' language development. Oracy or oral competence is social experience in language use which is linked to speaking and listening. Languages' participants' links to oracy include their heritage languages, which is "a language spoken at home or otherwise readily available to young children, and crucially this language is not a dominant language of the larger (national) society" (Rothman, 2009, p. 156). Within that definition, in most cases the heritage language is also the L1 learnt in the home domain while the rest of their vernacular African languages are learnt and used with people from various ethnic communities within which they interacted. Even so, and as we see below, some participants lacked oracy in their heritage languages and resorted to L2 use in proto-typical L1 domains. But, first, a look at what participants' revealed about their heritage languages is warranted.

Primarily, the participants' remarks about their heritage languages showed the importance they attached to these languages as the main connection between them and the people from the same ethnic group. They elaborated on the strong sense of identity it gives them, as typified in Extract 4.1 from Alice's interview data. Alice is in her thirties from Ethiopia. She speaks two languages, Anuak and Amharic. Anuak is her L1 and Amharic is one of the three official languages in Ethiopia. Alice went to school up to primary level and Amharic was the MoI at that level. She considers Anuak her ethnic language and the language to which her

identity is attached and Amharic as a school language in which she learnt to read and write as required by the authorities.

Extract 4.1

VWT: You speak Amharic and Anuak. How did you learn them?

ALICE: Anuak my language. Amharic not my language. Amharic for school, Anuak my language. (Alice: 115-117)

The heritage language provides a link by which people carve their history as individuals, and identify their place in community and in society at large. Participants told life stories surrounding their heritage languages which depict a mixture of bonding and exclusion. Some of the participants told stories showing the L1 as a means of bonding with others in their L1 community and others told life stories in which their L1 was fuel for igniting old rivalries even in the diaspora. For example, a participant (Violet) talked about how her L1 enabled her to live within her L1 community in a different African country before migrating to Australia. Violet is in her forties. Her L1 is Acholi and she comes from the Acholi ethnic group in Sudan within which she grew up. When war broke out in Sudan she and her children fled into Uganda where she was able to mingle within the Acholi community. Whilst in Uganda, she had the opportunity of attending adult education with both English and Acholi as MoIs.

Extract 4.2

VWT: Okay. So in what language did they teach you in the [adult education] school?

VIOLET: In the school, English and our own language, Acholi.

VWT: Acholi in Uganda?

VIOLET: In Uganda, yes.

VWT: So Acholi is a Ugandan language or Sudanese?

VIOLET: Acholi also in Uganda, also in Sudan. (Violet: 84-90)

On the contrary, another participant, Osman's experience with his heritage language was not so positive. Osman, from Ethiopia and of Anuak heritage, found this out when on arrival in Australia his heritage language linked him to people of Anuak heritage from Sudan. Although he was from a different country, his heritage identity did not make him welcome in this group and he had to be resettled in a different city.

> Extract 4.3
> I'm from the Anuak tribe in Ethiopia. The majority of the refugee at that time was the Dinkas from the Sudan. […] They contacted the Sudanese community to receive me. And then the Sudanese community in [name of city], they said that ah we are not getting along with the Anuaks, we don't want him to come to us. (Osman: 192-204)

While the heritage language was very important for all the participants, not all of them were able to communicate sufficiently in them as an L1. Some of the participants have higher levels of oral competence in their L2 than their L1. Daniel's story best illustrates this point. Daniel is in his 20s and from Sudan. Below is the conversation we had about his L1.

> Extract 4.4
> VWT: So which languages are you speaking from Sudan?
>
> DANIEL: Yeah in Sudan I speak English, but I also speak Arabic.
>
> VWT: Arabic and English. You don't have a…
>
> DANIEL: Well I have a, I have a mother tongue which is Dinka that I don't speak, that's a shame. So I was kind of spoiled@@@@@
>
> VWT: Wow.
>
> DANIEL: And yeah we have this, my mother tongue which is Dinka.
>
> VWT: Your mother tongue is Dinka?
>
> DANIEL: Yeah I understand Dinka but I can't speak it and that's a challenge I need to. I'm trying hard now with my aunty, and my aunty's kids, in one more year I'll be alright, yeah so. (Daniel: 145-158)

As the above extract shows, Daniel mentions English as the language he speaks and then Arabic. When I prompted him for his heritage language, he explains what it is but that he has no oracy in it. That is in line with Gramley and Pätzold's (2004) observation that some African English speakers "have grown up hearing and using English daily, and speak it as well as, or maybe even better than, their ancestral language" (p. 316). As Daniel's example shows, he did not feel the need to learn his heritage language to signal group identity in his home country but in the context of settlement he finds that he needs to have competence in his heritage language to signal solidarity and effect belonging within the community. Therefore, Daniel's pressing language need in Australia is to learn his heritage language to allow bonding and belonging within his ethnic community in Australia.

Finally, exploring oral repertoires helped to unravel the rich oral tradition backgrounds of these participants which may be hidden due to dominant monolingual ideologies. I will use the linguistic repertoires of two participants, Amina and Fatima, to showcase some of the themes that emerged in our talk about their languages. I chose Amina's story because she speaks the most languages, seven in total; and Fatima's story provides an example of the importance of considering peoples' multilingual repertoires.

Amina is a woman in her fifties from Sierra Leone. The seven languages she speaks include her L1, Themne, five community languages (Susu, Lao, Kono, Madingo, Krio) but shies away from saying that she speaks English. She elaborated on her linguistic repertoire as I sought clarification on how she learnt her languages which I mistakenly thought were only four in number.

> Extract 4.5
> VWT: How did you learn these languages, the four languages you speak?
>
> AMINA: I can speak more than that, I, I'm just=
>
> VWT: How many?
>
> AMINA: =I'm just, I can speak Krio.

VWT:	Krio, Susu, Lao, Kono, Madingo.
AMINA:	Yeah.
VWT:	Krio, Madingo?
AMINA:	Yeah I can speak Themne.
VWT:	Themne. And you can speak English?
AMINA:	Not really because I'm not educated@@@@@@@

(Amina: 87-97)

Amina learnt all the languages during social interactions in Sierra Leone. Being from Themne ethnicity, she acquired Themne in the home environment when she was a child. As she was growing up she learnt Krio – the English Creole and main lingua franca in Sierra Leone – and used both Krio and Themne at home. Amina learnt English in the formal setting of school. When she went to school English and Krio were the MoIs in class but on the school grounds she used Themne and Krio. Amina attended school only up to primary level and so did not have the opportunity to develop literacy skills in English. After leaving school, she married a Themne man. They mainly spoke Themne and Krio at home and when they started having children they maintained those two languages in the home. Later, Amina started her own petty trading business. That style of work became a major source of the four new languages she learnt – Susu, Lao, Kono and Mandingo – as these were languages she used as a trader and business owner when she interacted with customers and suppliers from those language and ethnic backgrounds in her country.

Amina's linguistic repertoire demonstrates that languages are learned in "specific social arenas, with specific tasks, needs and objectives defined, and with specific interlocutors" (Blommaert & Backus, 2011, p. 21). The extract shows that each of the languages in Amina's repertoire is very important to her with specific significance in phases and aspects of her life. Like most participants in the study, she explicitly names their languages individually rather than providing a numerical representation of their languages. In these talks about their

languages, participants also spelled out when they learnt them and with whom they used these languages. However, when it comes to English the story is different. Amina's evaluation of her English is typical of the participants who have no or low schooling and who would only claim oral competence in other languages but not English because they associate competence in English with education and literacy. Even after so many years in Australia and obvious use of English – as all interviews were conducted in English – they still shy away from claiming oracy in English with the proclamation "I'm not educated", which is most often accompanied by laughter. In the following we will look at Fatima and how she talked about her languages.

Fatima in her thirties is an Ethiopian woman of Oromo ethnicity. She speaks five languages: Oromo, Amharic, Dinka, Arabic and Kiswahili. Fatima was brought up with Oromo as a child and she spoke Oromo in the home. When Fatima went to school, Amharic, one of Ethiopia's national languages, was the MoI. In school, she was learning to read and write in Amharic but her schooling was cut short at primary level when she was about ten years old and had to flee her country due to civil unrest. During the flight out of Ethiopia, her family became separated and she ended up in Kenya without her parents and sought refuge there in the Kakuma refugee camp. Initially, Fatima lived in the camp as an orphan and mingled with other people. During that time, Fatima learnt Kiswahili which was the lingua franca used by the different people with whom she lived and whose own languages were not mutually intelligible. After about ten years in the camp, she started seeing a Sudanese man of Dinka ethnicity. She learnt to speak Dinka when she moved to settle with him in the Sudanese community in the camp. Fatima and the man started a family and they had three children. She spoke Oromo with her children. When they developed serious domestic issues in their relationship, Fatima and her children were moved into a women's shelter within the camp for protection. Whilst there, Fatima learnt to speak Arabic with the other women who were also in the protection program. However, when I asked her about her languages, her first response

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was Amharic, the language national language of Ethiopia. Below is the conversation we had about her languages:

Extract 4.6

VWT:	What languages do you speak?
FATIMA:	Amharic, Amharic.
VWT:	Amharic, only Amharic? Do you speak another language?
FATIMA:	Yeah I speak Amharic, and I speak Oromo language.
VWT:	Oromo?
FATIMA:	Yeah. Speak Kiswahili, Kenyan language.
VWT:	Yeah.
FATIMA:	And a Sudanese language.
VWT:	Which Sudanese language?
FATIMA:	Dinka and Arabic.
VWT:	Wow. Wow. You speak all those languages?
FATIMA:	Mm.
VWT:	How did you learn all these. You didn't add English, do you speak English?
FATIMA:	Some, not …
VWT:	So what are you speaking now?
FATIMA:	Not good, good English.
VWT:	Okay. How did you learn all these languages?
FATIMA:	Amharic is my trad[ition] is the same in my country.
VWT:	Okay.
FATIMA:	Kiswahili I learn in Kenya, I speaking for 10 years.
VWT:	Yeah.
FATIMA:	Refugee.
VWT:	And Dinka?
FATIMA:	Dinka, I married Sudanese.
VWT:	Okay. And Arabic?

FATIMA: Arabic also I learn in, there is like people at communication, yeah. If you have problem you can stay there … protection.

VWT: In which country?

FATIMA: It's Kenya.

VWT: Kenya?

FATIMA: Yes, Kakuma refugee camp.

VWT: That's where you learned Arabic?

FATIMA: Yes. Kenya. And Dinka and Arabic. (Fatima: 20-54)

The above conversation with Fatima is quite fascinating because delving into her repertoires helped to unravel her lived realities as an Ethiopian national and her multiple relationships with people of other nationalities with whom she had interacted in the different languages. However, prior to getting that far, we see that while Fatima clearly has a multilingual repertoire she took a monolithic approach to answering my question about her languages. As the extract shows, her initial response to my question about her languages yielded only a singular language – Amharic, one of the three national/official languages of Ethiopia, her country of origin which she repeats and then stops to give me a turn. That nationalistic approach would have rendered the rest of her languages and associated identities invisible. However, in line with the study's design and style of interviewing, to elicit in-depth responses from participants to produce 'thick descriptions' (see Chapter 3), I persist and ask whether she speaks another language. For the third time she mentions Amharic before adding her L1 which she simply refers to as "Oromo language". By mentioning Amharic as her language and not her L1, Oromo, we see evidence of a monolithic and nationalistic view she has adopted to talk about the language she speaks. Further evidence of this is shown in how she refers to the rest of her languages, e.g. "Speak Kiswahili, Kenyan language". However, that ideology comes unstuck when, commenting on the supposed one language that she

speaks from Sudan, "And a Sudanese language", she produces two language names "Dinka and Arabic".

To understand the contradictions between what is clearly Fatima's multilingual realities and a monolingual ideology, I found useful the concept of 'classification identification' (van Leeuwen, 1996). According to the theory, people's identities are defined "in terms of the major categories by means of which a given society or institution differentiates between classes of people" (van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 54). Using a payroll form from Cardiff University, Machin and van Leeuwen (2010) draw on the concept to demonstrate how filling out official forms coerces people into declaring a single identity to describe who they are. They argue that such classifications, which satisfy state and institutional requirements and the promotion of 'nationality', have become normative and overwrite the 'diversity' that is prevalent in the current global migration trends. That is exactly what we see with Fatima. As the primary applicant in the migration processes, she may have had several experiences of filling in such forms requiring her to state her national identity. She may have also viewed my role as a researcher as part of this apparatus and therefore felt that she needed to give the best response in line with what is provided on her official documents. Hence her choice of "Amharic is my trad[ition] the same in my country" may be the language she has identified to best fit such monolithic expectations. Additionally, Fatima's decision to name a major language first may also be influenced by possibilities for service delivery as has been reported elsewhere (see Borland & Mphande, 2006; Musgrave & Hajek, 2013) in studies of linguistic demography of Africans in Melbourne. Nevertheless, this extract provides evidence of multiple languages in which participants have oracy and which complicate a monolithic view of language based on country of origin.

The section has used the notion of repertoires to highlight participants' perspectives about informally learned languages – languages learnt through social interactions and in which they

mainly claim oral competence and various relationships and identities. The section has shown that oracy is mainly attached to their heritage languages and the rest of the languages learnt through social participation. Delving into repertoires also helped to showcase some of the languages of importance to participants' identities and which enrich their histories but may be hidden due to monolingual ideologies informing contexts which do not acknowledge such realities for them.

The next section will explore participants' perspectives, this time in regard to languages in their repertoire to which they attach literacy and formal learning and use.

4.4 Education, literacy and formal language learning

Western-type formal education in a second or foreign language provides the tool for gauging the presence of languages in participants' repertoires to which they draw links with formal language learning (see Chapter 1). Education and literacy in those languages that are MoIs also provide a major tool for "induction into highly valued regimes of knowledge, particular identities and particular ways of being a member of society" (Blommaert, Creve, & Willaert, 2006, p. 6). These are also the languages that are perceived to index literacy and class status (as we see above with Amina). Therefore, in the discussion here, participants' repertories and literacy are considered in relation to the MoIs at their highest level of educational attainment and based on which four groups emerge (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2   Medium of instruction and education (N=47)

Medium of instruction	Secondary school or higher	Elementary school or less	Total
English	Group 1: (++) N=21	Group 3: (+-) N=5	26
Language other than English	Group 2: (-+) N=7	Group 4: (--) N=14	21
Total	28	19	47

Table 4.2 shows how the four groups were identified in relation to the categories of MoI and education and the number of participants that make up each of the four groups identified. In

the two sections that follow, I will provide a general description of what participants said in relation to their levels of education and MoI. Like their oral repertoire, these repertoires attached literacy and will provide further insights into the diverse sociohistorical backgrounds that have shaped their lives. Then I will look at how these link to their self-reported English proficiency claims on arrival in Australia (Section 4.5).

4.4.1 English as Medium of Instruction

English was MoI (see Table 4.2) for the 26 participants (Group 1 and Group 3) who came mainly from countries where English has a second language or foreign language status. For these participants, there is an entire range of competence in relation to their instruction in English. As summarised in Table 4.2, Group 1 is made up of 21 participants who had secondary level or above schooling before coming to Australia and Group 3 is made up of five participants with zero to primary level schooling. The participants with zero to primary school level education explained to me that their English was not good because they lacked formal education, as in the following example: "[I do] Not really [know English] because I'm not educated@@@@@@@@". In another example, one participant explained that with her level of education she was able to acquire competencies in reading and writing but did not have oral competence in the language: "Yeah I was able to write and read but to express myself, it was difficult, like to express something in English. […] I was not used to using English for communication". For these participants, limited competencies in English are related to limited access to interactions in English. English proficiency is thus embedded in much deeper issues, such as gendered access to education for women.

Participants who had secondary level and above qualifications in English as the MoI can be divided further into two sub-groups. One group came from contexts in which English was spoken as a second language (ESL) and another group came from contexts in which English was spoken as a foreign language (EFL). Before going any further, I must hasten to add that

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these categories are used loosely here. This is because in this study one of the key objectives is to shed light on participants' realities rather than attach them to imposed categories. Elsewhere (e.g. Chapter 5 and Chapter 6) the ESL and EFL distinctions have been characterised by the participants' practices rather than their contexts. Having said that, those in the first group usually traced their English all the way to instruction received in primary school which they built on further, as the below examples show:

Extract 4.7

VENUS: I did English in school, that's what we did in school.

VWT: Okay. So you studied English from what, primary?

VENUS: From primary school up to, in secondary school. (Venus: 74-76)

Extract 4.8

VWT: You speak very good English. Did you study your English here or where did you learn to speak English?

SALLY: In Zimbabwe, yes, we were colonised by the British so everything we did we used English. Right from the beginning of school, we started to learn English. So that is how I got to learn English. (Sally: 53-59)

The second extract also shows one participant indexing her country's colonial links and how her country as an ESL context has influenced her competence in English.

Those in the second sub-group came from predominantly EFL contexts. In such contexts, languages other than English (LOTEs) as the MoI was available for their secondary and higher level education. However, due to the global reach of English, the micro policies of some of these participants and their families led them to opt for education with English as the MoI. Participants in this group came mainly from Sudan, a country with a complex language situation whereby for some parts of the country at some times and for some people, English could be considered a second language as the below extract shows.

Extract 4.9
In Sudan, I went to nursery school and that was a private school, it's a British private school and it's mainly English. […] When I finished my high school I had to be sent off there [Kenya] because when we went to university, the government came out with a policy about Arabisation that all universities have to be in Arabic, so I became disadvantaged, because I was in English all along. So everyone at my time got disadvantaged. But then, lucky enough, because a lot of them are from good families so they decided to send their kids abroad, and that's how I came to Kenya. I lived in Kenya for about 10 years. (Daniel: 48-50 & 92-101)

Daniel was born in a middle class African family in the 1970s in Sudan. His father was a university lecturer and his mother was a school teacher. At the time of his schooling, the Arabisation system he refers to meant government prescribed Arabic stream schools were the default schools. These existed along with private schools such as the English stream he mentions. Daniel's parents chose to educate him and his three sisters in the English stream right from nursery through to secondary school in Sudan before sending them overseas for tertiary education in Kenya.

For some participants, their introduction to English MoI education only started when they entered high school. The next quote is from Franklin, also from Sudan, who began his schooling with Arabic as the MoI until his family decided that he should enter the English stream for his secondary education.

Extract 4.10
Because I was studying by then in Arabic school, and then all of a sudden when I was entering the high school I was accepted in one of the British what, erm school in Juba and then by then coming from Arabics pattern, I what all that I know is yes and no. And the first time doing the interview of course, I don't even know how to write my name in English. And the forms were given to us to me and what, but I couldn't do anything. So I left the form and then I said I don't want to school. Then he [father] say you must learn English, because if you learn English, you study in that school, you will have no problem anywhere in the world. And

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I said but father I can't do it, I didn't study it, and after all this the language of the white people. He say he said no. English is the one ruling the world now, so you must like English. Then I say oh okay I'll try my best. […] he's really very encouraging father and he was supporting me, keep going, keep going, keep going. You will learn it, you will do it. Yeah. (Franklin: 248-274)

As Franklin explains, his primary education was with Arabic as the MoI although that changed at the insistence of his father. While he was initially hesitant to learn in the English stream because of identity reasons, at his father's insistence and insight on the global importance of English he accessed education in English and achieved competence in English. Franklin went on to study at tertiary level in English and is forever grateful for his father's insights.

> Extract 4.11
> And one of the things still that I appreciate him and or like him of course he gave me life, but the English I am speaking now is through him. He was the one who encourage me to speak this English, because I remember one of, some of his words that English is a key for what, to open all the doors in the world. (Franklin: 240-246)

For the rest of the participants in this group, their introduction to English as a MoI came as a result of moving from their country to access education in another country. Mark and Vida are two such examples. Both of them come from Sudan and had primary education with Arabic as the MoI. During their secondary and tertiary education both of them were living in Uganda where English was the MoI at those levels. Mark also studied in the US where he and Vida further honed their competencies in English before returning to Uganda.

The importance of English as a MoI for some participants cannot be overemphasised. Indeed, three of the five participants from Ethiopia were very much involved in the politics of their

country. They explained language-in-education policies they helped to implement with English as the MoI for their ethnic group. Below is what one of them had to say:

> Extract 4.12
> Our region is called Gambela. […] English language starts from year one as a subject and up to year six. After year six, all the subjects will be changed to English. […] So in our region what we did, we started from year one up to year four all subjects have to be in Anuak. After year four English will be a medium of instruction in all subjects up till year twelve. […] so we want to make advantage of English so that our children will be far more better in English that the others, than the rest of the Ethiopians. (Obi: 518-545)

The foregoing overview of participants' relationships with English as the MoI at their highest level of education shows complexities and insights into differences in practical use of English that people have acquired before migrating as well as micro- and macro-policies that influenced how English entered their repertoires. In what follows next I look at what is revealed for the participants who were educated through a LOTE as the MoI.

4.4.2 LOTE as Medium of Instruction

A language other than English (LOTE) as the MoI-influenced education describes 21 participants, Group 2 and Group 4, and they came mainly from countries where English has a foreign language status. For these participants, there is an entire range of competence in relation to their instruction in Amharic, Arabic and French. The participants with low or no secondary education were mainly from Sudan and Ethiopia where Amharic and Arabic were the MoIs respectively, at primary school level. However, one participant is from Congo (DRC) but her upbringing included early schooling in Sudan. Unlike their counterparts in the previous group who had no or low schooling (Group 3), the 14 participants being discussed here as Group 4 were unabashed about claiming competence in various LOTEs and including them in their repertoires. Indeed, none of them were found to mention a lack of or low level of education as a way of explaining their competency levels in each of these languages when

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we talked about them as belonging to their repertoires. Instead, they mostly talked in relation to what they were able to do in relation to literacy in these languages as shown in the above examples (see Alice and Fatima). A further example comes from my conversation with Timothy, in his early thirties with up to primary level schooling in Sudan, about his competence in Arabic.

> Extract 4.13
> VWT: But you could write, read and write Arabic?
>
> TIMOTHY: Arabic yeah. […] Because I know in Arabic we use dictionary, because we
>   translate Arabic to Arabic again, I know how to use dictionary. (Timothy:
>   402-403 & 415-417)

Similarly, and not surprisingly, the participants who were educated at higher levels also talked about their literacy abilities and competence in these languages of education. For instance, one participant in her twenties and originally from Sudan explains her competence in Arabic as follows:

> Extract 4.14
> VWT: Can you write in Arabic too?
>
> MARINA: Yeah in Sudan I'm very clever in Arabic. In Sudan if I'm in Sudan like
>   maybe now I am in uni. Because all my friends that were with me in the same
>   class, they've been in uni now. (Marina: 363-367)

The extract below is from Genevieve, a woman in her forties who comes from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

> Extract 4.15
> We learned French, I learned I was, I started my school with primary school [in French] in the
> Belgian school. Then the president of my country didn't want us to be in connection with
> foreigners and outsiders, he wanted us to use locally, everything locally our own schools. And
> then my father put me in another [French medium] school but is was a good school because

they wanted the best education for us. And then I finished my high school, I did university [in French]. I studied communication, journalism and public relations and I got a bachelor degree in communication. (Genevieve: 29-39)

The repertoires of participants show patterns and differences in how the participants related to languages learnt through social interactions and languages which were MoIs at their highest level of education. The above also indicate that the levels of English competence they arrive with for settlement will differ, too. In the next section, I explore details about participants' self-assessments of the English proficiencies they claim in Australia as a result of pre-migration experiences of education with or without English.

4.5 On-arrival English proficiencies

With the social turn in SLA theorising, research has moved away from the view of an 'objective' measurement of L2 speaker proficiency (see Chapter 2). However, 'objective' measurement continues to form the core element of "administrative and bureaucratic apparatuses all over the world, and they operate with exceptional power in fields such as education, labor and migration" (Blommaert & Backus, 2011, p. 24). Nevertheless, recent accounts informed by poststructural theorising in SLA research explore proficiency in relation to the L2 speaker's 'subjective' construal of their abilities in the target language (see Chapter 2). In these studies, L2 users' personal stories and lived experiences are explored to show people's accounts of how they 'cross' into other languages and cultures (Rampton, 1995), 'pass' as speakers with 'native-like' and 'authentic' proficiency in an L2 (Piller, 2002b), or invest in L2 learning to access powerful networks (Heller, 1995; Norton, 2000). The consensus in these studies is that proficiency is 'interactive' and there is no 'objective' measurement of proficiency because it is assessed differently by different people, and people assess their proficiency according to what they are able to do with their languages (Piller, 2002a). Drawing on the poststructural notion of subjective proficiency, this section explores

participants' perceptions of their on-arrival English proficiency. Having an understanding of these will pave the way to further understand their English language learning successes and failures, and their struggle with the language, identities and power inequities in their settlement in Australia.

During the interviews, I asked all participants about what they thought of the English they arrived with and whether they thought it was sufficient for them to get by in Australia. Their responses ranged on a continuum from the highest level of English proficiency expressed by the attribute 'perfect', to the lowest level of English proficiency expressed as 'no English' and 'no school'. Adopting the *etic* categorization from ABS's four-point scale of self-rated English proficiency for population and census data – Speaks English – 'Very well', 'Well', 'Not well' and Not at all' – I organised the attributes that characterised participants' *emic* views of their English proficiency as shown in Table 4.3. In doing so, I do not claim Table 4.3 to be a systematic measure of English proficiencies but rather that it helps to provide a rough overview of participants' self assessments of their on-arrival English proficiency (see also Piller, 2002a, p. 103).

Table 4.3   Participants' self-rated on-arrival English proficiency

Speaks English	Attribute
Very Well	*"perfect", "extremely well", "very well"*
Well	*"ready", "well", "good", "no problem"*
Not Well	*"a little bit", "not really", "not good", "not educated"*
Not At All	*"can't speak", "can't understand", "no English, no school"*

From these attributes the four groups of participants, identified according to their pre-migration educational attainment and MoI, were categorised into two broad evaluative categories: Speaks English – "Very Well", "Well"; and Speaks English "Not Well" and "Not At All".

Table 4.4   **Groups of participants by educational background, MoI and self-rated English proficiency**

Groups	Speaks English			
	Very well or well	%	Not well or not at all	%
Well-educated groups (n=28)				
Group 1: English MoI	21	44.7		
Group 2: LOTE MoI			7	14.9
Low or no schooling groups (n=29)				
Group 3: English MoI			5	10.6
Group 4: LOTE MoI			14	29.8
Total	**21**	**44.7**	**26**	**55.3**

Table 4.4 shows the four groups identified in relation to level of education and MoI and their self-assessment of the English proficiency they arrived with in Australia. Group 1 includes 21 participants (10 men and 11 women). These evaluated their abilities in English on arrival as 'Very well or well'. All of them come from English speaking African countries or have lived in English speaking African countries. All of them are bilingual in English and one or more other languages. All of them define themselves in relation to their English abilities, their educational credentials by reference to English being the main MoI, and by their countries' colonial ties and familiarity with these links to Western English speaking countries. They reported that they used English formally at their highest level of education and some used English exclusively in work situations. All the participants in this group felt that their English language proficiency was high enough to settle in Australia at an adequate level.

Group 2 includes seven participants (three men and four women). They assessed their English on arrival as 'Not very well or not at all'. All of them come from non-English speaking African countries, but rather from Francophone and Arabophone countries where they were mainly educated through the medium of a LOTE. They reported that English was taught as a subject at school but they did not use it outside of class or in social interactions. Some of them had learnt English informally during transit in English speaking countries but said they did not have the level of competence they felt was needed to claim proficiency in English. All

the participants in this group felt that they needed to improve their English language proficiency in order to apply the skills and qualifications learnt previously in a LOTE in the new setting.

Group 3 includes five participants (all of them are women). They assessed their English on arrival as 'Not very well or not at all'. All of them come from English speaking African countries or have lived for extended periods in English speaking African countries where English was the main medium of communication. All of them said that their level of education (no schooling or only primary level schooling) did not allow sufficient development in English for them to claim proficiency in it. Although they had used varieties of English such as Krio and English mixed with other lingua francas, on arrival in Australia they felt they did not have enough English. Embedded in this group's experiences of education is the issue of gender as a factor that impinges on these women's access to schooling.

Group 4 includes 14 participants (4 men and 10 women). They all assessed their English as 'Not very well or not at all'. All of them come from African countries where a LOTE (Amharic, Arabic) is the main MoI used at the primary level of schooling. Only one participant in this group (Ahmed) assessed his English proficiency as a "little bit". He had learnt it informally during travels to English speaking countries for commercial purposes.

> Extract 4.16
> Actually I learnt English back home when I was working. Because I used to move a lot. I learn English just in the street. Because I was in Uganda, I was in Kenya and both of them they talk English. They talk some languages and English as well. So I learn Kiswahili and English. My language is Arabic and then Kiswahili and a little bit English. (Ahmed: 20-28)

Ahmed is from Sudan. He grew up with Arabic and went to school up to primary level with Arabic as the MoI. On leaving school, he began his working life doing odd jobs before going

on to start his own small retail business, which he ran for fifteen years. His business had entailed frequent travel for "goods" in the two countries where he learnt both languages informally. Even so, in the extract above, he found it necessary to qualify his proficiency in English as "a little bit". Yet he did not use such qualification for Kiswahili which he named after his heritage language, Arabic. Ahmed's comment raises two interesting points. Firstly, he held different views about English in comparison to the African languages in his repertoire. For example, he had learnt both English and Kiswahili on the streets, yet he found it necessary to define the extent to which he had proficiency in English although he did not do the same with Kiswahili which he named after Arabic, his heritage language. Given the multilingual context of learning and use of English he may have often used code-switching and borrowing (Myers-Scotton, 1993, 2006) between his various languages, something that is not possible in a monolingual Australian context.

In sum, focusing on differences in pre-migration educational opportunities and the status of English or a LOTE as the main MoI at their highest level of education in their origin countries or countries in which these were attained, it is possible to distinguish four groups as follows:

Group1 – migrants from Anglophone African countries who have completed secondary education or above;

Group 2 – migrants from non-Anglophone African countries who have completed secondary education or above;

Group3 – migrants from Anglophone African countries who have had no or low schooling; and

Group 4 – migrants from non-Anglophone African countries who have had no or low schooling.

Each of these groups is the analytical focus of the four chapters that follow. In these chapters the participants' backgrounds, self-reported evaluations of on-arrival English proficiencies, and discourses surrounding their language learning and work situations will illuminate the differences and similarities in their beliefs and realities about their language learning successes, struggles and negotiation of settlement in Australia.

4.6 Summary

The foregoing exploration of the participants' linguistic repertoires, level of education and MoIs sheds some light on their diverse language backgrounds and the languages in which they reported having both oracy and literacy skills. The chapter demonstrates that, growing up in African contexts with a variety of sociocultural, political and historical conditions, these men and women have used multilingual repertoires in which they have communicative competences and forged relationships with interactions in their various languages.

This chapter has looked at participants' pre-migration language practices and the linguistic resources they accumulated as a result of those practices. The Western monolithic perception that informs how Africans people are seen tends to simplify the inherent diverse sociolinguistic backgrounds that have shaped African migrant realities and their repertoires of languages, as the chapter demonstrates. It has drawn on the concept of linguistic repertoire and underlying notions to explore participants' pre-migration linguistic resources in terms of how they evaluate their languages in relation to oracy and also literacy. The chapter found that L1s and African languages were mostly oral and were learnt in social interactions that the participants engaged with. Colonial and foreign languages are associated with literacy and these are privileged over African languages due to the status positions the participants index in these pre-migration contexts.

CHAPTER 5

5. Well-educated through English medium

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the language learning and settlement experiences of the category of participants identified in the matrix in Chapter 4 as: well-educated through an English medium of instruction. Specifically, it constitutes an inquiry into the effects that a high level of education has on English language learning and the transformation of educational credentials obtained in English into the Australian context. In doing so, the chapter also addresses the second research question:

> *RQ 2: What are the English language learning experiences and settlement trajectories of well-educated migrants from Anglophone African countries who arrive with English proficiency?*

The category identified as well-educated in an English medium and who arrived with proficiency in English is made up of 21 participants (10 men and 11 women). They had received education from Anglophone[2] African countries where English is the MoI at the highest level of education they attained. As would be expected, the participants in this category all indicated that their repertoires included LOTEs and English on arrival in Australia. Table 5.1 provides a summary of the participants' socio-biographic details which include LOTEs, the highest level of education received with a LOTE as the MoI and their self-rated proficiency in English on arrival in Australia.

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[2] Anglophone is used loosely here and refers to countries in which the participants studied at secondary or post-secondary level with English as MoI.

Table 5.1 Sociobiographic information about the participants (N=21)

Participant (age)	Country of origin/transit	Year of arrival in Australia	Languages other than English (LOTE)	Highest Education attained in English as MoI	Self-rated English proficiency on arrival in Australia
Sylvia (42)	Sudan/ Kenya	2005	Acholi, local Arabic	High school graduate	"good"
Vida (50)	Sudan/ Uganda	2006	Kakwa, Acholi, Juba Arabic	Vocational diploma	"very well"
James (39)	Sudan/ Egypt	2001	Madi, Arabic, French	University graduate	"very well"
Daniel (29)	Sudan/ Kenya	2002	Kiswahili, Arabic	University graduate	"very well"
Franklin (41)	Sudan/ Egypt	2003	Bari, Lugbar, Kakwa, Shilluk, Arabic	University graduate	"good"
Shirley (36)	Sudan/ Egypt	2003	Bari, Arabic	High school	"good"
Mark (55)	Sudan/ Uganda	2006	Madi, Acholi, Kiswahili, Arabic	Post-graduate degree	"very well"
Benjamin (51)	Sudan/ Kenya	2001	Madi, Arabic	Technical diploma	"good"
Venus (42)	Liberia/ Guinea	2004	Themne, Krio, Kru	Vocational diploma	"very well"
Ruth (38)	Liberia/ Guinea	2006	Pidgin (English)	Vocational diploma	"no problem"
Abiba (26)	Sierra Leone /Guinea	2003	Themne, Krio	High school	"no problem"
Lucy (26)	Sierra Leone /Guinea	2001	Mende, Krio	High school	"no problem"
Nina (30)	Sierra Leone /Guinea	2002	Kissi, Krio	High school	"well"
Daisy (48)	Kenya	1999	Kikuyu, Kiswahili	Vocational diploma	"well"
Sally (38)	Zimbabwe	2002	Shona	University graduate	"perfect"
Veronica (30)	Zimbabwe	2007	Shona-Karanga	University graduate	"very well"
Abenet (38)	Ethiopia/ Kenya	2004	Anuak, Amharic	Trained teacher	"very well"
Obi (39)	Ethiopia/ Kenya	2003	Anuak, Amharic	University graduate	"perfect"
Osman (39)	Ethiopia/ Kenya	1999	Anuak, Amharic	University graduate	"good"
Lewis (27)	Liberia/ Guinea	2005	Kpelle, Pidgin (English)	High school	"ready"
Eric (30)	Sierra Leone /Guinea	2007	Mende, Krio, Madingo, Themne	University	"extremely well

For the participants in the this group, in the African countries where they lived, studied and held jobs, English is the 'literary language' that people identify with as well as the official language, or one of the official languages, around which their daily lives revolved. It is not surprising that all of them self-rated their English highly and perceived their English as ready for life in Australia, as another Anglophone country. Even so, the data analysis of their answers about their English proficiency shows differences in their claim to English ownership depending on its use in the wider communities from which they came. A common theme that emerged in their talk about their English reveals that what they found in Australia was quite different from their expectations. Specifically, all my participants discovered at one point or another that the value of linguistic repertoires does not travel well. As Blommaert (2003) points out:

> Whenever discourses travel across the globe, what is carried with them is their shape, but their value, meaning or function do not often travel along. They are a matter of uptake, they have to be granted by others, on the basis of the dominant indexical frames and hierarchies. (Blommaert, 2003, p. 616)

The granting of uptake is loaded with ideological and power relationships, which produce a gap between the ways my participants themselves think about their linguistic abilities and the ways their linguistic abilities were perceived in Australia. That gap became the main barrier during their settlement processes as these participants who acquired their educational credentials through the English medium sought to translate their linguistic abilities, knowledge and skills for work and other social activities in the new setting.

The chapter is organised as follows. It begins with the participants' pre-migration educational experiences which provide the background for understanding differences in their on-arrival

English proficiencies and communicative competences. Next, it explores specific language situations arising in their reflections on their post-migration experiences as people who believe they arrived in Australia with proficiency in English learning and the gaps between that perspective and mainstream perceptions that frequently position them as language learners. Then it looks at how their English language development has fared in Australia and what they report about employment and the quest for better opportunities here. Finally, how language learning and employment issues intersect for Group 1 is discussed in individual case studies with two participants (Venus and Sally) to provide a holistic perspective on issues addressed in the chapter.

5.2 Pre-migration experiences of education and English language learning

Pre-migration education and language learning backgrounds provided by all the participants in this category have been summarised in the fourth and fifth columns in

Table 5.1 under the titles Languages other than English (LOTE) and Highest Education attained with English as MoI. Eight of the participants were tertiary-educated (James, Daniel, Franklin, Sally, Veronica, Obi, Osman, Mark) including one post-graduate degree holder (Mark); six participants held technical/vocational degrees (Vida, Benjamin, Venus, Ruth, Daisy, Abenet); and seven of them were tertiary-education aspirants who had experienced disrupted educational careers due to war (Shirley, Abiba, Lucy, Nina, Lewis, Eric) and gender (Sylvia). The table also shows that, in terms of English language proficiency, all of them reported having high levels of proficiency in English on arrival in Australia. Given their educational levels and English being recorded as the MoI in which these were attained, their self-ratings are not surprising.

As all the participants were educated through an English MoI at secondary school level or beyond, they talked about their English proficiency in relation to these educational attainments. Several examples have been provided in the previous chapter (Section 4.4.1).

Part of the reason behind these practices by the participants could be attributed to a keen sense of feeling the need to prove themselves as competent and authentic speakers of English and also to claim ownership of English. One way through which participants claimed ownership of and authenticity in English was by explicitly or implicitly linking their English to their countries' British colonial roots. For example, Sally explains that "in Zimbabwe, yes, we were colonised by the British so everything we did we used English" in order to prove herself as a competent and authentic user of English in several domains in her country. Venus, of Liberian paternal heritage but who grew up in her mother's country, Sierra Leone, points out that Sierra Leone used to be a British colony and tells people: "I speak ENGLISH, I'm not speaking AUSSIE." Others also expressed ownership of English which was not linked to a colonial heritage with Britain but rather with the global reach of English. For example, a participant from Ethiopia gave the following explanation about his English proficiency: "the school I learnt in [in Ethiopia] is predominantly American English".

One theme that stood out for these participants is that, regardless of how they see their English, there is a mismatch between their self-assessment and the ways in which their English is perceived by others. Once they have left their countries of origin, their English becomes marked as 'other' and most of them must validate competence in English in the new setting. The gap that persists between the participants' perceptions of English proficiency and the prevailing monolingual ideologies of language in Australia lead to their invariable positioning as language learners and being seen as 'deficient' in English rather than 'different' in the Englishes they speak. The section that follows will look at their experiences in relation to their migration pathways and language training eligibility within the settlement service provision to which they were or were not entitled and which they either embraced or rejected.

5.3 English speakers becoming English learners in settlement

As the previous section has outlined, participants who attained their education through the medium of English at secondary level and beyond arrived in Australia with the belief that their English proficiency was such that they would not encounter any linguistic problems in Australia (see

Table 5.1). For them, as people educated through the medium of English in the African countries where they lived, studied and some had held jobs, English was one of the languages around which their daily lives had revolved. In the migration context, this group in particular expected that their English would facilitate entry into study or work. However, they all learnt that this was not to be the case. Instead, what they found was a gap between their own views of their English proficiency and the ways in which their English proficiency was perceived in mainstream Australia. Specifically, the participants were dismayed to discover that they were typically not expected to speak English or to hold qualifications. According to Venus,

> Extract 5.1
> When I came to Australia I think these people, they've got the perception that every Africans don't know English, they think we don't know nothing. Even when I went to TAFE to register they wanted me to go do English. I left after and said no I'm not doing any English language, because I even did English in my country and after we study that I did an international course which was in English, I've got a certificate in that, so I'm not going to do the English language. (Venus: 87-97)

Another participant found that in Australia his variety of English was labelled a 'pidgin':

> Extract 5.2
> We call it Liberian English, it is like the everyday something for communication something. Everyday language for communication. But it is not, it is here I got to learn about Australian people saying Liberian Pidgin so that is how we are all just used to saying Liberian Pidgin. (Lewis: 288-304)

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The above examples point to the "erasure of linguistic capital" (Creese 2011) for the new arrivals. This issue is explicitly present, especially for those who arrived with refugee histories and as humanitarian entrants were entitled to settlement service provision through the AMEP. As Venus' quote above shows, even when these people arrive with proof of English and certificates, their default positioning is that of English language learners first and foremost before they could proceed to study or work. I explore this gap between participants' expectations first with humanitarian entrant perspectives (Section 5.3.1) followed by the perspectives of the participants who were not eligible for settlement services when they arrived in Australia (Section 5.3.2).

5.3.1 Humanitarian entrants with AMEP entitlement

As mentioned above, the Australian Government settlement services for humanitarian entrants include English training provisions for those with less than functional English (see Chapter 1). In this group 18 of the 21 participants (Sylvia, Vida, James, Daniel, Franklin, Shirley, Mark, Benjamin, Venus, Ruth, Abiba, Lucy, Nina, Abenet, Obi, Osman, Lewis, Eric) were humanitarian stream entrants and eligible to learn English in the AMEP and the remaining three participants (Daisy, Sally, Veronica) were not eligible. Issues discussed here are from the data set of the former sub-group.

The practice which deemed the humanitarian entrants as needing to learn English for settlement was not clear to them. They felt that assessments they submitted to within their settlement service provision in the AMEP were going to lead to content-specific courses rather than English language classes. They reported that they were enrolled in English classes for which they believed they were over-qualified and which they did not need. One participant said: "I actually went to the English program or something but that was only two weeks because then they were satisfied with my English anyway." Other telling examples

show participants' reactions to being enrolled for English study for which they felt they were over-qualified follow:

> Extract 5.3
> I felt my English was ready. When I came I wanted to do study in medical science but at the time I was told, [...] I had to attend the 510 English classes. And I was attending that for about three months and all that they were teaching there were not anything that I really needed so why I was attending there? (Lewis: 54-60)

> Extract 5.4
> I think they put me in level three and they were learning these things that I've learnt in primary school@@@@ A-B-C and what. And I said no this is not for me so I had to leave the same day. And I didn't come back there anymore. (Lucy: 364-368)

The two extracts above are typical examples of the participants' reactions to the mismatch between what was on offer within the AMEP and the participants' understanding of the program. The participants' decisions to go ahead with study (Lewis) or reject English study (Lucy) are reflected in the reactions of all the participants. There were a few participants like Lewis who despite feeling over-qualified for English classes showed a reluctant acceptance of English learning and enrolled in the classes that were offered. However, none of them fully completed the 510 hours allocated. For them it mostly served as a conduit into TAFE courses as Franklin explains below:

> Extract 5.5
> VWT: Okay. So did you attend any English classes when=
>
> FRANKLIN: In Australia?
>
> VWT: =Yes.
>
> FRANKLIN: Ah I attended for I think one week.
>
> VWT: One week.
>
> FRANKLIN: Yeah in [name of suburb] and then I realised that no need for for me to be in the class.

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VWT: Okay.

FRANKLIN: Because they they they have up to level three, and then they found that I am beyond level three. So they they send me to TAFE to do any other course. (Franklin: 392-402)

The participants who continued with English classes said they were informed that it was a mandatory requirement: "Because I was told that it was a requirement of the government that I should do it". They also explained that attendance was tied to social welfare entitlements through Centrelink and were threatened with cancellation of their entitlements. One participant reported the following: "They said I am going to tell Centrelink to cancel your payment. So I went to Centrelink and reported myself that I can't go further with that because I am above it". These comments show that rejecting the AMEP provision had consequences for the participants. Participants said they had two options when they rejected English study: find a fulltime course, or find a job. Some like Ruth chose to leave English study and find a job.

Extract 5.6
I was in TAFE [learning English] for like nine months and after the nine months I applied for the job at [Name of abattoir] because it's like you've got responsibilities and you have to help your people back home so I had to leave TAFE [learning English]. (Ruth: 125-128)

Mostly such readily available jobs were low-skill jobs for which they were over-qualified but, as Ruth explains, it provided economic relief for her and her family. Further evidence of the consequences of rejecting imposed English learner positioning for this sub-group of participants can be found below in the discussion about job challenges (see Section 5.4.1).

5.3.2 Other pathway entrants with no AMEP entitlement

So far the examples I have given about the mismatch between participants' and 'other' perceptions of their language abilities and skills are from those who qualified for on-arrival

settlement help. Three of the participants (Daisy, Sally, Veronica) in this group did not qualify for such help on arrival because of their visa streams. For these participants the issue with language and skills for settlement was not as explicitly linked to their positioning as language learners. Their issues were to do more implicitly with lack of recognition of those skills gained through English. I will use Veronica's settlement trajectory as an example.

Veronica is in her thirties from Zimbabwe. She speaks Shona-Karanga, her L1 and English. Sally has a tertiary degree from Zimbabwe and was educated there mainly through the medium of English. Veronica came to Australia in 2007 on a family reunion visa to join her husband who migrated a year earlier as a subclass 457 visa holder (see Appendix VII Explanation of Participants' Visa Codes) to work in C-Town as an auto mechanic. As a spouse and an eligible dependant, she could study or work but she did not qualify for formal settlement help. It was up to her husband as her sponsor to provide her and their daughter with settlement support. Veronica did not anticipate that there would be a problem with English when she arrived in Australia. She described her on-arrival English was "very well" (see Table 5.1). As Veronica explains, like Sally above, she was familiar with English in her daily life (see Extract 4.8). While her comment suggests that she believes she arrived as a competent and daily user of English having English was not sufficient to begin life in Australia. Despite her qualifications and experience as a teacher who had used mainly English to instruct her students in Zimbabwe, in the context of Australia, and as an 'overseas trained teacher', she was not considered as having the local qualification and local experience to work in that area (Deters 2011, p. 9). Through her network she, like most of the women, learnt about aged-care as the easiest job to get into and was enrolled in the course at the time of her interview, hopeful that she would be able to get a job when she completes the course. Thus the issue is not simply language but that of the intimate link between the recognition of English language proficiency and overseas qualifications.

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5.3.3 Linguistic differences between African Englishes and Australian English

It is undeniable that various Englishes have their own structural norms and characteristics (Bhatt, 2005; Chisanga & Kamwangamalu, 1997; Romaine, 1992). Attributes of African varieties of English are linked to socio-historical backgrounds and current sociolinguistic and political use associated with various geographical locations (Mesthrie, 2008b). Therefore, it is not surprising that people find that they rate their English proficiency highly in one variety but find communicating with others from another variety challenging, at least initially. Such was the case with some of the participants in this group. Some of them mentioned that Australian English "was too fast" or that Australians "talk too rapidly" and some said "it was very difficult for me to hear." My conversation with Benjamin below typifies the views of most of the participants in this group regarding accent differences and mutual intelligibility, and the strategies adopted to bridge them.

Extract 5.7

VWT: So you speak English from Africa, you've been born in Sudan, from Sudan to Uganda and you have English. When you got here seven years ago, did you understand Australian English, and did they=

BENJAMIN: It's hard.

VWT: =understand you?

BENJAMIN: It's very hard to understand. And some also is very hard to understand me. As I told you before, the accent is quite different. The Australians is speaking for me very fast, where I could not get that, and I say why, these people are just speaking too fast. Compare with the other people, English speaker, I give you example because Sudan have been colonised with the British. British English a bit better, I understand them. Now here, Australians speak fast (makes noise and claps). Finish. Yeah, so I have to learn that one also. I have been in [AMEP Centre], but I yeah, it help me also but I didn't go long. I said no. I have to start working or to do another course. So I leave that language. I

say more language I'm going to learn by myself, through friend, through the community, through to workplace, that is help, at our community, yes. This is how now we are learning the English. I say I'm now taking my course, more English I'm going to learn, I'm still going to have more and more. (Benjamin: 495-519)

Some of the participants also mentioned that the prevalence of unfamiliar "slang words" made it difficult for them to communicate initially in Australia.

Extract 5.8
FRANKLIN: Erm no, I can say the that the Australian accent, things like nah, g'day, so it's totally different. Because we were being colonised by British, Sudan has being colonised by British and we speak British English, which is a bit clear than the Australian one. The Australian was, it was a bit difficult to me, even after now like here around C-Town when they started speaking among themselves, I just end up, I don't grasp their what this thing when they are using their slangs, I don't understand their slangs.

VWT: Okay.

FRANKLIN: Yeah and so I have problem with the Australian word slangs.

VWT: Okay.

FRANKLIN: But when they try to speak pure English I understand the pure English. But the Australian slang, nah, I don't know. (Franklin: 375-391)

Veronica, from Zimbabwe, provides a reflective narrative on her initial difficulties with slang words her young nephew and niece were using when she first arrived.

Extract 5.9
They [Australians] use more of slang, like first time when I came here, my sister-in-law's kids were just saying, commenting on the food, whether it's good or not, so they were saying "it's yucky, it's yummy". So I couldn't understand what they are what do they mean for yummy.

Only when I asked them "what's yucky? What does yucky mean"? But it's more of slang than the English we which you know, yeah. (Veronica: 312-319)

As the example above shows participants are aware of the need to bridge sociocultural influences on lexical differences in their English and Australian English. Moreover, accent differences become an issue when power inequity and ideologies are at play that subordinate speakers of certain varieties. Based on such misrecognition these people find themselves discriminated against. Lippi-Green (1997, 2012) points out that all speakers have an accent but certain accents are accorded more value. She makes the following point in relation to accent and language subordination:

If you look closely at language-focused discrimination, you will find that it is not language *per se* that is relevant; instead we need to understand that the individual's beliefs about language and following from those beliefs, institutional practices. In short, these beliefs and practices are the way in which individuals and groups are denied recognition. (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 67)

Whilst mainstream ideology may not see African Englishes as legitimate because they are 'accented' and come from racialised speakers, neither accent nor race can be shed. What is more, "[l]anguage itself is not evil. The unbalance and disempowerment lie more in the social structures that seek to entrench a linguistic hierarchy where a balanced management of multilingualism is possible and should prevail" (Djité, 2006a, p. 417). Indeed, these participants were well aware of accent difficulties and differences yet none of them mentioned wanting to speak with an Australian accent. What most of them wanted was the acceptance of their Englishes and not their exclusion on the basis of race and accent. Blommaert and Backus (2012) point out that language learning is ongoing:

the 'language' we know is never finished, so to speak, and learning language as a linguistic *and* a sociolinguistic system is not a cumulative process; it is rather a process of growth, of

sequential learning of certain registers, styles, genres and linguistic varieties while shedding or altering previously existing ones. Consequently there is no point in life in which *anyone* can claim to know *all* the resources of a language. (Blommaert & Backus, 2012, p. 12)

So far participants' reflections and emic views show discourses that underscore some of the gaps that exist for participants who were highly educated in English, who rate their English proficiency highly, and conditions they met in the migration context in their quest to turn such capital into economic and social capital for inclusion.

5.3.4 Summary

This section has presented an overview of participants' pre-migration sociobiographic backgrounds and what they reported about their educational backgrounds and English language learning experiences before they arrived in Australia. The section has shown that participants believed that they arrived with sufficient proficiency in English and they had appropriate levels of qualifications to enter the Australian labour market or participate in further education for career enhancement. On the contrary, they found themselves explicitly or implicitly positioned as language learners. The humanitarian entrants were positioned by default as language learners and 'deficient' in English rather than as 'different' English users. With that positioning, their settlement needs were not being met and a mismatch between perceived and actual needs underscored that deficit positioning in which the resources brought went unnoticed. Unlike their counterparts, the participants who were not considered eligible for settlement help and were not the target of such policy were not explicitly positioned as language learners. At the same time, their Englishes did not necessarily provide them the inclusion they sought in mainstream practices including equitable access to economic and social resources. The section that follows explores their experiences with employment.

5.4 Finding jobs and re-establishing careers

The previous sections have focused mainly on the participants' experiences of explicit and implicit erasure of their linguistic capital that participants face. This section looks at what happens to the participants' cultural capital – accumulated knowledge and skills – that they bring as resources to find jobs and re-establish their careers in Australia. The three tables below show the three sub-categories within Group 1 based on the participants' highest level of education as tertiary-educated (Table 5.2), technical/vocational-educated (Table 5.3) and secondary school-educated (Table 5.4) and their occupational statuses. The tables show for each sub-group, their year of arrival, whether they live in C-Town (the small town location in New South Wales) or in a Western Sydney suburb, their pre-migration occupations and their post-migration occupations at the time of their interview.

Table 5.2   Tertiary educated participants' occupational status in Africa and Australia (N=8)

Participant (age) F/M	Year of arrival	Lives in	Pre-migration occupation	Occupations in Australia (former) and current at time of interview
Franklin (41) M	2003	C-Town	Catechism and English teacher; bilingual aide	(factory hand); Casual community worker
Veronica (30) F	2007	C-Town	Teacher	TAFE student – aged-care
Mark (55) M	2006	C-Town	Translator; pastoral carer	Casual bilingual teacher's aide
James (39) M	2001	Sydney	Teacher	(factory hand); Teacher
Daniel (29) M	2002	Sydney	Student	Corporate worker
Sally (38) F	2002	Sydney	Teacher	(aged-care); Community health worker; university student- adult education
Obi (39) M	2003	Sydney	Teacher; politician	University student – teaching
Osman (39) M	1999	Sydney	Teacher; politician	Casual accountant

Table 5.2 shows that seven of the eight tertiary educated participants were employed in paid professional jobs before coming to Australia.

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Two participants (Franklin, Mark) in C-Town are married men who arrived through the humanitarian pathway with their families and were eligible for settlement help. The third participant is a married woman (Veronica) who having arrived on a family reunion visa as a dependant of her spouse, a 457 visa holder (see Appendix VII Explanation of Participants' Visa Codes), which meant that she was not eligible for the government-funded settlement help. The two men were employed in casual work in community liaison roles which did not correspond with their level of qualification whilst Veronica was training at TAFE to enter aged-care as a nursing assistant which, as well as being below the level of her pre-migration qualification, is also a gendered role.

In terms of the participants who were resident in Sydney, there were four men (James, Daniel, Obi, Osman) and one woman (Sally). All the men arrived in the humanitarian stream. With the exception of Daniel who is single, the rest are married men and live with their wives and families. Sally also arrived on a spouse visa like the women in C-Town and similarly was not eligible for settlement help. Two of the men, James and Daniel, both of whom are from Sudan, worked fulltime in jobs at par with their professional skill areas. The remaining two, Obi and Osman, both with teaching and politician careers from Ethiopia, were not in fulltime employment. Obi was completing study at university to attain local teaching qualifications to work as a teacher but Osman who had already completed such training was finding it difficult to get a fulltime job as a teacher. Sally, a former teacher from Zimbabwe, had worked initially in aged-care before her current job as a community health worker. She had shifted into community health when a position became available that required a person from an African background to work within African migrant communities.

Table 5.3 shows that the six technical/vocational-educated participants were employed before coming to Australia.

Table 5.3   **Technical/vocational educated participants' occupational status in Africa and Australia (N=6)**

Participant	Year of arrival	Lives in	Pre-migration occupation	Occupations in Australia (former) and current at time of interview
Vida (50) F	2006	C-Town	Secretary; pastoral worker	TAFE student – community services
Benjamin (51) M	2001	C-Town	Printer; evangelist	University student – theology
Venus (42) F	2004	C-Town	Administrative assistant; trader	Abattoir worker; TAFE student – business administration
Ruth (38) F	2006	C-Town	Shop assistant	Cleaner
Daisy (48) F	1999	Sydney	Business owner	Public officer
Abenet (38) M	2004	Sydney	Teacher; politician	Social worker; University student – social work

All the participants living in C-Town arrived through the humanitarian stream with their spouses and children (Vida, Benjamin) or as single parents (Venus, Ruth). They were all eligible for settlement help. The two who were working are Venus and Ruth. Both of them had jobs that were below their qualifications, in cleaning and process work in the abattoir. Venus also studied at TAFE in the evenings. Vida and Benjamin were unemployed and studying at TAFE in the areas of community services and theology respectively.

In terms of the two participants (Abenet, Daisy) who lived in Sydney, Abenet arrived with his wife and children as humanitarian entrants. They were eligible for settlement help on arrival. He was working on a part-time basis as a social worker and studying at university in the area of social work. Daisy arrived in Australia on a tourist visa and, as an onshore applicant for visa purposes, she was not eligible for settlement help on arrival until her resident application was formalised after about two years. At the time of the interview, she was employed as a public officer in a community liaison role.

Table 5.4 shows that before coming to Australia, the seven secondary school-educated participants were mostly students and unemployed. Two of them were involved in community roles but these were not paid roles.

Table 5.4   **Secondary school educated participants' occupational status in Africa and Australia (N=7)**

Participant	Year of arrival	Lives in	Pre-migration Occupation	Occupations in Australia (former) and current at time of interview
Shirley (36) F	2003	C-Town	Community aide – unpaid	Student – ESL; home maker
Eric (30) M	2007	C-Town	Student	Abattoir worker; TAFE - computing
Sylvia (42) F	2005	C-Town	Women's health advisor (unpaid)	Unemployed; home maker
Abiba (26) F	2003	Sydney	Student	Nurse
Lucy (26) F	2001	Sydney	Student	Student – TAFE – community work
Nina (30) F	2002	Sydney	Student	Women's advocacy worker
Lewis (27) M	2005	Sydney	Student	Casual social worker; TAFE student – social work

All the participants living in C-Town arrived through the humanitarian stream and were eligible for settlement help. Both Shirley and Sylvia were married women who migrated with their spouses and children – but Sylvia had separated from her spouse at the time of the interview; and Eric was a single man who migrated with his siblings to join their older sister who was already living in C-Town. He was working as a labourer in the local abattoir which records a shift for him as he was a first year student studying for a law degree before he fled Sierra Leone, and was also studying at TAFE in the evenings. Both Shirley and Sylvia as mothers were homemakers in fulltime, gendered roles as carers for their families and not in paid work. Shirley was caring for her pre-school-aged children and also studying English

online. Sylvia had previously studied in a course at TAFE, which she had to leave, and was caring for her family as well as an African youth she found (see case study below).

Four participants were living in Sydney. All of them (Abiba, Lucy, Nina, Lewis) were young – aged in their early twenties when they migrated with their families via the humanitarian stream, and they were all eligible for settlement help. Abiba migrated with her parents, Lucy with her siblings and half siblings, Nina with her siblings (she was oldest and the primary applicant), and Lewis migrated with his aunt as main applicant and a member of her family. Three of them (Abiba, Nina, Lewis) had jobs. After completing university study, Abiba was working as a registered nurse. Nina had wanted to be a mechanic but found her gender and race mediating access to her preferred profession and the one in which she had been training before migrating, and that caused her to shift to women's advocacy work instead. Lewis worked as a casual social worker, was studying social work at TAFE and had applied to go to university to complete the course.

Overall, as a group with pre-migration credentials received in English and people who arrived with proficiency in English the participants' experiences show that they were not able to translate their language and professional skills easily into adequate work in the new context. The above descriptions show that the majority of the participants in Group 1 (14 out of 21 persons) were underemployed or not employed. Only seven out of twenty-one participants were employed in skill areas that could be considered at par with their qualifications. Even so, the latter have had to retrain in order to shift into the different skill areas in which they were working at the time of their interviews. None of them had been able to slot straight into their former career areas when they arrived in Australia, regardless of their pathways. In addition, for some of the women (racialised) gender was at play in processes that pushed some of them into feminised roles. Therefore, despite having English proficiency with educational credentials attained in English, their employment trajectories were not linear and

their employment, on the whole, was not on par with the skill areas in which they had qualified before migrating to Australia. In the rest of the section, participants' experiences in relation to translation of skills and the identified themes are discussed under the two topicalised areas of challenges (Section 5.4.1) and strategies applied to gain desirable jobs (Section 5.4.2).

5.4.1 Challenges

English proficiency and professional skills are touted as important resources and form the basis of selection and for admission into Australia and most other English speaking countries (e.g. Canada, US). In view of racialised men and women who experience the effects of race and gender being simultaneously linked and impacting their labour market experiences (see Section 2.3.1 & Section 2.4.2), this section explores challenges the participants faced when arriving with English language and vocational skills and their labour market experiences. Most of the participants in Group 1 were tertiary-educated and people with technical/vocational expertise who had worked in these professional capacities before migrating to Australia. Their experiences point to overlapping factors including their racial 'visibility' as 'other' and the origin of their skills in relation to local experience; their English as embodied; and racialised gender – with women the ones engaged in lower-paid stereotypical feminised work. These factors mediated their employment, leaving the majority underemployed and unemployed and fewer employed in career areas they had built before coming to Australia. These are discussed next.

Racial visibility as 'other' links to origin of skills and local experience: Educational credentials that participants had attained before migrating were not accepted as equivalent to the local qualifications and even locally acquired qualifications were not easily translatable into jobs. They found rationales behind the rejection of their credentials tied to their racial visibility as 'other' and behind inscriptions of them as lacking in professional skills: "the

biggest problem we Africans, we are facing and for those who came with profession, the excuse we are hearing is the work experience". This is typified in most of the participants' experiences. For example, Osman, who has a degree from Ethiopia and taught biology previously in high school there, was the only participant in Group 1 who completed the English entitlement of 510 hours in the AMEP. This led him to decide to change career paths from the teaching profession to training as an accountant and by completing an accounting diploma at TAFE he had the hope of making a quick entry to getting a job.

Extract 5.10
I have to learn new thing. So I choose new thing. And my intention was to get to work soon. And I choose to do the diploma rather than to go for the degree. And I did that, I finished in three years time. Look like after three years because I spent one year on language and do two years. I took advance diploma and I came out and I was eager to go to work but it turned out that the first priority to be able to get you work is to have experience. (Osman: 371-380)

Without experience he was only able to get casual jobs since being in Australia and was continuing further study in accounting at university level.

Extract 5.11
The only thing I should do every morning is to apply for a job and they turn me down always because of lack of experience. If I get a job it is a part time job or a casual filling the vacuum if there is somebody in the office went for holiday or maternity, that is the time I do get a job and when that person come back I have to leave. So for two years I was off in and off get a one month contract or a three month contract then get out. So within three years time, when I looked at it, I found that I spent more time without job than the time I spent on working. And I said ok maybe I have to do some more study maybe by that time it will help me and I am back to the university now to do the degree in accounting and see what is coming next @@@@@@@. So that is a problem of getting a job is a challenge for us. If you are not working, it's very difficult for you to settle. (Osman: 389-408)

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The demand for local experience meant that some participants had to participate in volunteer work in the kind of work they aspire to in order to get a foothold into jobs. Abenet, who was a teacher from Ethiopia, upon finding his qualifications were rejected as unsuitable for teaching in Australia, decided to enter the area of social work where he had identified there would be a need for African professionals to work with new migrants within African communities. At one point he was involved in as many as three voluntary roles in order to get local experience. During that time, he had to deny himself sleep and juggle studies with these local experiences whilst striving to get a job. He was one of four people who volunteered in social and community work with new migrants prior to being taken on eventually in casual roles.

As Creese (2011) notes, volunteer work is no longer voluntary because increasingly migrants have no other choice than to take on such 'compulsory voluntary' roles in order to gain employment. Even so we see from the experiences of the participants that they were only offered casual roles after volunteering. To be taken on in casual roles after volunteering, on the one hand, is evidence that they have shown they have valuable knowledge to do the paid job. Yet, on the other hand, they are constructed as deficient and not sufficiently valued to provide them permanent roles and job security. That pushes them to enter studies in a bid to validate their skills in work in which they have already shown proof of capability – as casuals – that they have practical knowledge and abilities, but not enough to guarantee permanent positions as these are mostly filled by locals.

English as embodied: As already discussed above (see Section 5.3), failure to recognise English proficiency that participants bring is linguistic discrimination. In terms of employment, linguistic discrimination was an issue confronting the participants who found work on factory floors and was particularly present for those in C-Town. Participants in C-Town who had worked previously or were working still in low-skill labour jobs in the

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abattoir usually found that English proficiency was not accommodated and none was assumed for them. This is how one participant described the situation: "We work with people who are extremely racist and yeah they don't even wanna listen to you because you are an African". For example, Venus from Liberia, who trained in her mother's country (Sierra Leone) where she worked as an administrative assistant and had also completed international courses through the English medium, was hard pressed to understand that she needed to study English before she could enter work (see Extract 5.1) and, having rejected English study, the only job she could find was labouring work in the abattoir. There, she was also hard pressed to understand how she and other black Africans, were constructed on the job. In the conversation below she describes her experience.

Extract 5.12

VENUS: IT WASN'T GOOD AT ALL. Now it's now it's a little bit, little better because I think when you talk they can listen to you. But at that time, formerly they don't listen to you, they don't listen to you. And what makes it difficult for me is that, because of where I'm working at abattoir, oh they so despise Africans. SO MUCH SO MUCH. And even the supervisors they don't listen to you.

VWT: Really?

VENUS: If you want to, like you want to raise complain, they don't listen to you. Because for the fact that I just, I don't know anything, they sooner you open your mouth they don't, what are you going to say again you know? They don't say it but you can see it.

VWT: So it's the body language as well?

VENUS: Yes, they don't say it but you can see it that this person, what is this going to say again. But it's better now. It's much much better. But we suffered so much in that place, we suffered. Oh we suffered and we cry and we cry and we cry.

VWT: How many years?

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VENUS: I've been there for four years now, since I came to Australia yeah. (Venus: 314-336)

Venus told me further that: "we are just there to make money, that's all. I'm going to TAFE at night". She said she expected that she would soon complete her studies at TAFE and that would enable her get a better job. Her case study is used to illuminate the issue further (see case study below). Lucy from Sierra Leone is another participant who resisted English study and constructions of her English as deficient when she arrived in Australia.

Gender and racialised gender roles are apparent in the experiences of my female participants, who have dreams and desires for certain career types and agency in terms of accrued skills. However, their choices seem to be limited when it comes to employment types. The failure to recognise women's roles in other job areas are systemic issues confronting women who found feminised institutionalised care areas as the easiest pathways to employment (e.g. Veronica, Sally). For most of the women there are tensions evident in how their gender affected the translation of their pre-migration resources into locally legible feminine occupations. For most of the women, care areas are unpaid home maker roles which are not recognised for the important contributions they make to individuals, families, the community and society at large. For these women, needing to be present physically to take care of children means that they are unable to enter paid work but even so some of them juggle these female-oriented unpaid job-roles with study. Shirley, for example, was studying ESL online. Shirley reported pre-migration English proficiency as "good". She also worked previously in an unpaid role in the refugee camp where she lived. She and her husband, Franklin, have four children. Shirley's oldest daughter is the only one in school. Their family is unable to afford child-care for the three pre-school-aged children. Shirley does home duties which include looking after her children and juggles them with online English language learning. In the extract below, Shirley expresses her frustration in having to manage both home duties and learner roles.

Extract 5.13

SHIRLEY: For me like here, now with my online study, the frustration is because I'm doing it by myself, no-one helping, there is a tutor once a week but it's not enough. Once a week and she come only one hour and go. And also like my homework and my assignment, sometimes my assignments and my studies I can't start because sometime I get tired and I just want to go to bed, yeah. Which is not good because I need to do a lot of work, do a lot of studies and a lot of assignments, writing and what what, reading, yeah. But I can't do that because I'm exhausted and tired and just I want to go to bed, and tomorrow I wake up, the same thing. Sometimes I study little bit and it's not enough, it's not enough.

VWT: Does Franklin help?

SHIRLEY: Yeah he helps a lot, he helps a lot, he helps with everything in the house. Cleaning, everything with the kids, he's very helpful husband, yeah.

VWT: Does he help with your assignment?

SHIRLEY: Yeah, yeah. He helps.

VWT: But he's also got his own work?

SHIRLEY: Yeah. Sometimes he say Shirley come we study together because when the kids go to bed, we sit down and we do our things, he do his and I will do mine, but I still I get tired and I say oh, I'm going to bed. Yeah. But this, it's my job, yeah.

VWT: So maybe when the children are all grown up and they're in school it will be easier?

SHIRLEY: When they are going to@@@@@@ by that time I will be old@@@@@ I've finish@@@@@@@ this is the problem here because back home if you want to study and house keep, someone will come and stay with you and you will do your things, you go to school or you go to uni or go to institute or somewhere, your mum is there your sisters are there. Your sisters-in-law,

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they are there, but here no-one, only you. See the point@@@@@ very difficult. (Shirley: 468-504)

In the absence of an extended family in Australia, Shirley finds juggling care-work and language learning challenging and even with the help of her husband she was struggling and feeling continually tired and overwhelmed. Care-work bound her to the home, compounding her feeling of isolation. All these are not understood for women in such situations, first of all because work is constructed in relation to wages and family care work is not accorded much recognition. Secondly, career women with young families who in pre-migration contexts would rely on extended family support find that these are not present for them in the migration context and are unable to afford paid child-care which means, as the woman in the family, they must juggle the carer position for the family as well as study or work. However, these dynamics are not fully understood for women like Shirley in such situations and their families. Their situations tend to be understood by settlement agencies as solely a gender issue with men constructed as needing to step into carer roles without recognition of embedded, complex sociocultural dimensions. One such example can be found in a DIAC-produced DVD for African migrants arriving as humanitarian entrants (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2007). It was designed to help earlier arrivals to help African migrants arriving as humanitarian entrants in their settlement processes and was made with the help of African community groups. Segments in the resource include information about accommodation; health services and emergencies; family and parenting; money and budgeting; education and learning; working in Australia; Australian law; and sport and recreation. I will only focus on the *Family and parenting segment*. Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2 are extracts with subtitles taken from that DVD.

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Figure 5.1   Family and parenting segment with subtitles – kitchen scene

Source: Extracted with subtitles from DIAC (2007), *Australia - a new home: settlement information for newly-arrived African refugees* [DVD].

In the frame of Figure 5.1we see a black African woman dressed in a pink suit looking on as black African man wearing an apron leans over the kitchen sink with the tap running. The advice given from the subtitle is for husband and wives to "support each other and respect each other". To do this, the characteristics of the main addressee of the message – gender (male), location (kitchen sink) and action (chore) – are highlighted as vital for the definition of support. The female is characterised as exiting for work and in a bread winner role. In Figure 5.2 the frame is the dining area and an extension of the kitchen. The apron clad man is characterised by gender (male), location (kitchen – dining area) and action (child care) to highlight expectations of his roles with his children. Comments made in the group in response to the Family and Parenting segment of the video are presented in the order in which they were made and recorded in my field notes were:

1. "What this is nonsense" (Kwabena – male)
2. "They must be thinking of some African culture so they have sliced it and imposed what they think is the Australian style" (Kwesi – male)
3. "But only last Friday I wore an apron I don't see anything wrong with it" (Ekow – male)
4. "But they are showing this in Africa before the people come, no wonder the men give the women trouble when they get here" (Abena – female) (2007.10.14_Notes on DIAC DVD Discussion).

Figure 5.2   Family and parenting segment with subtitles – dining setting

Source: Extracted with subtitles from DIAC (2007), *Australia - a new home: settlement information for newly-arrived African refugees* [DVD].

The message from the DVD shows that the producers misrecognise gender roles as a problem rather than nuclear family situations without extended family support. The comments above were made by African parents of both genders, none of whom saw the benefit of reversing gender roles and constructing the African man as unsupportive the way he is in the segment while failing to address the real issue at stake. As African cultures are not well understood in

Australia, taking an uncritical view in research on African child-rearing may yield limited understanding of complex issues. Well-meaning material produced to acquaint settlement service providers with African cultures, and provide new African arrivals with knowledge of what to expect in their settlement processes, may lead to African child-rearing and parental roles being misunderstood and may inadvertently lead to the perpetuation of stereotypes of a homogenised African parenting and child-rearing in Australia. These mask the critical issues of lack of extended support and child-care affordability for families.

Another gender-related issue that arose for one woman in particular was accessing a profession that was not associated with women. How do these women negotiate identity in racialised and gendered roles to access the jobs of their dreams? That is what I examine with Nina's story in the next extract. Nina from Sierra Leone was training to become an auto mechanic while living as a refugee in Guinea. In Australia, she found that she was not able to continue her training because it was not seen as an appropriate career pathway for her.

Extract 5.14

VWT: So from fitting mechanic to volunteering and community service?

NINA: Erm for that one, I didn't get any encouragement.

VWT: For the fitting?

NINA: For the, because when I was I was doing full time community service in [Name of suburb] TAFE, so I did the mechanic thing in [Name of suburb]. I and my other step brother used to come there because we did the same scholarship on the mechanic thing. But the first thing is like when I came to [Name of suburb] erm it was called refreshment course, like you've done it before, you just need refreshment. And why I needed the refreshment, is like because here they got the automatic and electrical system is like a bit so I wanted to do more so I will know everything. But when I get there it was like I am the only female and there was no encouragement that was the first thing. And the teacher they were like racist, only me and my brother we are black in

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there. Sometimes when they are teaching, even if we ask a question, no one look at you, no one want to answer. So my brother said Nina I don't want to waste my time. Here you see even if we are talking, no one talk to us, so me I'm going to stop. So he stopped. He say I'm going to do something else. He went to TAFE and continued with his business administration. But for me since Africa, I like to do something until the end, so I said I'll still continue. I used to go alone, nobody was going with me but still I feel like they don't even care. You know like for example, you know the gear boxes they are all different. Here they use automatic so the gears are in, everything different. So if I don't know I want to ask a teacher how do you do that? No one talked to me. Until the end, what I got, fail@@@@@@@

VWT: so you finished it?

NINA: I finished it

VWT: The main thing is that you finished it.

NINA: Yeah but I failed, I've still got my certificate@@@@@@@@ (Nina: 371-411)

This narrative shows Nina's description and awareness of factors impacting access to her dream job: race, gender and language. The intersection of race – "the teacher they were like racist", gender – "I am the only female" – and language or denial of language – "So if I don't know I want to ask a teacher how do you do that? No one talked to me" – are implicated in her thwarted access to the auto mechanic industry as a preferred career choice. To Nina the rejection could not be any clearer. She understood the message of not being suited to that industry. Although she may have had pre-migration English and an international qualification, these were not recognised for access to local training.

In mainstream Australia, auto mechanic work is a masculine-oriented trade occupation. It is also a job in demand and is listed in the Australia Skilled Occupation List (SOL) as Australia and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) code 321211 and

Australian Skills Classified Occupation (ASCO) code 4211-11 (Australian Government, 2010, p. 7). Outsiders who enter Australia in this trade area are accepted as skilled but they are only accepted from stipulated countries (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2010). African countries from which trained auto mechanics are usually accepted for skilled and temporary migration purposes are Zimbabwe and South Africa (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2010). In Australia, locals who enter the auto mechanic trade do so as part of an apprenticeship through TAFE. Therefore, as a woman and as a refugee from Sierra Leone, Nina did not fit the mould of skilled persons accepted in the auto mechanic trade in Australia. Although Nina stubbornly persisted in the pursuit of her career choice, in doing so she was working against rigid, gendered traditional and systemic structures which foiled her admittance into not only a male-dominated industry but also a white and male-dominated industry in Australia. Nina reflects further on her racialised and gendered positioning thus:

Extract 5.15
So this is how I just said, because it took long years in doing the mechanic. Like because in Africa I was doing a real good thing for myself especially after the first one was finished I was doing, I was working with [COMPANY] and still in Conakry almost I got a job almost before this interview [to go to Australia] came. So it is like when I came, why I wasted all those years studying and I didn't get this thing? So I just concentrated on the community service. I went to my counselor, I told her what happened. She said oh you know maybe it's a bit strange in Australia for a woman to be in this course you know, in Australia they don't want a woman to do any hard thing and stuff. So the other thing, just continue with the community service. This is how come I just focus on the community service thing up to diploma. So all those years that have been spent being a mechanic is zero@@@ (Nina: 413-431)

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Two main points that emerge here are: firstly, on the issue of acceptable gender-oriented employment positioning for women in Australia, Nina had skills from the international market but they were constructed as deficient and lacking local experience (see above discussion); and, secondly, representatives of settlement agencies may funnel women into feminine jobs as we find in Nina's example with the counsellor guiding her to pursue what is seen as a more suitable female position.

In the final example I use to discuss these challenges I will look at how settlement in a small town location poses job challenges for the migrants in Group 1. All the participants in this group from C-Town mentioned getting a job as their main barrier: "getting a job is the problem" was a typical discourse in all their interviews. Those who were studying or had young children in school were hoping to leave the town once they or their children completed their studies. One such example was Franklin who could only find casual work and had gone into fulltime university study to improve his chances of getting work once he achieved local qualifications. Afterwards, he and his family would eventually leave C-Town and find work elsewhere.

Extract 5.16

Franklin: No facilities. No facilities, which makes this life very difficult. And the worst part is like it's hard to find a job here in C-Town, the job is real problem. Job is really a problem. Many of us are not working. Including myself because the job I'm doing now is only once a week. How can I survive on once a week job?

VWT: So how do you survive?

Franklin: It's just through the Centrelink money now.

VWT: Okay.

Franklin: But the hope is that I am hoping that when I finish my studies, maybe our family situation, maybe I'll get another job and then things will improve.

VWT: In here or moving out?

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Franklin:	Ah moving out.
VWT:	Okay.
Franklin:	Definitely I'm going to move out. Yeah, definitely. Just after finish my studies I have to move out, because I will not find a job, so I see no reason of to stay here. My age will be going for nothing. But if there's a secure job then I say yes, there will be a need for me to be in C-Town, but if there's no job I have to go. Most of the my colleagues, the student in the class, they just erm we just wait to finish this the course. Because I have we have some colleagues from Sydney, they're they're working in the same field, but here nothing, nothing. (Franklin: 536-561)

Franklin and Shirley initially settled in Sydney and decided to move to C-Town because they heard from people in their community that it was a quiet and conducive place for raising children. Their desire is to continue living in C-Town because they found it to be great for raising their four children but getting a job was a problem and that is why they plan to move when Franklin finishes his studies.

5.4.2 Strategies applied to gain desirable jobs

All newcomers face challenges on the job market because of the fact that they are newcomers and do not start on a level ground with locals. Drawing from Bourdieu, Creese explains that, typically, newcomers find that they must:

negotiate unfamiliar labour market practices without the same social or cultural capital that the locals take for granted. Social capital includes networks of friends and acquaintances who can offer help in job searches, and cultural capital includes things as simple, yet important, as local conventions around resumes, interview techniques, appearance, and demeanour. Immigrants' social capital tends to develop in networks with other immigrants; invaluable advice and contacts may be passed on that are particularly important for finding entry-level jobs, but gaps in cultural capital or even

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misinformation that may limit access to better jobs can also be shared. (G. Creese, 2011, p. 66)

Social capital that the participants drew on derived mostly from their own networks and/or cultural capital provided through accessing the AMEP if they were humanitarian entrants. The latter option is only available to those who identify as language learners (see above).

Social networks were the most valuable resource that helped participants with work choices or getting work in the first instance, but advice from social networks did not always work out well for the participants. For example, Lucy in her twenties from Sierra Leone, after rejecting language study as a pathway (see Extract 5.4), drew on her network, her half-sister's friend, to help her find her first job in Australia as a checkout operator in a grocery supermarket. Following advice from another source in her network she moved from supermarket work to aged-care because it offered more pay. However, in hindsight, she found that she had been misled by that advice:

Extract 5.17

VWT: How did you find working in the supermarket?

LUCY: Aw it was so great. You know when I left the job, I regretted it because I move in the, I didn't know the difference. You know when people when you come to this place, if you don't have people to advise you like your mum or something you know you go out of hand.

VWT: Yeah

LUCY: So I was working there but when I started doing this nursing home job, like this is great, this is money because I was earning like thousand dollars and I thought the supermarket is like six hundred only, you know so but later on I regretted, I wanted to go back but I say why, how can I go back? @@@@So I couldn't go back.

VWT: So what did you do then?

LUCY: I continued my nursing home.

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Lucy explained that she had not been aware that she would need to work longer hours and overtime to be able to make that money. Feeling misled by misinformation from her network, Lucy decided that one way of getting out of low-skill jobs into her desired job is through further study.

> Extract 5.18
> Yeah I want to study and like sit in the office like these white people doing. You know they are not the only people that can do it. I want to show them we too we can do it. Africans can do it too. But you know sometimes they look down upon us but that's the reason I don't want to do these odd jobs any more. (Lucy: 697-703)

Although Daisy, a trained secretary from Kenya, received advice from her social network to work in aged-care, her strategy was to reject that advice and stick to her desire to look for work in an office.

> Extract 5.19
> And when I came here, I was being told, I used to check on the local newspaper a lot. I could see a lot of jobs I can do because I'm a secretary by profession. And I remember my friend telling me, don't waste your time, you cannot get a job in an office. This country is racist. They can never give an African an office job. I didn't know much about the people but I never judged people because of other people. I just said this is the job I'm gonna do. But if worse comes to worst I can still do the nursing job. (Daisy: 71-72)

Advice through the AMEP was also an important resource. Some relied on teachers and settlement resources in class to lead them into jobs (one such example was Nina above) and also voluntary roles as social workers within African communities.

Another popular strategy pursued by the participants in this group is the uptake of further education to better their job prospects. All the participants in this group have studied, are studying or contemplating study to be able to get more highly skilled jobs. Areas of study they take up vary and are mostly related to building on their previous skills or shifting to a

totally different field which they feel will result in the quick result of getting work. For example, Sally made the shift to study aged-care, which led her to a job and the local experience she needed to get into a better job and, at the time of the interview, was doing further study at university (her case study below has more details). Regardless of the strategies they adopted, the key difficulty people in this group faced in relation to employment was finding work commensurate with their backgrounds and skills. Most were forced to choose jobs beneath their qualifications or face the prospect of extended unemployment.

5.4.3 Summary

Participants educated through the medium of English arrived in Australia with the belief that their English proficiency was such that they would not encounter any linguistic problems in Australia. In particular, they expected that their English would facilitate entry into the work force. However, they soon discovered that this was not the case and that there was a gap between their own views of their English proficiency and the ways in which their English proficiency was perceived in mainstream Australia. Specifically, they found a lack of recognition of the readiness of their English for life in Australia, including entry into the workforce. This gap was explicitly present for the eighteen participants in this group who arrived from refugee backgrounds needing settlement help and who were constructed as needing to learn English. For those who were not eligible for settlement help such constructions were implicit and they also found employment a challenge. Their employment experiences show that those in Sydney fared a little better than those who settled in C-Town. Gender and racialised gender were also discussed as factors mediating employment for some of the women in Group 1.

Studies on the workforce integration of new migrants in Australia (Colic-Peisker, 2011; Hawthorne, 2005; Ho & Alcorso, 2004) have outlined birthplace differences as central to the

'cultural fit' that employers consider for some migrant groups. The studies show that, while English proficiency and qualifications may be crucial to getting jobs, also important are employer stereotypes and prejudices as crucial factors that come in play for who gets what types of jobs. As Colic-Peisker (2011) explains, "[i]n a multicultural workforce such as Australia's, cultural stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination may be affecting a significant portion of the workforce to at least some degree" (p. 638). Such birthplace based employment discrimination was a major constraint within African community groups. Below is an excerpted conversation with a community member who drew on his own experience and commonly-described experiences of educated African members who arrive with proficiency in English and qualifications:

> Extract 5.20
> First of all they start with your qualifications when they know that you already have English. Then source of qualification, where is it from? So it is where you had your qualification that matters to them. It doesn't matter what you have. It is where you have it from. And where you have it from is, not only Australia. It's Australia first, then they look a bit into England, USA, […] then having met all these they go to experience. Then experience is further defined LOCAL experience. So however good you are, if you're the best scientist from Africa and you don't have the local experience you can't work. So what is your chance? When are you going to catch up? When do you start and get this local experience? You are doomed. You have a family to feed in a new country, what do you do? Not many organisations will accept you. Even voluntary organisations require experience. So in other words where employment is concerned they are telling you to go and look elsewhere. (Kuma: African community leader)

In sum, in the mainstream labour market, black African identities are constructed as suitable for certain job types (e.g., G. Creese, 2011; G. Creese & Kambere, 2003). Even though they may have skills which skilled migration intake indicators show are highly attractive, factors like gender, race, birthplace and visa types, as well as cultural stereotyping may mesh and

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push these skilled positions out of their reach. In the process, low-skill survival jobs which are within easy reach are 'naturalised' as suitable for them. Thus, processes of explicit and implicit funnelling of black African migrants into low paid jobs are maintained.

In the remainder of the chapter, two case studies will be used to explore the themes identified here and how they play out for the employment processes of people arriving with pre-migration proficiency in English and educational credentials. Venus's story provides a focal point for the vocational/technical educated sub-group (Section 5.5); and Sally's story relates to the tertiary-educated sub-group (Section 5.6). As women who were highly proficient in English, educated through the English medium, and who had also worked in their areas of qualification in their respective countries in administrative work and teacher roles respectively, building on their careers in the new country was high on their settlement agenda.

5.5 Case Study 1: Venus

This case study will be used to look at linguistic and cultural capital erasure issues with Venus's experiences as its focal point. Her story is that of a migrant woman with proficiency in English as well as vocational qualifications who migrated through the humanitarian pathway to settle in C-Town. The case study looks at how she was explicitly positioned at resettlement as a language learner – linguistic capital erasure – and also as needing to acquire local skills – cultural capital erasure. Rejecting the imposed language learner positioning, she also rejected the settlement help on offer which had consequences for her settlement in C-Town where at the time of her arrival the only readily available work for both men and women was abattoir work.

Venus is in her early forties. Her father is from Liberia and her mother is from Sierra Leone. She was born in Liberia but grew up in Sierra Leone where her mother took her to live at the age of two with her siblings when she broke up with Venus' father. Venus speaks four

languages: Themne, Krio, Kru and English. Themne is her mother tongue and she is fluent in that and Krio, the national lingua franca in Sierra Leone, but is less fluent in Kru, which is her father's language. She learnt to speak English in school as it is the medium of instruction and in it she completed her secondary and vocational education in Sierra Leone. She also completed two international diplomas in business administration with English as the language of examination. Venus said she comes from a line of working women. In Sierra Leone her mother worked very hard as a market woman to raise Venus and her nine siblings as a single mother and saw them all through school. Venus said most mornings, she and her brothers and sisters would wake up early to go to the marketplace and set up their mother's fruit and vegetable stall before going to school. In her early teenage years, whilst she was still in school, Venus fell pregnant with her first child. After the birth of the baby, a son, Venus went on to continue and complete her high school education and the two international courses. Seven years after the birth of her first child, she met and married another man and she had another boy. She was working at that time as an administrative assistant in a large company. She was also experiencing marriage problems about the time that war broke out in Sierra Leone in the late 1990s and Venus and her husband went their separate ways. Venus, her two boys and some relatives sought refuge first in Liberia and then, when Liberia became unsafe, they fled into Guinea. With the help of a relative Venus and her then seventeen year old younger son were eventually accepted as humanitarian stream entrants for resettlement in Australia. Because of age limitations her older son, who was then in his early twenties and considered independent, was not approved as part of their family unit. He was left behind.

In 2004, Venus and her younger son arrived in C-Town. Her main priority was to attain financial independence, look after herself and her son in Australia and her older son left behind. She felt that her English was more than enough to look for work (see Extract 5.1) and so she rejected language classes and took a course in aged-care instead.

Extract 5.21

Because I wanted to get the job, that's why I did Certificate III [in aged-care], because I heard it was easier to get the job in a nursing home. At least to keep me going. (Venus: 148-150)

However, after training in the aged-care course, she found that it was hard to get a job, but there was readily available job in the local abattoir so she decided to work there instead because it provided the immediate economic independence she was looking for. But she found working conditions to be harsh (see Extract 5.12) and planned to leave at the earliest opportunity. So, whilst working in the daytime, she also took up evening classes at TAFE. This time she enrolled in a course in business administration, Certificate IV, to try her chances at getting back into her skill area. At the very time she was informed by one of the nursing homes that her application for aged-care work had been successful, she suffered a workplace injury in the abattoir which complicated all her plans of changing jobs.

Extract 5.22

VENUS: But even when I finished the nursing because I couldn't get the job still, it was hard at that time to get the job, but now it's much easier things are going on ... it's much better now. So I had to work in the abattoir. Where I'm presently working. Although I just got the job at the the one of the nursing homes, but I had an accident at work [in the abattoir], I couldn't do now unless I fix my finger before I start work. So it is just unfortunate.

VWT: So what happened?

VENUS: Well my hand got stuck in the conveyer belt, yeah and this is [shows me her bandaged hand] you see it's nearly gone. This one broken, it's just the little one left.

VWT: Yeah.

VENUS: That's why everything go, yeah so. I can't leave now, that's the unfortunate thing that happened. (Venus: 125-139)

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Incidents such as the ones Venus reports above further complicated her settlement experience. Having suffered injury at work without information about her rights and workplace policy she was negotiating with the employer on her own. Venus explained that Africans in her workplace did not know much about their rights and what were acceptable work conditions and what was not, and they put up with whatever work demands.

Extract 5.23

VENUS: It's really not easy and the problem is, most Africans working out there I tell you, most of us, not, ALL OF US, not most, they have certain rights, we don't know, we don't understand.

VWT: Yeah?

VENUS: And they take advantage, they REALLY take advantage of you. Nobody to stand for you, who is going to stand for you? Nobody. (Venus: 521-528)

To begin with, Venus was not aware of work practices and no one explained procedures that follow a work injury like the one she suffered. Having had surgery on a Friday, she was expected to return to work on the following Monday but she could not and went back on the Tuesday. Then she was told to swap her rostered day off for a check up at the surgery. Venus said she had to negotiate time off as best as she could within what she felt was right.

Extract 5.24

VWT: And what did your supervisor say?

VENUS: He didn't say anything to me just that they do the normal procedure, they recorded the incident and what went wrong, […] But they wanted me to swap my day off to swap my, and fix my appointment on my day off.

VWT: Really?

VENUS: I said I'm not going to do it because that's my day off. So we're still arguing about that, we started that on Friday. I said I'm not going to do it, that's my day off. And I even complained to them I say, you know what I'm even my housework, I can't do my housework, even going to TAFE I'm behind.

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VWT:	Yeah.
VENUS:	If I didn't finish my module I have to pay again all of my next year, I didn't complain. And they want me to swap my day my appointment for my day off. Because they don't want to lose their time.
VWT:	Yes.
VENUS:	Then I go to work, I say I'm not going to do this we're still arguing about that.
VWT:	Yeah. So you're standing firm and you do your own arguing, or you get someone to do it?
VENUS:	Well, when they told me on Friday I say I'm not going to do it, because I know that's my day off.
VWT:	Yeah.
VENUS:	It's my own right, I'm not going to do it, so I don't know what they're going to, what's going to be next. (Venus: 461-490)

Nevertheless, Venus said that she was thankful that at least she had language skills to be able to negotiate – or argue, as she prefers to call it – with the employer.

Venus said that after four years she was beginning to get used to life in C-Town and she had no plans of moving elsewhere. Her main concerns at the time of the interview were to ensure that she heals properly from her work injury and that her other son joins them. So far her attempts to sponsor him to Australia have been unsuccessful and that makes her quite unhappy. Venus continues to take care of him and other family members by regular remittances and she hopes to bring him over in order to feel complete. She said that once he gets to Australia she will find a better job, take up more study and work less.

In sum, Venus is from a line of working women who were not afraid of hard work. Like her mother before her, she had raised her children mostly by herself. Although she believed she had English and qualifications to find skilled work, she was prepared to do whatever work

she could find in C-Town to provide for them. As a mother, she was particularly concerned about her adult son left back in Sierra Leone and, knowing the difficult financial conditions under which he was living, she felt that she needed to help him with regular remittances until she could bring him to Australia. Her initial plans to get into gender-prescribed aged-care job did not work out but she did not shy away from hard work in the abattoir, work mostly reserved for men, because that was the only way to earn money at the time. As Piller and Lising (2014) succinctly described in their study of Filipino meat workers, abattoir workers "led lives that were focused on work, and even their personal time was closely circumscribed by the demands of heavy physical work, long shifts, and exhaustion they result in" (p. 51). To that regimen Venus combined evening study at TAFE in a bid to attain local qualifications and navigate out of marginalised employment and a better life. In the end, she suffered a work injury with little information about her work rights and workplace policy which further complicates her work plans and settlement trajectory.

In the case study that follows, the focal point is Sally, a woman from the tertiary-educated sub-group and a family reunion migrant from Zimbabwe who joined her husband in Sydney.

5.6 Case Study 2: Sally

This case study will be used to look at another woman's experience of linguistic and cultural capital erasure in Australia. This time from the tertiary educated sub-group, Sally's story will be used as a focal point to explore themes identified within this sub-group's experiences. Unlike Venus, she was one of a small number of skilled professionals who had initially taken a low-skill job but was later able to transition into a fulltime position that was on par with her pre-migration qualifications and skill area. Yet she continues to be exposed to discourses of racialised gender in the workplace and in the broader social arena.

Sally is in her late thirties and both she and her husband are Shona from Zimbabwe. She speaks, reads and writes Shona, her heritage language which was learnt as a subject in school.

English was the main medium of education throughout her schooling and university studies. She describes her English as "perfect". Sally completed a university diploma in teaching and taught in English at a high school in Zimbabwe. In 2001, her husband migrated to Australia as an auto-mechanic on a 457 visa, and the following year she and their three children, then ten, seven and five years old joined him in Sydney.

On arriving in Australia, she found that the English, particularly the accent, was different but she did not feel that would be a barrier to interacting with people and finding work.

> Extract 5.25
> SALLY: Yeah I didn't yeah I didn't have that language barrier here. Of course there was a bit of problem with understanding, you know the accent and things like that. But with time I was able to understand the Australian accent. But initially it was very difficult for me to hear what they saying@@@
>
> VWT: So how were you able to cross that accent problem? How were you able to understand now what they're saying?
>
> SALLY: I just it was just you know keeping on interacting with them. With time I got to learn and through the television and you know with time you just get to know that's how they speak. It took a while but I think it was just practice and keeping on hearing them talking and communicating with them, yeah.
> (Sally: 96-111)

Sally explained that, due to their visa conditions, she and her family were not entitled to settlement help and although her husband was working she also needed to work as she had done previously back in their home country.

In Australia, Sally found that as a foreign trained teacher she did not have the local requirements for teaching. Then, from her networks – mostly people she met in Sydney within her community – she learnt that the easiest job to enter as a black African woman was care-work in a nursing home. So she put her career identity as a teacher aside and made the

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shift with the following explanation: "And you know we need to survive here, so the first job I got was a nursing home". Within a few months of her arrival she had completed training in aged-care and found work in a nursing home. But her plan was not to stay in the nursing home. While working there, she was also looking out for better job opportunities. One day that breakthrough arose when she saw an advertised position that seemed to fit her pre-migration qualification and local experience. She applied and was successful:

> Extract 5.26
> So to get this job [health education] actually what happened was they were looking for somebody [from an African background] with a bit of education background a little bit of health. […] So I used as that of the health that they required and I used my education background they required. So I got the job. (Sally: 20-29)

Sally said she drew on her pre-migration teaching qualification and the local experience in health accumulated from working in the nursing home to satisfy the requirements for the role. Thus she was successful in making the move from care-work to a career in social work in which she was working at the time of her interview. By then, too, she had taken up part-time study in adult education at bachelor level in a university to build on that career and was feeling very pleased with her progress.

Although Sally's career trajectory has not been linear, compared to most of the women arriving in this group with English proficiency and skills, she acknowledges that she has done well for herself and she acknowledges as well the crucial role that having English played: "And I also feel sorry for people with no English. I think it must be very hard for them". At the same time, and in spite of her success at getting a job at par with her qualification, she points out that her adjustment processes were also complicated by her positioning as an inferior 'other'. These are present in examples she provides of her experiences which indicate the theme of symbolic violence and power inequities between interlocutors and embodied

symbolic capital (see Chapter 2). These emerge in racialised discourses of work colleagues' perceptions of black Africans. Below is her account of some of her experiences:

Extract 5.27

erm I think what I can say is, in a number of erm of instances there is a bit of I don't know if I can call it racial you know racial remarks. Sometimes I usually think it's very racial. You know for example if somebody says aw how come you speak that good English, where did you learn it? You know or if they see you doing one thing they will just think you shouldn't be able to that just because you are @African or things like that@ so I just don't like it when people do that. Or they are telling me oh I remember just this one. When I was working with another lady you know she is Asian. So I think she saw me driving. And she came to me afterwards. She said aw I saw you driving. I said yes? Then she said aw aren't you a clever girl aw very clever. So I thought what does that mean? Just because I'm driving means I'm clever? Is it because you know @@ of my colour I'm not supposed to be driving or what? So such things. And also I've had cases of my husband you know because he is a mechanic, they would ask him where did you learn to fix this? Do you have cars in Zimbabwe? Do you have equipment in Zimbabwe? Did you learn all this here? You know some people tend not to understand where we come, they think we come from the bush. I used to have a neighbour too. Who is so where you come from, you would get up in the morning and all the crops are eaten by the elephants @@@@@she thinks we've got elephants in our backyard and I tell her that I've never even seen an elephant@ @@@@@@ It's very funny but you know such remarks you always come across hmmm. (Sally: 440-471)

Workplaces as social arenas are a reflection of broader socially configured hierarchies. This case study shows a number of points. Firstly, Sally suffered employment discrimination like most of the participants in this sub-group. As a black African woman migrant, regardless of her proficiency in English and her professional qualifications, she was directed towards a certain job type which resulted in her deskilling in order to enter the labour market. Secondly, it is only after deskilling that she accrues local skills. Then, having drawn on her pre-

migration skills and locally accrued skills, she was able to negotiate out of that positioning into a career at par with her pre-migration career. That is not the normal pattern for this group with most still struggling to enter fulltime positions that are at par with their skill areas.

Even so, in work discourses Sally finds that existing hierarchies enable her positioning as an inferior other and mean she is gazed down upon by work colleagues who question the legitimacy of her English with questions such as – "how come you speak that good English, where did you learn it?" Allowed within existing hierarchies to perceive themselves as higher, work colleagues from other ethnicities also inquire about the legitimacy not only of her linguistic skills but of other cultural capital such as driving a car – "Then she said aw aren't you a clever girl aw very clever. So I thought what does that mean? Just because I'm driving means I'm clever? Is it because you know @@ of my colour I'm not supposed to be driving or what?" Also embedded in such experience is a gendered process that Creese (2011, p. 52) refers to as being "infantalized" which happens often to black African women who are more likely than their male peers to become targets of explicit and public harassment and aggression. Further evidence of that situation can be seen in the difference between the line of question in her workplace and the line of questioning in her husband's workplace – "where did you learn to fix this? Do you have cars in Zimbabwe? Do you have equipment in Zimbabwe? Did you learn all this here?"

Finding herself in a hierarchical social arena which does not favour her, and based on her own and her husband's experiences of subtle and not so subtle racist comments from work colleagues and even her neighbour, made Sally to doubt whether they would ever be seen on equal terms. For instance, Sally felt doubtful that taking up citizenship in Australia would bring her any sense of inclusion and belonging in Australia. For her, if anything at all, she felt that the chances are that she will be further inferiorised and constructed as "a second class

citizen" which to her would be an unpleasant and annoying imposition. She explained her position on holding off taking up citizenship as follows:

> Extract 5.28
> You know here you will always be a second class citizen. That's, it annoys me@@@ You'll never be the same, you know with them. You will always be, like I was laughing the other day. I said even if our kids if they are old kids here, they will always be asked, where are you from? You know, even if you are citizen or whatever, you will always be asked, where are you from? (said in a manner mimicking Australian accent) (Sally: 718-727)

In effect, both women's sense of themselves in relation to employment and settlement in Australia were shaped by race, including racism in the workplace. For example, even though Sally was happy with her progress in terms of forging a desirable career, having successfully moved from care-work in a nursing home to the higher skill area of health worker, her particular experiences with her racialised positioning in the workplace, together with her husband's positioning in workplace discourse, were sources of concern for her. She has found racism permeating her, her husband's and her children's participation in Australian society.

Both women experienced racialised gender in how their career pathways shaped out in Australia. Despite the fact that the two women come from different career backgrounds, racialised, gendered post-migration processes led their careers to converge into care-work. Another effect of racialised gender in both women's experiences is employment inequality. Both had first to identify with lower skill career areas for entry into a gendered labour market. For the women, entry into these career levels was at lower levels compared to their pre-migration qualification levels and these are the points at which they begin to negotiate job mobility and move to work commensurate with those pre-migration skill areas. As both women identify further study and local qualifications to be crucial to job mobility, they were working fulltime and also studying.

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In sum, these women's examples indicate that, as people who were contributing members to the labour market in their pre-migration contexts, they were looking forward to opportunities to participate in the labour market in the new context. Yet these were constrained by structural forces which pushed them to accept jobs below their qualifications. Although they evaluated their language and qualifications positively and positioned themselves as people capable of working in their skilled areas, their racialised identities and their interplay with gender were crucial factors that intersected and shaped their employment and settlement choices. Nevertheless, the women continued to actively seek ways to enter desirable work at their level and to create a sense of belonging for themselves and their families in Australia.

5.7 Summary

The discussion in this first analysis chapter has looked at the language learning and settlement trajectories of migrants in Group 1 who arrive with English proficiency and pre-migration qualifications to negotiate life in Australia only to find a mismatch between their perceptions of them and mainstream perspectives about their needs and abilities. The majority were unable to find jobs commensurate with the skills they brought. Issues were discussed in relation to the difficulties these migrants faced in a context where not all migrant are eligible for settlement help, and in a context that supports perspectives which position them as deficient in English in order to provide them settlement help. The participants in this group feel that race more than anything was fundamental to their deficient positioning both linguistically and in terms of participating in skilled positions in employment. The next chapter will look at issues that emerge with participants in Group 2: well-educated participants who were educated in a language other than English.

CHAPTER 6

6. Well-educated through LOTE medium

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the language learning and settlement experiences of the category of participants identified in the matrix in Chapter 4 as: well-educated through a LOTE medium of instruction with low to no proficiency in English. Specifically, it constitutes an inquiry into the effects that a high level of education has on English language learning and the transformation of educational credentials obtained in a language other than English (LOTE) context in Australia. In doing so, the chapter also addresses the third research question:

> *RQ 3: What are the English language learning experiences and settlement trajectories of well-educated migrants from non-Anglophone African countries who arrive without English proficiency?*

The category identified as well-educated in a LOTE with low to no proficiency in English is made up of participants who have received education from Arabic-speaking or French-speaking African countries where these two languages are the medium of instruction (MoI) at the highest level of education they attained. Therefore they arrived in Australia with literacy and proficiency mainly in these two languages, the one being a Romance language closely related to English, a Germanic language, and written in the Latin alphabet while the other is an Afro-Asiatic language written in the Arabic alphabet. Table 6.1 summarises the participants' LOTE, the highest level of education received with LOTE as MoI and their self-rated proficiency in English on arrival in Australia.

Table 6.1   Sociobiographic information about the participants (N=7)

Participant (age)	Country of origin/transit	Year of arrival in Australia	Languages other than English (LOTE)*	Highest Education attained with a LOTE as MoI	Self-rated English proficiency on arrival in Australia
Marina (20)	Sudan/Egypt	2006	Bari, **Arabic**	High school	"can't understand
Serena (26)	Sudan/Egypt	2006	Dinka, **Arabic**	High school graduate	"not really"
Mustapha (24)	Sudan/Egypt	2007	**Arabic**	High school	"a little"
Genevieve (42)	Congo (DRC)	2002	Lingala, Kikongo, Kiswahili, **French**	University graduate	"can't speak"
Ernestine (39)	Congo (DRC)/ South Africa	2006	Lingala, Kikongo, Kiswahili, **French**	Vocational diploma	"no English"
Samuel (44)	Congo (DRC)/ South Africa	2006	Tshiluba, Lingala, Kikongo, Kiswahili, **French**	University graduate	"little bit"
Thomas (27)	Burundi/ Tanzania	2008	Kirundi, Kiswahili, **French**	High school	"little bit"

* The language of instruction at their highest level of education attained is in boldface.

They come from three different countries. Three of the younger participants (Marina, Serena, Mustapha) come from Sudan, and a fourth is from Burundi (Thomas). The remaining three come from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Genevieve, Ernestine, Samuel). Within those countries they also come from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds as shown in their repertoire of languages. Even so, they share a common language in the national language and/or lingua franca (see Table 6.1). Arabic is the common language in the repertoires of those from Sudan while Kiswahili and French are common languages in the repertoires of those from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. Prior to coming to Australia, all but one participant (Genevieve) had lived in a second country from where they migrated through the humanitarian visa stream. As the last column in the table

shows, three of the participants (Mustapha, Thomas, Samuel) indicated having some proficiency in English in the repertoire of languages they brought to Australia.

Well-educated with low to no English designates two groups of participants. One group is made up of those who attained post-secondary school qualifications in a LOTE. The second group is made up of those who received secondary school education in a LOTE medium of instruction but who, due to external factors of forced migration, experienced disruptions to their education. While this second group may not be considered as 'highly-educated' in Western contexts, I have included them because all of them expected to achieve post-secondary education had they not experienced forced migration and thus an interruption of the educational careers. In addition, their experiences throw a spot light on class and privilege and how education and literacy held the promise of success for individual and familial progress in life and how this aspiration for a post-secondary education influenced their post-migration language learning choices and aspirations.

As already mentioned, French and Arabic were the main languages of education for these participants from Burundian, Congolese and Sudanese backgrounds. In the Burundian and the Congolese contexts, both of which are former Belgian colonies and part of a larger French-speaking African context, higher education was modelled on the French and Belgian educational systems (Shabani, 2006, p. 487). Following that model, on completion of secondary education and qualifying for the award of a Diplôme d'Etat, French-speaking Africans obtained tertiary education through university or non-university institutions also known as technological institutions or pedagogical institutions which train technicians and teachers respectively. Table 6.2 provides an example of the structure that pertains to the Congolese context.

Table 6.2   Structure of the higher education system in Congo (DRC)

Higher Education level	Type of school	Minimum entry qualification	Duration (years)	Certificate/ diploma awarded
University	University	Diplôme d'Etat – cycle long	1st cycle- 3 years	*Graduat*
			2nd cycle- 2 years	*Licencié**
			3rd cycle- 2 years	*Diplôme d'études supérieures*
	University	Diplôme d'Etudes superieures	4-7 years	*Doctorat*
Non-university	Institut Supérieur Pédagogique (ISP)	Diplôme d'Etat – cycle long	1st cycle- 3 years	*Graduat en pédagogie appliquee***
			2nd cycle- 2 years	*Licencié en pédagogie appliquee****
	Institut Supérieur Technique (IST)	Diplôme d'Etat – cycle long	1st cycle- 3 years	*Ingénieurs techniciens*
			2nd cycle- 2 years	*Ingénieurs*

Notes: * In medicine and veterinary medicine, this stage lasts for three years and leads to the title of *docteur en medicine/ docteur en medicine vétérinaire.*
** Qualified to teach the first four years of secondary school.
*** Qualified to teach the final two years of secondary school (higher education).

Source: Table adapted from The World Bank (2005, pp. 22-23)

As Table 6.2 shows, higher education consists of university or non-university study for a three-year undergraduate and a two-year post-graduate study. Doctorates are attained only in the universities. On the completion of the three-year university study one receives the undergraduate (*graduat*) award. Those who complete the three-year non-university pedagogical institutional education receive awards to teach in secondary schools (graduat en *pédagogie*); and those who complete the three-year non-university technological institutional education receive technicians (*ingénieurs techniciens*) award. All the three Congolese participants had received university education at the undergraduate (*graduat*) level.

The Arabic-speaking participants had lived in the northern part of Sudan where Arabic dominated and was the MoI throughout their educational careers. For them general education consisted of thirteen years of schooling which is made up two years of pre-school, eight years of basic school and three years of secondary school (The World Bank, 2012, p. 61), but, all of the participants from Sudan in this group had experienced disruptions to their education at secondary level. Had they continued with their education they believed that they would have pursued tertiary education in any of the five types of higher educational institutions – public universities, public technical colleges, private universities, philanthropic universities and private colleges – in which the universities confer degrees and the colleges confer diplomas (The World Bank, 2012).

This chapter explores how educational attainment or educational aspirations for those who experience disrupted education influence their English language learning and settlement trajectories. The chapter is organised as follows. It begins with their pre-migration educational and language learning experiences which provide the background for the level of on-arrival English proficiency and communicative competence they reported. Next, it explores specific language situations arising in their reflections on their post-migration English learning experiences as new migrants with competing needs for everyday living and a quest for better opportunities in Australia. Finally, two participants' language learning and settlement trajectories are presented as individual case studies. Genevieve's story will illustrate identity and language learning experiences arising for a mature adult well-educated in French. It will track her trajectory as a new migrant who arrived without permanent residency status, the challenges she faced and how she acquired resources through previously learnt skills for self-development and participation in community practices. Marina's story is showcased to explore identity and language issues arising for a younger adult who had experienced disrupted education. It also illustrates the tensions between forced migration, linguistic limitations and post-migration aspirations.

6.2 Pre-migration experiences of education and English language learning

Pre-migration education and language learning backgrounds provided by all the participants in this category have been summarised in the fourth and fifth columns in Table 6.1 under the titles Languages other than English (LOTE) and Highest Education attained with a LOTE as MoI. The participants were tertiary-educated (Section 6.2.1) or tertiary-education aspirants who experienced disrupted educational careers (Section 6.2.2). In terms of English proficiency on arrival, they reported having low to no proficiency in English as shown in the table. However, some said they learnt English as a school subject (Section 6.2.3) and some learnt it for communication in transit countries (Section 6.2.4).

6.2.1 Tertiary-educated participants

All the tertiary-educated participants (Samuel, Ernestine, Genevieve) came from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and they were all educated in French as the MoI at their highest level of education. They came from large family backgrounds of eight or more children where gender did not determine whether they could be educated or not. They all reflected on their educational attainments with pride. Ernestine, a woman in her late thirties, said she was number eight of twelve siblings – seven boys and five girls. She talked about her four-year post-secondary school study in a medical college at the end of which she qualified with a diploma in nursing. Samuel, who is in his forties and married to Ernestine, told of how his parents were not so highly-educated but did their best to educate him and all his brothers and sisters. He said that out of thirteen siblings, he was the only one who was able to attain a university degree. Genevieve, a woman in her forties, came from a comparatively smaller family of eight siblings. She described her educational experience right from her school years through to university level, emphasising the importance of education to her parents.

> Extract 6.1
> I've got seven siblings, so we have a big family of four boys and four girls. I'm the third one, third one in my family and erm I did my primary school and high school in, my primary

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school first in Belgian School [Belgian owned international school] so erm my dad, my father wanted the best education for us, […] Then the President of my country didn't want us to do, to be in connection with foreigners and outsiders, he wanted us to use locally, everything locally our own schools. And then my father put me in another school. But it was a good school because they wanted the best education for us. And then I finish my high school, I did university. I studied communication, journalism and public relations. I got erm I'm a Bachelor, got a degree, Bachelor degree in communication. (Genevieve: 22-39)

The main reason behind the family sacrifices and these participants' individual hard work towards educational attainment was that, for all of them, a high level of education determined whether they would be able to access good employment, earn good incomes and afford to look after themselves as well as the collective needs of their families when they arose. They and their families made conscious efforts to ensure that they were well positioned in that way. To that end, even when macro-level policy dictated a levelling of educational access within the country, as Genevieve's comment reveals, at the meso-level some parents showed resistance by taking extra measures to ensure that their children were positioned competitively educationally for gainful employment in the future. And at the micro-level the participants as individuals studied hard to attain the envisaged tertiary level education and employment.

Indeed, all three of them said they used their tertiary skills to work before they were forced to leave their country. Samuel said he worked with his degree in psychology and was a human rights activist. Ernestine worked with her nursing diploma in a hospital. Genevieve applied her degree in communications in an educational institution and also as a freelance journalist before leaving the country. Out of the three, only Ernestine experienced an interruption to her career prior to her forced migration. She said she had to put her career on hold and take on domestic duties within two years of getting married to Samuel when her first child was born. Clearly, in terms of education for this group gender, was not a discriminatory factor as it was

for other groups in this study (see Chapter 7 and Chapter 8). However, gender was present as an influential factor in career advancement for women in marriage situations with implications for the post-migration context as the analysis shows.

6.2.2 Disrupted educational careers

Disrupted educational careers refers to the experiences of a group of four younger participants (Thomas, Mustapha, Serena, Marina), all of whom were in the 20-30 age bracket and whose educational careers were cut short at the secondary school level. Like the previous group they and their families valued and believed in education as a resource for progress. They all said they were on track to accessing tertiary level education and would have completed that level of education had not those aspirations been cut short because of forced migration resulting primarily from war (Thomas, Mustapha, Serena) and poverty (Marina). Compared to the previous group, they had experienced forced migration at a younger age. They had also lived for at least two years in a second country without opportunities for attaining tertiary education in those countries. They were the ones who reflected most on lost opportunities for furthering their education. They were also the ones who emphasised their abilities in learning and having the foundation to build on in the post-migration context (Section 6.3).

Reflecting on lost opportunities – below is a typical example from Serena who had just completed her secondary schooling when she and her family were forced to leave Sudan due to war.

> Extract 6.2
> I finish high school but I didn't go to uni. […] if I was still in Sudan I will go to uni, and if I finish uni of course I will find a job because in Sudan it's good when you finish uni, you find whatever you study you find a job from it. […] So it's because I didn't stay […] after I finish my high school I went to Egypt. (Serena: 30-42)

Serena also recounted how she grew up in northern Sudan in an Arabic-stream school and emphasised that she was a high-achieving student with a lot of potential to go beyond secondary school.

> Extract 6.3
> All the school in Arabic and there are college in English […] but I was in Arabic school. Actually I was, I love to study you know, I love to read and I don't like myself in a class to be last or you know? I always like to be in the first ten. Yeah so I was a good student, I was a good student. (Serena: 103-115)

Marina also said the following:

> Extract 6.4
> In Sudan I'm very clever in Arabic. In Sudan if I'm in Sudan like maybe now I am in uni. Because all my friends that were with me in the same class, they've been in uni now. (Marina: 365-367)

Likewise, Thomas and Mustapha who grew up in Burundi and Sudan respectively also said that they were high achieving students whose secondary schooling was disrupted when they had to flee their respective countries due to war. Marina arrived on a humanitarian visa but her middle class family had earlier experienced poverty with the sudden and unexpected death of her father which led to her mother's decision to take her young family to live in Egypt.

> Extract 6.5
> And after he died my mum said I wanna take you out to other country. Because it is going to be difficult to look after you after your dad is died. And we came to Egypt with my mum. (Marina: 165-169)

Marina said her mother's main concern was to educate them well but their circumstances did not change in Egypt where her mother was still unable to provide for them and send them to school (see Section 6.5). Her mother's next attempt was to apply to migrate with them to

Australia but sadly she died before they could leave for Australia and as a result Marina, herself a youth, inherited the responsibility of looking after her four younger siblings.

What was common for the participants is that they had had a taste of middle-class privilege that drove them beyond primary level education in contexts where barriers to educational attainment abound with very high school dropout rates (UNESCO-UIS, 2010, 2013). For them, higher education would have meant acquiring knowledge and skills to get into a good job for their own benefit as well as for their families and communities collectively. In the migration context those values and aspirations surfaced as they accessed language learning to build on their truncated educational careers (Section 6.3).

6.2.3 English as a school subject

The participants explained that English was taught as a school subject in non-English-speaking African countries and pointed to their countries' language-in-education policies and the status of English in them. Taking the Democratic Republic of the Congo as an example, English was introduced as an obligatory foreign language in secondary schools in the late 1950s and was a required subject for one year at university level (Bokamba, 2008, p. 232). However, the fact that English was taught in secondary school and up to university level did not necessarily mean it was popular, nor was there any use for English beyond the classroom. Indeed, all the participants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo said that they did not learn it for communicative purposes outside of the classroom setting but to satisfy course requirements. Below are typical examples of what participants said about the learning and use of English in their country in their formative years:

> Extract 6.6
> I've learned English at school but it was erm we don't practice. Because as I said I have a good education, so we have English program in school, high school and university in my country so it was opportunity for us to learn English, but we don't like English and we don't practice. But now I think it's becoming famous. (Genevieve: 153-158)

Extract 6.7

we are from French speak, French yeah French speaker but we try to pick up some. We go to

school and learn, we have the knowledge, English speak knowledge before. We go to school.

(Samuel: 115-119)

Similarly, the participants who grew up in Sudan said English was taught as a subject but

they did not learn it for communication outside of class. Marina said the following.

Extract 6.8

Before I come I can't understand but now I can understand […] yeah because in Sudan I used

to go to school and they give us English too. But one lesson. But here is every day. (Marina:

100-104)

Such comments confirm the global prestige of English but show also that in their countries

English had a foreign language status and was not used for day to day activities. Furthermore,

English did not determine the value of people's education. However, they know from

experience that English is important for education and for living in a country where it is the

dominant language. Most of them found that out when they lived in a second and English-

speaking country before coming to Australia and learned English in those countries (Section

6.2.4). Others found it out for the first time in Australia (Section 6.2.5).

6.2.4 English for communication in transit countries

Living in another country before resettlement in Australia allowed some of the participants to

learn English as a lingua franca. The above table shows that three of the participants (Samuel,

Thomas, Mustapha) reported having arrived with "a little bit" of English. These participants

said they learnt English informally in countries they lived in before coming to Australia.

Extract 6.9

As I said I learn some English from South Africa. And I'm saying I'm learn, I learn in the

community not the school. (Samuel: 130-132)

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Thomas and Mustapha said they had learnt English informally while living in Tanzania and Egypt respectively. Thomas lived in a refugee camp in Tanzania for ten years and, during that period, he was able to learn informally both Kiswahili and English, which were the main lingua francas for people in the camp. Mustapha said that in Egypt language was not a problem because he could speak Arabic. However, his brother, who was sponsoring him to Australia, stressed the importance of having English to live here. So he learned English words from friends in Egypt and also taught himself English from books he bought during the two-year period whilst he was waiting for his papers to be approved for migration to Australia. Among the three of them, Samuel was the most articulate about his English learning for communication in transit. Below is the conversation we had about his English learning in South Africa:

Extract 6.10

SAMUEL: It was great trouble just when you fly to South Africa, because we are going we face the new culture, new people, new civilisation, everything was new to us.

VWT: In South Africa?

SAMUEL: In South Africa.

VWT: Okay.

SAMUEL: Now we have to check the ways, communicating with those people and integrating in the society. That's why we are, our first concern. From that concern, we find ourselves in obligation to learn English, to force to learn English, it's like that we thought now about the new language. Yeah it's from that idea of facing new cultures and others, yeah.

VWT: Okay. So how did you force to learn English in South Africa?

SAMUEL: It was not easy. The way to force was just to check for example your friends, to be with those people the English people speaker, all the time, that's was the major.

VWT: Okay.

SAMUEL: Because no other way. (Samuel: 208-228)

In the above (Extract 6.10), Samuel paints a picture of flight and desperation for survival which precluded any thoughts about language. As he explains, it was only after they had reached the host country that they found language surfacing as an issue and a critical barrier that must be negotiated for day to day living in the new setting. Under that challenging circumstance, he said that he had to "force [himself] to learn the English". What he describes as being forced to learn English entailed immersion into the local community and tapping into his social capital – "to be with those people the English people speaker, all the time" – to build discursive competence in English for survival. However, he and his wife (Ernestine) mentioned that she was not able to learn English informally in South Africa. She describes what happened to her in South Africa as follows:

Extract 6.11
In South Africa I could not even speak like I'm talking here, it was very hard even to say, to greet somebody, it was a difficult for me. Yeah, and I was just talking in myself, if I can if and they talk somebody or write something down. I was just always asking myself those kind of questions. (Ernestine: 47-50)

Ernestine's description reflects her struggle without communicative skills in English when she was in transit. Unlike Samuel who immersed himself into the community language which he was able to learn informally, she said that she did not adopt that strategy because she did not have the skills to perform basic speech acts such as greetings in English which would have been valuable precursors to interacting within the community. She found that, left to her own devices and without knowledge of how to perform such important discursive practices,

she was unable to immerse herself into the community and build social connections which would have helped her to learn the language informally.

6.2.5 Summary

This section has presented an overview of participants' pre-migration sociobiographic backgrounds and what they reported about their educational backgrounds and English language learning experiences before they arrived in Australia. The section has shown that participants and their families valued education and invested highly in it with the hope of building bright futures for each participant individually and their family's future. English had a foreign language status in their countries and educational attainment was not contingent on having proficiency in English. The section has also shown that gender was not a discriminatory factor for these participants' educational attainment as it was for other participants (see Chapter 7 and Chapter 8). However, gender reflected in their career advancement when patriarchal values they embrace meant that, in marital situations, the woman would be the one who shelves career advancement to take up domestic roles.

In the section that follows, I will explore their formal English learning experiences and the influences that those and their educational backgrounds may have had on their L2 learning and career paths in Australia.

6.3 Experiences of language learning and settlement

Once in Australia, the participants took up formal language learning which they accessed through the government-assisted AMEP program like most migrants who qualify for that provision. Six of the seven participants in this category who migrated through the humanitarian visa stream and who were eligible on arrival all enrolled in the program in the first few weeks of their arrival. Genevieve was the only participant who arrived as a tourist and applied for and gained asylum onshore. She was not eligible for the program during the

two-year period that her permanent residency application was being considered. She enrolled and took up formal English language learning once her entitlement became available.

All of them saw English language learning as essential for living in and participating in Australian society. Living in Australia without oracy and literacy skills in English was debilitating. The experience of a migrant learner living without literacy in English in Australia was described by Serena:

> Extract 6.12
> I'm trying, I'm trying my best and sometimes when, before now, before you know I learn a little bit, it was hard for me because everywhere, I have to go to Centrelink and I have to fill form. And sometimes I just take the form without filling and we just go and talk there, but sometimes I don't understand the letter, they you know they send to me and I have to go back. So sometimes you just talk and sometimes they don't understand what you're saying so they have to say, what? I don't understanding, I don't get you, so you have to explain it more more, and sometimes I get really ashamed by myself, why I don't know this and why you know, yeah so at time I just say oh no I have to, you know to learn and they have to understand what I'm saying […] so you know I'm trying my best to learn. (Serena: 1469-1474)

As Serena points out, linguistic limitations had affected her communicative behaviour in social interaction leaving her with a diminished sense of self. Nevertheless she was motivated to continue investing in English language learning to improve her language performance and literacy.

While the above example illustrates the urgent need to acquire formal and communicative skills in English – and in addition to contextual constraints such as competing needs, age, gender, race and visa status – some adult learners' pre-migration literacy languages have implications for the development of communicative competence and literacy skills in English as previous research indicate (Bigelow, 2010; Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; Rabab'ah, 2003;

Wang, Koda, & Perfetti, 2003). For example a study which tested the effect of different writing systems on college students learning to read English as a second language (Wang, et al., 2003) found that knowledge of alphabetic or non-alphabetic orthography influenced ESL performance differences of learners from the two groups.

Research has shown that the formal English language learning trajectories of those educated through Arabic-medium instruction and those educated through French-medium instruction are quite distinct. The former are learning print literacy in a script system which is different from the script in which they have acquired print literacy. Also, in terms of oracy, Arabic has a different vowel system to English (Saigh & Schmitt, 2012). The latter are learning literacy in a language which may share a similar alphabetic script system but which does not share the same phonological system (Capliez, 2011). In addition, French-educated participants in this study are comparatively more highly educated than their counterparts and therefore may have more defined educational skills on which they may be able to draw for formal language learning purposes. Therefore, it was necessary to look separately at the English language learning experiences of Arabic-speaking and French-speaking participants as learners who also have the mastery of writing in Arabic or French. The rest of the section explores the formal English language learning experiences in Australian contexts for the Arabic-educated (Section 6.3.1) followed by the French-educated participants (Section 6.3.2).

6.3.1 Formal language learning and Arabic speakers

Arabic speaker challenges encountered while learning English are well documented in the literature (e.g., Abu-Rabia & Siegel, 2002; Ahmad, 2011; I. A. Khan & Itoo, 2012; Linebaugh & Roche, 2013; Rabab'ah, 2003; Randall & Meara, 1988; Ryan & Meara, 1991). Specific challenges include difficulty with orthography due to different alphabet systems, significant grammatical, vocabulary and pronunciation differences. In the ESL context of a

British university setting, Saigh and Schmitt (2012) defined the difficulties they found with their Arabic-speaking participants as follows:

… some Arabs have considerable difficulty with selecting or recognising vowels, especially short vowels, in reading or writing due to orthographic and literacy saliency strategies transferred from their L1 …. Specifically, short vowels seem problematic, and so may require additional attention, or perhaps even a different type of instruction than long vowels. (Saigh & Schmitt, 2012, p. 33)

In addition, Arabic speakers in ESL contexts were found to face the issue of lack of familiarity with the teaching style, lack of exposure to the target language and lack of practice in the language and different communicative strategies in the target language (Jdetawy, 2011; Rabab'ah, 2003). The formal language learning experiences of the participants in this study who were educated in Arabic medium are consistent with previous studies. They used descriptors such as "hard", "can't understand", "can't read", "can't write" and "can't speak" to sum up their struggle with learning both oracy and literacy skills in English. Specific examples of learner challenges they elaborated on related to the monolingual medium of delivery which contrasts with what pertained in their previous learning context.

Extract 6.13
this now is different you know? In Arabic because you can understand the teacher or whatever he say, she said or he say you can understand what they are saying. So but now in English it's hard to understand all the things they said, even if you understand what all they said you can't read all the thing in the book. (Serena: 755-761)

That statement points to the tensions Arabic-educated English learners face in a monolingual ESL classroom. The participants' speech samples show improvement in oracy skills and communicative competence from the low English proficiency level they reported arriving with in Australia two years prior to the interview (see Table 6.1). This shows that Arabic-educated language learners experience tensions which are not a result of cognitive deficiency

and a lack of competence on their part but rather because they are learning in a context that has not adequately understood their needs and capabilities to support them in the development of literacy skills in English. Arabic speaker difficulties in negotiating access to literacy in English are real (see Extract 6.13). Therefore the Arabic-educated will benefit from a rethinking and reimagining of their specific learner needs and abilities to enhance their language learning experience. The next section will look at the experiences of French speakers learning English for settlement.

6.3.2 Formal language learning and French speakers

French-speaking students of English have learnt a language which belongs to the Romance family with which the Germanic language, English has shared features as well as differences. French and English share the same twenty-six letter alphabet but French has additional letters with diacritics. French-speaker challenges encountered while learning English have been identified in relation to phonological differences between the two languages.

> The obvious differences between English and French phonologies are at the origin of the problems that French speakers have with English pronunciation. Not only the stress and accent systems, but more generally the prosodic structures of the two languages share hardly any characteristics. (Capliez, 2011, p. 1)

As such, the two languages may share similar roots and many vocabulary items orthographically but their phonological differences may pose challenges. Such is the case in instances where learners face words with the same spelling but may need different pronunciation and stresses, and also in instances where the meaning may not be the same for words with similar spelling (Capliez, 2011; Hodges, 2006).

In this study it was common for French speakers to point to learning to speak in English as "difficult" and "hard" compared to learning literacy skills in English. Unlike their Arabic-educated counterparts, these participants' experiences show that they were able to draw on

French to perform basic literacy practices in English even before they started formal English learning in Australia. Below is an example of what Genevieve said she was able to do in English when she arrived in Australia.

Extract 6.14
But it was not enough for me to write something. I was able to fill in a form, but not to go further you know? To speak, I was seeking an interpreter, French interpreter assistance. (Genevieve: 164-168)

Thomas, who was freshly enrolled in English studies having arrived in Australia six months prior to the interview, was the most explicit about his English language experiences:

Extract 6.15

VWT: Well how do you find the English class, how do you find it?

THOMAS: Yeah I found it well, but not on, not handle, it is not well because say sometimes you can find it too difficult to understand some things telling you teachers because you go to [AMEP Centre] to train in your even in language which is not, which you are not familiar with, yeah. Sometimes you, a teacher can tell you something and then you can, you can be misunderstood, misunderstand well what the teacher is talking about.

VWT: Okay. So when that happens what do you do?

THOMAS: Sometimes you so maybe I can say always because whenever I go to [AMEP Centre] I always need some new words to me in English, so maybe you know, I'm not I'm not used to the dictionary and then I have to hand up and then to ask my teacher what does this mean, but sometimes when my teacher explain something to me, yeah it can so maybe I find it still difficult too because I can't understand the word what he my teacher is speaking about. (Thomas: 179-198)

Thomas was unable to easily understand the teacher in class due to the monolingual teaching style which did not accommodate his individual learner needs. He emphasised the importance

of persisting in English language learning regardless of the challenges because being the educated one his young family, his wife and children, relied on him to be the language broker for their family. He was also language broker for his community which compared to other African communities in Australia is a recent and much smaller group. As he explained, language learning problems was often a key agenda topic for their community meetings:

> Extract 6.16
> Yeah, so many times we like to discuss about language, yeah. Because we are Burundian and so we don't know to speak English language as how other Australians speak it. And then we like to discuss it. So about the right assistance from government, [...] how many things we have to do in our community and how many things we need. (Thomas: 238-245)

The foregoing indicates that on the one hand the French educated participants may be better placed as English language learners compared to their Arabic educated counterparts and on the other hand both French and Arabic educated English language learner needs and abilities are in need of being adequately addressed. Future studies on each of these groups of English language learners may be able to shed more light on linguistic as well as contextual factors that affect their English learning for settlement.

6.4 Finding jobs and re-establishing careers

In this section I consider what the data for tertiary educated participants with pre-migration careers (Genevieve, Ernestine, Samuel) showed about re-establishing their careers in Australia and the role of language learning in that regard. Next I look at further education and the process of establishing careers with the participants who had experienced disruptions before they could realise their aspirations to tertiary education (Mustapha, Serena, Marina, Thomas).

Prior to coming to Australia, Genevieve, Ernestine and Samuel had qualifications and experience in different fields (see Section 6.2). At the time of their interviews, Ernestine had

experienced a gendered interruption to her English studies when she took time off for the birth of her third child and had just returned to English classes, while Samuel had left the English class and was in the second year of a nursing course at university. Genevieve was the only one among them who was working and had been able to re-establish career links.

Ernestine told me that she was making steady progress with formal English learning in contrast with what she found previously with informal learning (see Section 6.2.4). She said that despite taking time off from English lessons she believed her English was better than when she first arrived in Australia, two years prior to being interviewed. She said only with the improvement in English proficiency did she anticipate that she would be able to re-establish her nursing career in Australia and her belief was in line with that of her social network:

> Extract 6.17
> What I want to do, to continue my course about nursing. yeah because I spoke with one nurse and she is working in that hospital because I like to work in hospital, she say to me you have to finish first your English language […] before, because I was not able to speak English, I keeping my documents with me at home and like the friend that spoken with me one, she just say okay you will we will see how we can help you or to show you which way we have to do with your job net, yeah. (Ernestine: 221-247)

Even so, the above also illustrates how access to relevant official job information can be out of the reach of new migrants due to lack of English proficiency, lack of informed knowledge of the local employment context and lack of work experience (Abdelkerim & Grace, 2012). It also points to the issue of lack of recognition for overseas and LOTE-acquired qualifications and lack of systemic bridges to facilitate the transfer of such skills in the local context (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007). Without such structures and transparency in how to transfer skills in a LOTE, new migrants resort to relying on advice from their social network which may be problematic (see also Marina's example in Section 6.5). Thus, for these new migrants with

skills and qualifications in a LOTE, not having proficiency in English meant that their skills were invalidated and were not recognised without the prescribed level of English: "before, because I was not able to speak English, I keeping my documents with me at home". Genevieve also talked about forgetting her pre-migration skills in journalism when she did not have resident visa status (see Extract 6.23). However, once they were able to regain confidence which, in Genevieve's case, came with her approved residency status, and the linguistic competence to partake in interactions in English to build social networks, their sense of who they were returned and they were able to imagine the future with hope.

Future aspirations were linked primarily to perceived levels of English proficiency and making career decisions. For example, Samuel had left formal English learning after using up about three hundred of his allocated 510 hours. His English by then was enough to satisfy university admission requirements. He decided to change career path from human rights advocacy to enrolling in a nursing degree. He explained that his new choice of profession was a strategy to a quicker entry into employment:

> Extract 6.18
> VWT: Having done psychology in Congo, you've switched now to nursing here. What made you decide to do nursing?
>
> SAMUEL: It is simple. It's about integration.
>
> VWT: Okay.
>
> SAMUEL: We see that today the easy way to get in Australian community or to integrate in the in Australian community is to have job, and the simple job can have quickly or to make life easy, is that option you take. (Samuel: 262-270)

In sum, with previously learned educational skills to draw on, albeit in a LOTE and with improved confidence and competence in English the participants show capability in building on those skills by acquiring local qualifications to enhance their skills and their employability.

In relation to the four participants, (Mustapha, Serena, Marina, Thomas), prior to coming to Australia, they had all experienced disruptions to their secondary schooling before they could realise their aspirations to tertiary education. They all perceived that within the period that they had been learning English formally, they had made good progress in their language learning but that they must also build cultural capital for them to get good jobs. In other words, they valued education and therefore they were not aiming for low-skill jobs but wanted to access qualifications and skilled jobs and they had the same aspirations for their children (see Extract 6.19). For example, Thomas who had only been in the country for six months at the time of the interview, said he was waiting to complete his English course and start further training at TAFE to continue in his skill area to become an auto mechanic in Australia. Marina had been studying English for two years and said she wanted to train to be a doctor just like her late father (see Section 6.5). Serena said initially she wanted to study at university but had now decided to forget about furthering her educational career and instead master the language to be a good role model for her children's educational careers and position them for upward mobility in Australia.

Extract 6.19
SERENA: You know I don't, for me I don't dream now to uni. It's not because I can't do it, I can do it if I wanted.

VWT: Yeah.

SERENA: But I'm not going to go uni. What I want I've, you know I learn English and I will look for another job like what I just said, to go some, you know I can do another course and get a job from it. But what I want, why I want to learn English I want to you know to improve myself and to be able to read well and understand well, so if my kids one day went to school, so you know I will be able to help them. So because now when you see a lot of you know, what do you call them? The African who comes and they keep them in school, there's no-one helping them and they have to look around and sometimes you don't

know what your kids doing at school. So for me I don't like what I'm, what I see now. I want my kids whatever they do every day I have to know what they're doing and how they're going to school. (Serena: 1491-1508)

For Serena, competence in English was tied to her aspiration for her children's educational mobility and success: "I want to you know to improve myself and to be able to read well and understand well, so if my kids one day went to school, so you know I will be able to help them".

In sum, the foregoing section has looked at the interplay between linguistic distance and education for LOTE participants. Through their English language experiences and choices in regard to employment, the section has shown that, while they were educated in a LOTE, they identified learning English in Australia as an important conduit to further education and (re)establishing skilled jobs and for further studies. However, contextual factors further disrupted the expected linear relationship between acquiring English and (re)establishing careers.

In the rest of this chapter I present two case studies to illuminate further the language learning and settlement experiences for LOTE-medium educated migrants.

6.5 Case Study 3: Genevieve

Genevieve's story is that of the language learning and settlement experiences of a French-medium educated migrant who arrived without linguistic proficiency in English. Her language learning and settlement experience, unlike that of the rest of the participants in this category, was further complicated by her arrival mode. She arrived on a tourist visa and then held a Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) (See Appendix VII for explanation of visa code) which meant that she was not eligible for settlement help including free, government-sponsored English tuition for about two years while her application for permanent residency was being considered. Alone in Australia – without a family, without financial support and

without English – she confronted multiple challenges and she was reflective about her initial struggles for survival and an L2 identity. The section explores nuanced account of her trajectory towards the development of proficiency in English and forging an L2 self locally and globally.

Genevieve is a vivacious woman in her forties from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She speaks her L1, Lingala, as well as French, the national language, and the national lingua francas, Kikongo and Kiswahili. She said she loved to speak French and found it hard to be modest about her abilities in French: "I have to be honest and say that my French is a very, I live with French. I speak fluently French and I used to be a French teacher". She traced her love for French right from her primary school days in a Belgian-run private school through to university where French was not only the medium of instruction but also her preferred language. At university, she studied communication, journalism and public relations and worked as a print journalist. She also worked in various roles in a school as secretary, a French teacher and a public relations officer. At that time she was engaged to be married but as a result of growing concerns of unrest in their country, she and her fiancé decided that they needed to leave. They decided that the best option was to travel on tourist visas to a safer country. She chose Australia primarily for safety reasons. And in that state of flight language did not surface as an issue of prominence.

In 2002, Genevieve arrived in Australia on a tourist visa without family and without English. She applied as an on-shore asylum seeker to the immigration authorities for permanent residency. Her application process took about two years. During that period she did not qualify for settlement assistance which included the free English training in the AMEP. In the first three months she relied on social support from non-governmental organisations that provided accommodation and food and arranged for her to attend a volunteer-run basic English language class for asylum seekers. After three months that support was no longer

available. Without any other support, and desperate and without English she found her first job in Australia as a process worker in a factory.

> Extract 6.20
> Yeah my first job here I was just working in a factory. Working hard, working hard to pay rent, life really started. Before I didn't mind any rent weekly, any bills, no because [Name of community organisation] took care of that. But now I got a flat, I got a unit. I have to pay my rent weekly, I have to pay my bills, I have to do my shopping. I was just focusing on how to finish my week to start the next week, going to work and forget about English class.
> (Genevieve: 206-218)

At the stage in her settlement journey that Genevieve outlines in the above extract, she was operating in a survival mode "how to finish my week to start the next week". For her, in that survival mode, her days were filled with working as much as she could including over-time to make ends meet. During that time she also found that English language learning was not such a priority. She came to that conclusion when she found that colleagues on the factory floor did not have proficiency in English.

> Extract 6.21
> And I was working in a factory. You don't think about all these things. People you find there, even they don't speak English very well. They are new arrivals or migrant like you, they don't care about English. The most important thing for them is to work and make money.
> (Genevieve: 220-223)

She said that she found that some of these work mates had been in Australia for considerably longer periods than her, varying from ten to twenty years, and had survived with little linguistic proficiency in English. That created a paradox for her. On the one hand it provided her with the hope that she would be able to survive without English just like them. On the other hand it influenced her to think that her previously acquired skills could not be used in Australia because English was a barrier and she would be stuck in the factory.

Extract 6.22

I've got all these tools, but the only thing is to adapt them to Australia, the society of Australia and English and whatever. Even I was working as a journalist in a French magazine, so I was a bit afraid of English, to do stuff in English. (Genevieve: 708-712)

She found that line of thinking was confirmed by people from her community.

Extract 6.23

So the people I met here they say oh you know when you come over they don't recognise your qualification blah, blah, blah. You know some people, they're talking about themselves. They don't have any degree or any kind of diploma from overseas. [...] So the people that I met here, didn't even have their high school paper, document, so they just say no, no one can use, no one can be recognised or whatever. So when you come to Australia you should start again and erm and do your study again or whatever. So it was people were giving people the wrong information. So I put all this wrong information inside my head [...] I forgot about my qualification. (Genevieve: 347-358)

Genevieve believed that her community had failed her as its members were unable to provide her with advice on how to navigate the system. On the surface it may seem that her network was liable for the misinformation although, from a sociological dimension, both Genevieve and her community – which is relatively new in terms of Australia's migrant history – were struggling under the burden of impenetrable structures made even harder by linguistic barriers. In effect, cultural capital – knowledge about how to navigate the system – was not available to them as new migrants. As a result, Genevieve felt stuck and without any hope of making headway until her application for residency was granted in 2004 and she qualified for formal settlement help. She said that was the year that things began to change for her. She finished the 510 hours of English and went on to study in a community welfare course at TAFE.

Genevieve said that in the initial stages of that course, linguistic limitation made her unable to participate in class.

> Extract 6.24
> Some students in the class, they were already in the field, in the industry working as community workers. So they give a lot of experience, they shared their experience, even the vocabulary, using some words. I was completely lost, they used this word and the teacher is understanding, they are understanding each other. I say I should do something. [...] I know it's very hard for me at the moment, but anyway I'm improving my English every day, watching movies, listening to news or talking to people and I read a lot. I was just looking, looking for opportunities and I've never been connected to a network, a network with leadership goals. (Genevieve: 613-623)

Nevertheless, she navigated that barrier by drawing on her previous literacy skills and knowledge. In this way, she was able to accumulate the cultural capital of value for her studies.

Outside of formal study, another source she found useful for building cultural capital was an African women's advocacy group that she joined in Australia. She said that participation within the group provided her with a great boost in confidence when the members overwhelmingly selected her one year to represent them as a delegate to the UNHCR's annual consultation with NGOs in Geneva.

At the time of the interview, Genevieve had been in Australia for six years. She had experienced a shift in identity from someone who, due to her visa status, had shelved her previously acquired skills to someone who was capable of making use of language learning and training opportunities once she had sorted out her visa status. She used these words to sum up her English language learning and settlement trajectory in Australia:

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Extract 6.25

Settlement in an English speaking country for non-English speaking background people is a big deal. I went through all this myself, but the only thing I thank God because I was educated. I was well educated so I used my skills in my other language to understand things myself more than to get help. […] It's not a big deal if you've got families, friends, people who came before you and your community is willing to help. (Genevieve: 1172-1190)

In summary, the case study has used Genevieve's story to illuminate key points about education and language for the successful settlement of participants. It has shown that, firstly, having education was more important than having English language proficiency because a high level of education provides individuals with resources that make discourse acquisition more accessible than language learning per se. Finally, people from new and emerging communities face greater challenges in settlement than those from established migrant communities and may not be adequately informed due to systemic failure in providing adequate information and support for such communities (see above for mention of the Burundi community challenges).

In the next section I present another case study. This time I look at the story of a younger participant who arrived as a teenager and with the added responsibility of looking after her four younger siblings.

6.6 Case Study 4: Marina

Marina's story illustrates the language learning and settlement trajectory of a youth from a middle-class family with disrupted education and whose experience as a young migrant from a LOTE background was made more complex because of life events that thrust the role of guardianship of her younger siblings onto her young shoulders. Without parental guidance in the new context, while she was accruing linguistic and cultural capital – language and knowledge which she felt carried the promise of positioning her in a good job. Lacking

access to informed knowledge about the working of the educational system, however, she had to rely on fraught information from her social networks.

Marina was born in 1988 into a middle-class family in Sudan – her mother was a teacher and her father was a doctor. Marina grew up speaking Arabic which is the dominant language in northern Sudan where they lived. She understands her heritage language, Bari, but she does not speak it fluently because it was not part of the lifestyle she lived with.

> Extract 6.26
> we didn't keep it [Bari] because we didn't live in village, that's the problem. We lived in city and all the city people, they speak Arabic. National language is Arabic, that's why. (Marina: 270-273)

She said her parents were both proficient in Arabic, English and French. Their investment in their children's education was aspirational and they believed the education of Marina and her four siblings would secure their future economically with good job opportunities and also maintain the status of the family. However, in 2004, when Marina's father passed away unexpectedly in Sudan due to an illness, life became difficult for her mother. Fearing that she would not be able to maintain the standard of care for Marina and her younger siblings by herself in Sudan, she decided to move her family to Egypt. Moving to Egypt meant pulling Marina out of her studies in secondary school. However, things did not turn out the way her mother expected and neither Marina nor her siblings were able to continue with their education in Egypt. After a year there her mother applied for migration to Australia on humanitarian grounds. However, in 2006, just about the time their visas were finalised for migration to Australia, her mother met her untimely death in an accident. That year and at the age of eighteen, Marina arrived in Australia in the role of guardian to her four younger siblings.

Marina said she did not have communicative competence in English when she arrived in Australia. In Sudan, she had learnt English as a subject in school but not for communicative purposes and she was not able to master the language. Within the two years of arriving in Australia, however, she found that she was making good progress in English.

> Extract 6.27
> Because in Sudan English is very difficult to me and when I can't, my mum she understand English and she always do homework with me at home. But I can't understand her but now I understand English. (Marina: 380-385)

In Australia, Marina started studying English in the AMEP at the Certificate of Spoken and Written English (CSWE) CSWE I and had progressed to CSWE III at the time of the interview. During the interview, Marina expressed ambivalence towards learning English. On the one hand, she felt her English was improving and she was happy for the opportunity to learn and use the language. On the other hand, she found – like others such as Serena (see Extract 6.13) – that English language learning was a struggle for her and her progress was slow and in sharp contrast with her abilities and previous academic achievements.

> Extract 6.28
> Yeah before when I call my friend and they say to me, they are in uni, and when I was in Sudan I was the first one in them. I get the big number, and now I'm just in, I come really down and now they in uni. And I feel bad but it's ok because I learn new thing too. (Marina: 375-378)

Despite her struggles as a language learner, she invested in English to enable her access to cultural capital – new knowledge and to be a role model for her siblings. She was precise about opportunities she envisaged for the family's future in Australia. Below is the plan that she developed for the next five years:

Extract 6.29
Yeah, I finish my English, I gonna work, my brother gonna be in uni, yeah. When the kids grow we gonna move out because when they go to uni, because in [C-Town] there is not enough university, yeah. So more people here in [C-Town] they finish high school and they move to other state to look for university. So maybe after, the kids wanna go to university, we must to move to other place to find the university for them. (Marina: 398-397)

At the time of the interview Marina felt she was moving well towards the future that she dreamt of for herself and her family. However, that had not been the case a few months prior to being interviewed. Marina told me about how her family had split apart when her siblings were taken away from her care by the authorities and placed in the care of a community member. In the end, with the help of people from her community, she won back the guardianship of her siblings.

Without her parents to guide her, Marina relied on her social capital – adults in her community and other adults to guide her. Although they were supportive and mentored her during the period of her family break up, she found that advice she received in terms of her future and career aspiration did not coincide with her agenda.

Extract 6.30
I wanna turn doctor. Yeah but when I ask many people to, I wanna study at uni and be a doctor, they all explain it's very hard to do. They say to me you have to do any course to find a job. If you went to university you gonna waste time, yeah they said to me it is difficult and if you go and spend all that time and finish uni, if you have your certificate, you're not gonna have work. They don't give you work. […] They say because many people finish there from Africa, they've got the certificate but they don't work. They say they didn't find job, no one want to get them to work and they've got certificate. And they say to me why you wanna finish your university at the end you gonna have no work. So it's better to just have any normal course so just you can just work. (Marina: 706-733)

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For Marina and many of the participants, language learning outcomes may not coincide with employment and career aspirations. In the above comments we see that, although language learning was a priority for Marina as the first step in the direction of further education and building cultural capital to be a doctor just like her late father, that dream did not coincide with career paths that people in her social network base advised. Their advice for her to take up a "normal course" positioned her in the direction of the comparatively lesser prestigious jobs of "hairdresser and nurse" which are also gender-stereotyped jobs in the service and care-industry and which they felt suited her better as career options. As shown above, Genevieve had also encountered such fraught advice although, by contrast, Genevieve was able to withstand this kind of low-aspirational advice because she was well-educated and mature. Marina said she envisaged that acquiring English would enable her to build cultural capital – acquiring knowledge and training as a doctor for work locally and overseas. She made that clear in her response to my question about whether she felt she would be able to attain English proficiency to enter university and study to become a doctor. "I think I can do it. And then I think if I finish the uni and they don't want to give me work, I can go back to Sudan and work there". Her response shows that with her growing linguistic capital – proficiency in English – Marina signifies her transnational identity and anticipates a wider global market in which she will be able to participate. Even so, without informed knowledge of the educational system and in the absence of a pathway for young migrants with disrupted education to transition into medical study and medical careers, Marina faces a great challenge of meeting that career aspiration.

6.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have looked at language learning and settlement experiences with migrants educated in a LOTE medium – the second category in the matrix of participants. The chapter aimed to understand how language and community practices work to promote or reject educational credentials which the participants had accumulated before migrating and how

high-level education or high educational aspirations helped their language learning for settlement.

The chapter started by showing the different LOTE African backgrounds that the data revealed for the participants in this category before focusing on data from two emergent groups. One group is made up of mature adults who had completed tertiary education before migrating and the second is made up of younger, higher education aspirants who experienced disruptions to their educational careers before migrating. I drew on Bourdieu's (1989) theories of symbolic capital to understand the different positioning that the participants experienced as a result of linguistic distance and education within the discourse of education and English learning enhancing access to employment and settlement.

The data showed that educational credentials which were obtained in a LOTE first needed to be translated for use into the new context. However, in this context, additional contextual constraints made that a complex process, beginning with monolingual oracy and literacy training in English. In terms of the impact of pre-migration education on language learning, the data showed that the participants educated in a French-medium, who mainly made up the highly educated and more mature participants in this chapter, were able to draw on their French literacy skills for quicker access to participating in literacy activities even before entering English study. However, that was not the case for the Arabic-medium educated who were struggling with both oracy and literacy in English.

Regarding the issue of finding jobs and re-establishing careers, the data showed that those who were highly educated had quicker access to participating in community practices made a faster transition to employment and further education compared to those who had experienced disrupted education and had not accrued as much cultural capital in the pre-migration contexts. However, both groups were keen to get into further education to be able to find skilled jobs, with the exception of one participant. That participant changed her mind

about her further education in favour of quality supervision of her children to ensure they attained good education to secure good jobs in the future.

The data revealed the issue of misinformation that surrounds LOTE educated migrants without access to information due to systemic barriers and or linguistic challenges. Lack of access to information means that for some of them the quality of advice they receive from social networks may not adequately appreciate their needs and their capabilities. As shown in Marina's case, relying on social networks which do not adequately understand one's background and capabilities led to fraught advice which was not helped by the fact that the system itself was not structured to accommodate her career aspirations.

The next chapter presents an exploration of the issues arising for the language learning and settlement of participants who arrived without English proficiency and with low or no pre-migration education.

CHAPTER 7

7. No or low schooling and from English speaking backgrounds

7.1 Introduction

Following on from the previous chapters' exploration of English speaking and well-educated participants' perceptions of their English proficiencies for settlement, this chapter is the first of two chapters that consider the experiences and perspectives of those who have had no or low schooling from their pre-migration countries. This chapter focuses on Group 3: the third category in the matrix – people from English speaking backgrounds who had experienced interrupted schooling or no education at all. The chapter addresses the following research question:

> *RQ 4: What are the English language learning experiences and settlement trajectories of migrants who have had no or low schooling from Anglophone African countries who arrive with some English proficiency?*

This is a women only group which makes gendered pre-migration educational opportunities and their impact on their negotiation of post-migration gender roles prominent themes for the analysis of this group. Five participants (Amina, June, Mamuna, Violet, Jane) make up this category. Table 7.1 summarises these participants' languages, their highest level of education received with English as MoI and their self-rated proficiency in English.

Table 7.1 Sociobiographic information about the participants (N=5)

Participant (age)	English-language country of origin or transit	Year of arrival in Australia	Language(s) other than English	Highest Level of Education with English MoI	Self-rated English Proficiency
Amina (50)	Sierra Leone/ Guinea	2003	Themne, Krio, Susu, Lao, Kono, Madingo	Primary school	"not educated"
June (20)	Sierra Leone/ Guinea	2006	Mende, Krio	No school	"no school"
Mamuna (56)	Sierra Leone/ Guinea	2004	Mende, Krio	Primary school	"not educated"
Violet (48)	Sudan/ Uganda	2005	Acholi, Kiswahili, Arabic	Some adult education	"a little bit"
Jane (28)	Sudan/ Uganda	2002	Acholi, Arabic	Primary school	"a little bit"

As outlined in the column of the table showing participants' languages other than English, of the five participants, three (Amina, June, Mamuna) have Krio as a common language while two (Violet, Jane) do not. Krio is the English Creole and lingua franca spoken nationally in Sierra Leone, an English-speaking country in West Africa. As an English Creole, it is a product of language contact developed through external contacts brought about by colonialism, enslavement and internal contacts (DeGraff, 2009; Kleifgen & Bond, 2009; Mufwene, 2001). Krio is an oral language that differs systematically from the "school English" that people in Sierra Leone acquire formally (De Kleine, 2009).

The chapter is organised as follows: it begins with the participants' pre-migration language learner experiences, discusses their repertoires and assesses the English proficiency they believed they arrived with in Australia. Next, I explore their reflections on their post-migration English language learning and issues raised in their interview around the AMEP's English course and outcomes they expected from their participation. Then I look at their job situations and experiences with employment in Australia. Finally two participants' (Amina, Violet) stories are presented as individual case studies to highlight adult language learner

issues along with a focused discussion of some of the L2 learner issues for participants in this category.

7.2 Pre-migration language and English proficiency

The section looks at pre-migration language and English proficiency concerns for two sub-groups of people: one sub-group (June, Amina, Mamuna) has Krio, an English Creole in their repertoires and the other (Violet, Jane) does not. Oracy in Krio is a Sierra Leonean identity marker that explicitly separates its speakers from 'standard' English speakers as well as from the other two participants in this category. In their talk about English proficiency and Krio the three participants make a distinction between Krio, which features strongly as belonging in their repertoire of languages, and 'standard' English from which they distance themselves according to their level of participation in formal education. As the table shows, primary school is the highest level of education for these three participants. In the self-rated English proficiency column the recorded attributes "no school" and "not educated" are the descriptions they used to characterise their pre-migration English proficiency.

For these participants, limited schooling usually means low levels of literacy and low fluency in the 'standard' English, as Mamuna explains:

> Extract 7.1
> Yeah I was able to write and read but to express myself, it was difficult, like to express something in English. […] I was not used to using English for communication. (Mamuna: 104-110)

This statement coincides with Bigelow's (2010) observation in her study of Somali learners with high oracy as language learners in the US in which she finds that "a low level of formal schooling is often, but not always, synonymous with low levels of print literacy" (p. 42). Among these Krio speakers only Mamuna indicated having some print literacy (see Extract

7.1) while both June and Amina said they had none prior to coming to Australia and participating in formal language learning in the AMEP.

Unlike the three Sierra Leoneans in this group, Violet and Jane were both born in Sudan but fled to Uganda as refugees where they lived since the early 1990s. Uganda is located in East Africa, a region which does not have distinct recorded Creole sociolinguistic histories (Schmied, 2009). In Uganda, English is used as the language of instruction from higher primary level and onwards forming the bases for further education (Schmied, 2009). Violet had a few years of basic adult education classes and Jane went to school up to primary level but was unable to continue due to financial constraints. Unlike their Sierra Leonean counterparts who framed their English proficiency in negative terms as resulting from lack of education, Violet and Jane evaluated their English positively as a valued resource derived from their limited education in English. They framed their English proficiency as resulting from having had some form of education enabling them to speak "a little bit" of English and were keen to explain about the history of their English proficiency in relation to their identities. Below is what Jane said.

> Extract 7.2
> Yeah [I speak] a little bit [of English] from before. I go to school from Uganda, my mum was the one who sponsor me, yeah. So I go to school from Uganda, from primary one up to senior one. Yeah up to senior one. From primary one to primary six then my mum couldn't able to sponsor me, then I was being sponsored by a certain organisation called this one, they helped orphan orphaned people, orphaned children. Yeah, [Name of international organisation] they sponsor me from primary six, primary seven, going to senior one, they stop to sponsor us. Then I try to go by myself through senior one, but my mum couldn't able to because her job just earning a little bit of money and I'm orphan I couldn't get more money to pay. (Jane: 123-136)

The above extract shows Jane mapping out her education to frame the English she speaks. She provides a detailed explanation of the level of English in her repertoire and a background to the difficulties she faced growing up without a father and as a refugee. What she does not say explicitly but is implied in her explanation is that she believes that, had she gone further in her education, she would have arrived in Australia with a higher level of English proficiency than she did. Indeed, Jane values English highly and told of how in Uganda she envied her colleagues who had relatives to help financially for them to attend school.

> Extract 7.3
> I feel jealous. I'm not happy because some other girls I'm there with them, they have their fathers, their fathers can sponsor for school. They have their uncles. Uncles maybe working big can sponsor them. But for me, I don't have any uncle, no-one can help me, just only my mum. (Jane: 140-147)

Even so, Jane values her English and she draws on it to make a comparison between herself and other Sudanese who did not have the opportunity to learn English before migration to Australia:

> Extract 7.4
> I'm a bit lucky because the Sudanese if they're from southern Sudan when they come to Uganda as a refugee, their children go to school in English. The Sudanese who is there in northern Sudan, they students go in Arabic. So it is confused for them. When they came to this country, to change Arabic in English is a bit hard for them. But for me when I arrived here, although I don't understand some other English, Australian English but I know a little bit, yeah. (Jane: 347-355)

Violet also talked about experiencing the benefits of having the English proficiency which she in the refugee camp in Uganda. In that context, her proficiency in English gained from a few years of basic adult education classes enabled her to find a job. As mentioned elsewhere Extract 7.2) they did not receive considerable cash payments for jobs in the camp situation.

Violet said that she was able to read and write and that combination enabled her to work as a nurse's aide in the refugee camp in Uganda. In her job she was able to use English as well as Acholi, Kiswahili and Arabic.

> Extract 7.5
> VWT: Okay, so what languages did you use as a nurse aide in the hospital?
>
> VIOLET: We were using English and other language Acholi, and other language like
>
>   Arabic, Swahili and Bari, many, many of them. (Violet: 101-105)

Below is a description of how she employed writing skills in English to perform in her work.

> Extract 7.6
> People speak to me and when I ask them what is your name, and what are you feeling, what is
>
> bad from you? Then they will be telling me then I will start writing in English, you see.
>
> (Violet: 525-528)

We see also that the context in which Violet uses English was a multilingual one where she was not restricted to one language. In her job interactions Violet would have employed frequent code-switching (Myers-Scotton, 1993, 2006) between the languages in her repertoire. These interactions may not have required the use of a high degree of proficiency her English and literacy, although they were suited to her interactional needs (see also Ahmed's example in Chapter 8). Violet understands that the practice in which English was used in that multilingual context is certainly different from the mostly monolingual and high literacy context that defines Australia and she agrees that she must learn English and new ways of doing things in English in the new context.

So far I have shown the different oracy and literacy skills that participants in this category arrived with in Australia. Considering their pre-migration histories with English, both Creole based and non-Creole based participants in this category can be described as "mesolectal" English speakers. Mesolectal English speakers are defined in World Englishes and Creole English studies as a continuum of ESL users "who speak fluently but whose norms deviate

significantly from those of L1 speakers as well as acrolectal L2 speakers" (Mesthrie, 2008a, p. 25). Mesolectal English varieties, whether Creole or otherwise, may be seen to better represent local norms and values than acrolectal varieties which may represent outside and elitist norms and may be stigmatised in some African contexts (Huber, 2008). Mesolectal English speakers may or may not identify with educated varieties due to factors such as level of education and also because of cultural dictates in their local contexts as we have seen above particularly with Krio speakers and their attitude towards "school" English. So what do all these mean for their language education in the new context?

The specific language learning challenges that the participants in this group of English Creole and mesolectal English speakers face when settling in Australia and trying to learn 'standard' Australian English for employment and settlement will follow.

7.3 Post-migration English language learning

This section explores the participants' post-migration English language learning experiences. The foregoing descriptions of their pre-migration English proficiency and English language learning indicate their views on their language learning achievements and use in that context. The focus now is to explore their experiences with AMEP participation and language learning and to understand the gap between their on-arrival English proficiency and the proficiency expected in Australia.

For all the participants the desire to learn English to improve their literacy and proficiency in English was strong. As all of them arrived through the refugee visa stream, they were immediately eligible for the AMEP's 510 hours of English lessons on arrival. All of them said they enrolled in the program and all of them commented on how important it was for them that they were provided with such a program to help them with their English language learning. All of them shared the typical view that participating in the program would provide the essential resources they needed for getting a job as soon as possible. However, challenges

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they grappled with including identity and sociocultural issues made it difficult for four of them (June, Mamuna, Jane, Amina) to complete the course of English lessons they were eligible for. Only one, Violet continued to study in the AMEP at the time of data collection.

Gender issues were key factors that three of the participants (June, Mamuna, Jane) gave as the reason for leaving the program prematurely. For these women, tensions were evident in how to balance gendered obligations in relation to formal language learning and learning skills that were not part of their pre-migration socialisation processes. June said she did not complete her entitlement because she had a baby and as a single mother she could not return to class because she was solely responsible for looking after herself and her child. Later on she explained that she was on a waiting list for child-care and might continue with English language classes when a spot was available for her child because she still wants to continue learning English. Mamuna said she left the AMEP prematurely because she had to step into the role of grandmother and look after her grandchildren for her adult children to be able to work and study. She said she does not think she will be returning to the classroom, and will not be entering paid work. In both cases, gendered care obligations thus took precedence over their desire to undertake further English language learning. Despite the fact that they were eligible for free English tuition they could not take up their full entitlement because of these gendered care obligations.

The third participant, Jane, who migrated with her husband and their daughter, said both she and her husband were enrolled in the AMEP class and looking forward to finding a job. Twice, however, she had to stop studying English in the AMEP. The first time, she left to have their second child while her husband continued with his English lessons. She returned to the English lessons but had to stop again. This time it was to look after herself and her children because her marriage had broken down. Jane said that when she left she was able to find work in aged-care. Later she switched from working in aged-care to working in

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disability-care. At the time of the interview she was employed in disability-care at night and also studying English at TAFE during the day. In the extract below she describes her language learning plans which she links to her career plans.

> Extract 7.7
>
> VWT: So what are you doing at TAFE now?
>
> JANE: I'm sitting for my English because my English still not good. I can talk good but I have problems writing, so I need to improve my writing and my spelling, I have problem in spelling so I have to go back and study English.
>
> VWT: Do you need your English studying for your disability work?
>
> JANE: No I need my English study for because I'm want I want to do a diploma you need English for, to do enrolled nursing.
>
> VWT: So you need English to do more?
>
> JANE: Yeah, I need for my English, if my English good then I will join training enrolled nurse, and for that maybe I'll become enrolled nurse.
>
> VWT: So do you see your English improving now that you're doing TAFE?
>
> JANE: Yes, yeah. (Jane: 285-301)

Sociocultural background and L2 learner identity conflicts emerge for participants as they grapple with the change from high oracy cultures to a high literacy context. This issue is evidenced in Amina's experiences in English lessons. Initially, Amina was able to perform in the low CSWE level classroom where she found her L2 learner needs were catered for. Among the five, she is the only one who explicitly mentions her linguistic and literacy achievement in the AMEP.

> Extract 7.8
>
> When I was coming here I can't speak like the way I'm speaking and I was not even able to write my name properly. Now I can write it and I can write my address, yeah like that. (Amina: 197-200)

Being able to write her name and address was key to Amina's success in finding a job in aged-care in Australia within a year of arrival. However, she found language and literacy success elusive in the higher CSWE levels when she progressed into these levels. She felt that high-oracy, low-literacy L2 learners such as herself were not adequately catered for in the lessons and left (see Extract 7.11). As she faces a class full of people from high literacy contexts she finds herself in a situation of a mismatch of the class to her needs and also a situation in which a hierarchy in the perception of the low literacy learners may be that students with the language learner characteristics of low literacy are looked down upon both by the teachers and the more literate people in the class. Amina's story best illustrates the clash between L2 learners' linguistic needs and abilities and linguistic provision in the English lessons and has been selected and used as one of the two focused discussions that follow (see Section below for the case study).

As mentioned above, one participant, Violet, was enrolled and continuing in the English lessons in the AMEP at the time of data collection. Violet was into the third year of her L2 learning. Like the rest of the participants, Violet hopes that learning English will enable her to participate fully in the new society in terms of employment and everyday life. As I will show with her case study, she expresses ambivalence about what the results of her L2 learning will yield, particularly in terms of work. Whilst on the one hand she is happy to be learning English and learning the use of new media like the computer, on the other hand, she is doubtful of the extent to which these new language and literacy skills will sufficiently bridge the cultural gap between her pre-migration skills and those required for work in the new setting. That issue is outlined with other issues relating to employment in the next section and followed up in her case study (Section 7.6).

7.4 Finding jobs in Australia

The importance of paid work in Australia was stressed by all the women yet only two of them were in paid work. Prior to coming to Australia, two of the women (Amina, Violet) had had work experience. Amina ran her own small retail business in Sierra Leone, her home country. Violet worked as a nurse aide in the refugee camp in Uganda where she had trained on the job but had no way of proving her skills. She did not receive wages in cash in that role (see also Chapter 8). The remaining three women who did not work before coming to Australia, comprised Mamuna, an older woman who had been a housewife since she was married off at the age of 14, and which had forced her to leave school; and two younger women, Jane and June, who had been school-aged girls at the time of migration. The women's remarks about work in Australia reveal challenges and frustrations with labour market constraints affecting their employment. They talked about barriers that mediate getting jobs in Australia and push them into unpaid work which tends to be not considered work because of how work is defined as attached to wages.

This section explores the participants' experiences in everyday practices in terms of challenges and opportunities for employment in Australia. Two of them (Amina, Jane) were employed in care-jobs. When I interviewed them, Amina was working in aged-care and Jane was working in disability-care. The rest of the women (June, Mamuna, Violet) were not actively looking for work. June was a single mother looking after her newly born child; Mamuna was looking after her grand-children so that her daughter Lucy (see in Chapter 5 above) and her son-in-law could work; and Violet, who was attending English classes, also had young children in her care who she was looking after as a single parent.

Women in this group arrive without formalised skills and with what they consider low proficiency which they needed to improve to begin life in Australia. For these women tensions were evident in how to balance gendered obligations in relation to formal language

learning and learning vocational skills that were not part of their pre-migration socialisation processes. This is how June, in her twenties from Sierra Leone and a stay home mum with a new baby, expressed it: "I want to know more English and if I know much English I'll find job later that is the reason why I want to know English first". That sums up the main challenge that the women said they were facing. Even when they had found a job, a lack of language and low literacy skills impacted job mobility. While studying English to improve their chances of employment, some of the women are able to get jobs on the lowest rungs in care-jobs (Amina, Jane). However the women find that there is no provision made for them to improve their language skills and further training to move to the next tier (Amina).

Women in this group have skills and experiences but these are not recognised. As mentioned above, two of the women (Amina, Violet) had worked previously, Amina as a small business owner and Violet as a bilingual nurse aide. However, there is no way of showing documentation as proof of the skills previously learnt and neither do they have accreditation. Instead of helping them build on skill areas, they are forced into jobs mostly in the lowest tier of care-work. From there, they are expected to acquire formal literacy in English for mobility. A combination of work and family duties made it hard for them to continue studying English to be able to move up and so they find themselves stuck in these jobs.

Contributions that women make in informal care-giving and which go unnoticed were brought into sharp focus in this group in what I observed of one of the women (Mamuna). Mamuna is in her fifties from Sierra Leone. Mamuna did not finish her schooling when she was growing up because by the age of 14 years she had been married off to her husband. Since then she had been a housewife with her husband's other wives and they shared the care of their children. During the war that made them flee Sierra Leone into Guinea, her husband died. Her adult children were first to arrive in Australia and they had sponsored her through the humanitarian visa stream a few years later. Arriving in 2004, Mamuna started attending

English class as required but she said she stopped because she had to be there physically to look after her grandchildren so that her adult children and in-laws could go to work. And for that very reason she was unable to look for work. Mamuna is a well-respected family member to her children and their spouses, and also a well-respected elder within her community. For example, during the interview, which lasted for about an hour, her phone rang no less than six times. Each time it was a different caller. Upon taking each call she would apologise and explain to me that these were calls from people within the community who had brought family issues to her as an elder and she was consulted regularly. Within her community she manages conflicts which is a great help to the families and the society at large but such contributions are 'invisible' because they are not paid work and the skills she employs are neither credited nor easily discernible within a culture that works with formalised skills and defines work as attached to wages. Despite the fact that Mamuna receives no wages, her invisible work is invaluable.

7.5 Case Study 5: Amina

Amina is in her fifties. She comes from Sierra Leone and speaks Themne as her L1 and Krio, Kono, Loko, Madingo and Susu. In Sierra Leone, Amina attended primary school with English as the MoI. Amina said that when she left school in her early teens she was unable to read, write or speak in English. After leaving school she got married and she later started her own small trading business. She learnt most of the languages in her repertoire through meeting and interacting with people from other language backgrounds. In Sierra Leone, Amina and her family enjoyed a middle class lifestyle. Below is how she describes it.

> Extract 7.9
> My father was a rich man. He was a diamond dealer. He was a very rich man, yeah. [...] I had I used to have maid at home, too because my husband too was really good he was we had the business and he was working in [Name of International Corporation] in Africa but they redundant him. He was at home we were doing our business now. I used to have a maid, I

used to have a like someone who is cleaning my house and his name was [Name of person] and my maid's name was [Name of person] she was the cook, she was cooking for me all my year. And I used to have a driver [Name of person] who would take the kids to school, like if I want to go out, take me out, he was even learning me how to drive, yeah. (Amina: 138-164)

Although Amina's gender positioning curtailed exposure to a high level of formal education when she was growing up, Extract 7.9 tells of how she had enjoyed a middle-class status through her family association. In the above extract, Amina describes the middle class lifestyle she was used to in Sierra Leone until 1999 when war broke out and they had to flee into Guinea, a French speaking neighbouring country. There, Amina, together with her husband and their six children lived as refugees for four years. For them, living as refugees in Guinea was the beginning of a dramatic transformation of class and a lowering of rank.

Under the protection of the UNHCR, she and her husband and five of her children were accepted for resettlement in Australia in 2003 while their eldest child went to the US. In Australia, Amina and her family's experiences of class differences continued as the data demonstrate. These experiences occurred in a society that is marked by racial differences. Also, for Amina, gender intersected with race and class to impact her employment trajectory. Although her socialisation was better supported within their pre-migration norms and values system, arriving in Australia, as an adult African woman with a low-level of education dictated a re-negotiation of these norms and expectations. Among her family, she alone had arrived with little education and literacy skills to negotiate a new employment identity which entailed formal English language learning and skills-training. Amina and her family were keen to find work and start a new life as soon as possible. Her children and her husband already had qualifications with English as the MoI and they started their settlement with looking for work and entering further study to acquire training for work. Amina was the only one in her family who did not have sufficient language and literacy skills to work or study. She started her settlement journey with language learning and acquiring literacy skills in

order to find work. Amina enrolled in the AMEP at CSWE Level I. She said going to classes in the AMEP was very helpful and provided her with basic skills in speaking and writing (see Extract 7.10). Within six months of being in Australia and learning English she was able to get into Certificate II level work in aged-care. She found that the training required for the job was within her limits and did not require higher literacy skills.

Extract 7.10

VWT: So the work that you're doing, did you study to do that?

AMINA: Yes I studied.

VWT: Were you able to write?

AMINA: Well the writing is not much, it's explanation, about the aged-care, about the people and they put the DVD on, you watch the tape how to handle the old the elderly. It's not much of writing, but now they say it's more plenty writing, I say oh thank God@@@@@@ (Amina: 352-360)

Amina continued working and studying in the AMEP progressing to CSWE Level II. She left the AMEP at that level.

Extract 7.11

VWT: And you finished at what level?

AMINA: I didn't finish all because we started in [Name of suburb] so I went onto level two and then I stopped. […] because I think we, we are mingled with people who have degrees from other country and they can understand more than us. You see some of these Chinese, Indian, these people who come over they have their own education. They have degrees. Only, they only study English to know. So they can understand faster more than us. I said I don't think I'll go with these people so I decided to stop.

VWT: Okay, and so you stopped because of the other people?

AMINA: Yeah because they understand more @more than me@ (Amina: 201-218)

Amina persisted with learning English because she saw that her lack of English was placing limitations on her progress in her job. While Amina was already employed as a Certificate II holder in aged-care work, she needed English to be able to access training and step onto higher rungs in the job. After about two years in her job, Amina went back to the AMEP with the aim of improving her English and her writing skills in particular. This time round she was placed in a CSWE Level III class. Again she left because she found that her needs were not met.

> Extract 7.12
> I said to them, my biggest problem is writing, I want to read and write. They said oh we'll put you into level three because your English is good we'll put you, but when I went there, the way I look at it, those people are degree holders, I'm just a beginner, I don't even want to sit with them. (Amina: 343-348)

At the time of the interview, it had been five years since Amina arrived in Australia and had been working in aged-care at the same level. She has not had any further language and literacy training and this is affecting her ability to progress in her work. Amina believes that with further training in English she would be able to move to a higher level which would be easier because she would not do the physical work that is done at her currently low-skill level.

> Extract 7.13
> VWT: So do you see yourself staying in that job or do you see yourself moving to another job?
>
> AMINA: I'm really looking at myself moving to another job.
>
> VWT: Okay, how are you going to do that?
>
> AMINA: I want to study.
>
> VWT: Okay, and what are you doing towards study? What are you doing now to make you able to study?

AMINA: I want I want to go to school back, even last night I was telling my brother I want to go to school back, I will not spend all my life lifting people. I'm getting big now, over 50 is not, I'm not a kid any more. I want to look for something to do better than that work. [...] I don't want to lift. I want to be like, like if you do the Certificate IV, you know how to read and write and attend to the residents, you wouldn't be lifting. Maybe you will be doing something extra than lifting, because I know the field now. Or I do business.

VWT: What sort of business would you do?

AMINA: Well if I want to do business I would like to have my own shop. The African stuffs, like that yeah. (Amina: 361-388)

In the above Amina's story raises points for discussion on transitional challenges for high oracy and low literacy participants in relation to cultural shifts, struggles with identities, L2 learner conflict and L2 classroom mismatch and hierarchy and how these have implications for them.

With the understanding that she needs English and literacy for living and working in Australia, Amina clearly embraces cultural change, a fact which is also evidenced in her entering the L2 classroom. She reports that training in the low level English lessons catered to her needs and proved useful for building on basic literacy skills as well as providing her with sufficient proficiency in English for her first job in Australia. After some years on the job she finds that further literacy skills were required for her to progress in the job, that is, from a low-paid, low-skilled and a very physical job in the aged-care sector to higher and more skilled areas. She finds also that as she progresses in years she may not be able to sustain the heavy physical aspect of the work for a long time which means that she may need to find less physically demanding work. To do the latter is contingent on first improving her literacy.

However, as we see above, so far two attempts at improving her literacy through the government-sponsored provision have proved unsuccessful. Her experience shows a

mismatch between her learner identity and her linguistic needs on the one hand and the make-up of the classrooms in which she is placed on the other. As she points out in her assessment of the composition of the L2 class: "those people are degree holders, I'm just a beginner". What we see here is a picture of a generic L2 context. Amina may not have had access to language courses targeting high-oracy low-literacy learners – possibly because none exists or possibly because she has not been properly assessed (Gunn, 2003). In Amina's observation the course was targeted at a generic language learner, and hence highly-educated and highly-literate language learners, probably with poor oracy, predominated whilst low-literacy learners were marginalised and perhaps even looked down upon for not performing as expected.

In addition, the gap that is evident in the generic L2 class is consistent with studies over the past forty years on Creole speakers as L2 learners. These studies have shown unequivocally that, in a range of countries:

> students who speak a variety of CE [Creole English] as their home language are at a serious linguistic disadvantage in classrooms that require SE, and that this linguistic disadvantage exerts a considerable influence on literacy development and overall academic performance. In particular, the structural differences between students' home language (CE) and the SE required in the classroom often mean that students find it difficult to express themselves in a language that follows the rules of SE, with significant L1 transfer effects from students' CE varieties. Moreover, teachers' misinterpretation of the role of CE in students' SE development often further exacerbates the challenges for these students, exerting a negative impact on both instruction and the assessment. (De Kleine, 2009, p. 180)

Although this point is made in reference to Creole English speaking migrant students in US classrooms, we can extend it to the linguistic and cultural disadvantage faced by adult learners, such as the ones in this study, as they struggle to acquire 'standard' English and literacy. In this context, where proficiency is a compounded score of literacy and oracy skills

in 'standard' English, Amina and others like her do not feel that they have been well provided for in terms of their linguistic and literacy needs. Consequently, and left without culturally informed avenues to provide them the means of improving literacy and capitalising on previous acquired language skills, it is not surprising to find them in low-skill, low-paid and physically demanding jobs without any prospects of mobility, as Amina's case exemplifies. Alternatively, they may turn to 'safe' job options in starting their own 'ethnic' business in which higher language and literacy skills may not be of the essence. Thus, Amina opts for starting her own business where she can sell "African stuff" or starting her own restaurant where she can cook "African food". These issues for African migrant groups of job mobility and ethnic enterprises in settlement have been discussed elsewhere (see Section 2.4).

The foregoing shows clearly that Amina connects English language learning in the new setting to getting paid work and progressing in her new life. She also embraces the new literacy culture and pursues English learning. However her learner needs and abilities meet a mismatch in existing classroom provision. The above has shown that it is not for a lack of motivation or a lack of the willingness to invest in language learning that Amina drops out of learning English. It is also not a matter of lacking basic literacy skills to grasp concepts introduced in class that makes Amina refuse to sit in class. For Amina and others in similar L2 learning impasses, the provision of more targeted language learning classes would be useful. The waiver of the formal literacy requirements for less physically demanding work in the care-sector could also be looked into for them. As long as neither of these options are on the cards for new arrivals such as Amina, their settlement needs are undermined, particularly as they age.

7.6 Case Study 6: Violet

Violet is a woman in her late forties from Sudan. She speaks Acholi as her L1, and Arabic and Kiswahili. When Violet was growing up she did not attend school. She married during

her teen years and had four children (including Jane) with her husband in Sudan. As was customary, she was the homemaker and her husband provided financially for the needs of the family. In the 1990s when war broke out in Sudan, her husband was killed for religious reasons. Violet and her four children fled into Uganda where they first mingled with the local Acholi community before seeking refuge and being accepted in a refugee camp. In Uganda, Violet met a Ugandan man and had two more children with him. She found that he was unable to look after her and the children and they faced a lot of financial difficulties. Because she had learnt English in an adult education class previously, she drew on that and other resources in her repertoire to qualify as a bilingual nurse aide in the camp hospital. Thus she was able to earn a small amount of money to meet some of the needs of her family as her daughter, Jane reported (see Extract 7.2).

In 2002, two of Violet's older children including Jane and her family were able to migrate to Australia as refugees. The following year another sibling followed. In 2005, these siblings sponsored their mother and her dependants, their two younger half-siblings into the country. Their eldest sister and step-father remain in Uganda. Violet arrived in Australia happy to be with her children but at the same time she felt rather isolated with no-one else to talk but them.

> Extract 7.14
> Anyway, Australia is good but you know I feel lonely. I feel LONELY. I'm the only one with my kids, no-one even come to talk with me. Just Australia, I love it but you know Australia, yes these white people, even if you meet him or her on the way, no-one no greeting, just passing only, when you are also passing without no greeting. But is, is good. (Violet: 192-198)

As Extract 7.14 shows, Violet sees herself thrust into an anonymous individualised society which stands in contrast to communal norms with which she was familiar. Another challenge for her is that it is also a high literacy setting in which she would require more than the

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literacy skills she learnt and used in the camp in Uganda. As a sponsored entrant who arrived on visa 202, she qualified for the government-sponsored 510 hours of English lessons in the AMEP. Within a few months she enrolled and was placed in CSWE level II and progressed to CSWE level III. In class she is happy to be learning 'standard' English which she describes as "their English" and acquiring new literacy skills to be able to participate in the new setting.

> Extract 7.15
> We are just studying, their English class. We are learning the English language and that is because we don't know how to speak English well, so they are yet still that they are teach us to continue and speak English well and writing, spelling and something. (Violet: 230-235)

At the same time, she expresses uncertainty about what job prospects will result from all that language learning. She expresses her concerns in the extract below:

> Extract 7.16
> I wish that when I came they should give us for the course for the work which we've been doing from Africa, that would be good. But what hear what I heard, that we are to do the course for the what, for the aged-care. Then you know for me there that this kind of work you don't know because we didn't do it from Africa. I don't know. I'm losing now, I can't even say I've been working, I'm now really losing. (Violet: 305-314)

In the extract we see her reaction to the information she received in her language learning class which to her not only equates English learning with a conduit to aged-care work but also a conduit to the erasure of the skills she brought from her previous work as a bilingual nurse aide. These are real concerns and echo other participants such as Sylvia (see Chapter 5) for whom the future looks bleak with both their linguistic capital and work experience erased, and their social network left behind.

Nevertheless, attending English language classes offers a way for Violet to build new social networks. She said she is happy that she has been able to connect with people in class and has started engaging with life outside her home. One of the people she has connected with is a

woman from Sierra Leone with whom she has been exchanging visits: "last time even she came to visit me and she brought me something". Violet is also learning to use the computer for the first time and quite excited about it.

> Extract 7.17
> Yeah, because you from Africa and even it is my first time to touch the computer from here. From Africa since I start my learning I didn't even touch the computer and I don't know how to work with it. Plus when I came to [Name of AMEP Centre], they tell us that you go to computer. Then we start there. Some, those who knows, they can do it. Then me just sit at and then the teacher said, "hey Violet why are you sitting"? And then I said, "teacher, I don't know how to use this thing, since I don't know even how to open it or to do what, I don't know. Then you are just seated down without even coming to teach or to do what. You know some people they know it but like some, those who come from other countries we don't know, so you better come and do for me, yes". And then the teacher come and she did it for me. Then I started to learn, yeah. (Violet: 257-272)

In addition to that excitement the reported exchange shows once again another example of a generic classroom situation with assumed expectations. Violet describes a mismatched and hierarchical classroom situation in which "those who knows, they can do it. Then me, just sit" and "some people they know it but like some, those who come from other countries we don't know" played out in the classroom setting. As Violet points out, learner-sensitive attention such as the one she describes the teacher providing was helpful in bridging some of the gaps in the classroom, then, she "started to learn". What results from that interaction provides a glimpse into positive results that will ensue if a learner-sensitive approach informs the classroom dynamics on a broader scale for all the different language learner groups.

7.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have explored L2 learner experiences of participants' with low levels of education acquired through the medium of English. Participants in this category have

multilingual repertoires and they have learnt and used an African variety of English or an English Creole in their pre-migration contexts. Self-reported English proficiency recorded for them shows that they rated their English as insufficient for living in Australia where English and literacy are pretty much part of everyday life. All of them welcomed the provision of the 510 hours of English lessons for them to learn 'standard' English in Australia with the primary expectation that through that medium they would develop the required resources for their day to day lives as well as jobs. However, their experiences show that it was not that simple. Challenges they met with as adult L2 learners include adjusting to cultural changes such as living in a high literacy and individualised culture, identity and L2 learner conflict which forced three out of five participants to choose between immediate pressing needs and language learning. For those who were able to juggle such needs and continue as L2 learners, experiences of mismatch and hierarchical structures in the L2 classroom presented more challenges including stigmatization and marginalisation where highly literate backgrounds learners dominated. Adult learners like the women here who did not fit the 'traditional' learners profile in the classroom setting, tended to feel intimidated and felt they were positioned as deviant. Consequently, instead of being a haven for them as new migrant women, some of them felt penalised for perceptions that formed about them.

Employment was the main reason why the women considered English learning when they arrived in Australia. However, similar to language learning, their experiences with getting jobs have not been easy. The two women who had jobs were at the bottom of the care-jobs and needed to develop their English further to train and move to the next level. However, it is not easy to continue to juggle working, looking after their families and studying English to be able to develop these literacy skills in English. Women's 'invisible' skills in care-work on the home front as housewives and elders within the community which they could be helped to hone into paid work are also often overlooked. The next chapter will look at participants in

the fourth and final group identified and how they have fared as language learners for settlement in Australia.

CHAPTER 8

8. No or low schooling and from LOTE speaking backgrounds

8.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at language and settlement issues from the perspectives of participants in Group 4 and the fourth key category of focus in the study – migrants from non-English speaking contexts who have low educational credentials and who arrived without English proficiency. I use their experiences to address the final research question:

> *RQ 5: What are the English language learning experiences and settlement trajectories of migrants who have had no or low schooling from non-Anglophone African countries who arrive without English proficiency*?

Without English and without education, both of which are deemed strong predictors of successful settlement by state actors such as the Immigration Department in its settlement framework (DIAC, 2012), these participants' challenges of transitioning into a literacy and English dominant society could be expected to be more severe than those faced by the migrants presented in the other categories.

The fourteen participants this category describes and whose experiences are focused on here are from Sudan (Isabella, Ahmed, Timothy, Ajara, Doris, Mercy, Charity, Felicia, Sarah, Philip, Peter), Ethiopia[3] (Alice, Fatima) and Congo (Ishetu). Most had experienced disruptions to their education such that none of them was schooled beyond secondary level and one of them had no schooling experience at all. Those of them who attended schools in their home countries of Sudan and Ethiopia learnt in Arabic and Amharic mediums

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[3] Ethiopia is loosely considered an Anglophone country as English is listed with Amharic and Tigrinya as national and or official languages (Lewis, et al., 2015). However, I have included these two participants in this non-English speaking group because at the time they were growing up in Ethiopia, Amharic and not English was the main medium of instruction for the primary level of education. Also Amharic has a writing script which is different from English.

respectively, both of which have different scripts from English. They were also bilingual in those MoIs and at least one heritage language. Their backgrounds are summarised in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Sociobiographic information about participants (N=14)

Participant (age)	Country of origin/transit	Year of Arrival in Australia	Languages other than English	Highest Level of Education with LOTE MoI	Self-rated English Proficiency
Ahmed (36)	Sudan/Uganda	2003	**Arabic**, Kiswahili	Primary school	"a little bit"
Ishetu (29)	Congo/Uganda	2003	Lingala, Kiswahili, Lugbara, Kakwa, **Arabic**	Primary school	"no English"
Isabella (50)	Sudan/Uganda	2001	Madi, **Arabic**	No school	"can't understand
Charity (41)	Sudan/Egypt	2003	Bari, **Arabic**	Primary school	"no English"
Mercy (45)	Sudan/Egypt	2003	Moro, **Arabic**	Primary school	"can't speak"
Timothy (30)	Sudan/Egypt	2006	Dinka, **Arabic**	Primary school	"not good"
Alice (35)	Ethiopia/Kenya	2004	Anuak, **Amharic**	Primary school	"very hard"
Fatima (32)	Ethiopia/Kenya	2006	Oromo, **Amharic**, Dinka, Kiswahili, Arabic	Primary school	"no English"
Ajara (26)	Sudan/Egypt	2003	Acholi, **Arabic**	Primary school	"no English"
Doris (24)	Sudan/Egypt	2004	Bari, **Arabic**	Primary school	"couldn't talk"
Felicia (37)	Sudan/Egypt	2003	Luku, **Arabic**	Primary school	"very hard"
Sarah (29)	Sudan/Kenya	2006	**Madi**	Primary school	"can't speak"
Philip (39)	Sudan/Kenya	2006	**Madi**	Primary school	"can't understand"
Peter (38)	Sudan/Kenya	2007	Dinka, Arabic	Some adult education	"can't speak"

Table 8.1 gives information to show that all the participants had lived as refugees in a second country before resettlement in Australia. The countries they lived in were Egypt and Kenya

where English is one of the key languages present. However none of them had the opportunity to learn English in those countries. All of them assessed their on-arrival English in words that amounted to 'not at all' (see column far-right). Even so, some of the participants reported being introduced to English during their school days but said they did not have communicative competence in it prior to coming to Australia (Section 4.5). The only participant who described his on-arrival proficiency in English as "a little" (Ahmed) said he had learnt it prior to living as a refugee. Ahmed left school early to start his own business for which he had travelled extensively on trips to English speaking countries that are neighbours to Sudan and from where he learnt interactional English and used a little bit of English as a lingua franca in his repertoire (see Chapter 4, Extract 4.16).

The majority of the participants (ten out of fourteen persons) in this chapter are women. Women's experiences of no schooling or disrupted schooling index gender as a key factor in terms of access to educational opportunities in their pre-migration experiences and which had post-migration implications (see Chapter 2). Consequently, this chapter pays attention to how gender intersects education to influence women's language learning and settlement trajectories.

The chapter is organised as follows: first, it presents participants' pre-migration educational experiences as a background to English proficiency levels they arrived with in Australia (Section 8.2). Next, it explores language learning issues arising mainly with women participants' post-migration experiences (Section 8.3). Then it looks at men's and women's post-migration job situations with a focus on barriers to gaining employment and also strategies they employed to get jobs. Finally, two participants' (Isabella, Alice) experiences are presented as case studies. The case studies explore women's struggles with language learning exacerbated and reinforced by gender and age and ensuing uncertainties about accessing employment in the settlement context (Section 8.5 and Section 8.6).

8.2 Pre-migration experiences of education and English language learning

This section presents the pre-migration educational backgrounds of participants with low to no schooling and their previous contact with English. The pre-migration education and language learning backgrounds provided by the participants have been summarised in the fourth and fifth columns in Table 8.1 under the titles Languages other than English (LOTE) and Highest Education attained with a LOTE as MoI. As the table shows, most of the participants in this category are women. The women, when they were girls, were the ones discriminated against in formal schooling in most African cultures, and many of my female participants spoke about the educational disadvantage they experienced in their country of origin. That makes the theme of gendered educational opportunities one of prominence for this section on pre-migration educational experiences. So I place the women's experiences at the centre of the discussion here.

8.2.1 Women's education

Nine out of the ten women in this group had received some formal education, that is, schooling up to primary level, but one woman had no schooling at all. These women grew up in various African countries where educational opportunities were set by traditional norms, in which views about girls and women and their roles within societies did not consider their education of premium value for them to perform in those roles. These translate into the gendered processes of 'no schooling' (Isabella), and that of 'disrupted schooling' (for the rest of the women) that characterise their experiences and which have consequences for them in Western migration contexts as will be shown below. For all the women, in the migration context, there were tensions in how to balance gendered obligations in relation to formal language learning and learning vocational skills that were not part of their pre-migration socialisation processes.

'No schooling' was considered the norm for the girl child in the era when Isabella, the oldest member in this group, was growing up in Sudan. The traditional norms and expectations at the time were that women would stay home and support their family and that the men would be the sole bread winner and financial support for the family. Another participant (Charity) also from Sudan, whose mother was of Isabella's generation, explained about her own mother's upbringing as follows:

> Extract 8.1
> @@@She grew up, when her elder sister got married they took her to look after her children, and she never been to school, she stay at home looking for the kids and then when she was fifteen years she got married with my father, and then she had me one year later, and then yeah she had the others. (Charity: 187-192)

Charity was the first of ten children. Charity explains further that she did not see much of her father when she was growing up as he was away most of the time and her life was pretty much shaped by her mother.

However, cultural practices have changed over time including shifts in traditional views of women in relation to education. Unlike the girls in her mother's era, Charity's period of upbringing coincided with a time when tradition norms were slowly opening up in relation to educational opportunities for girls in Sudan. Even so, the experiences of the women suggest that the elementary school level was the cap for the girl child in her generation. In the interview, Charity talked about being able to go to school which she enjoyed very much but not going further than primary school level. When she completed primary school the next step was work. Mercy told a similar story about how she finished primary school and went to work in child-care. The women's examples suggest a shift to educational opportunities for girls compared to what was available in their mother's generation. However, the primary school level tended to be the cap after which, as both women's examples show, their lives were directed into work in child-care jobs which are in themselves institutionalised gendered

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practices. Some of the younger women (e.g. Ajara, Doris, Felicia) had also had some basic schooling. They also said at the time they were growing up primary level was considered enough for them, and they too were required to fulfill gender roles which did not require schooling beyond the primary level.

Disrupted schooling is another factor that affected the women in this group. Civil unrest when some of the younger women were still of school age and in school meant they had to flee their countries. For these younger women, the realities of refugee live in camp situations precluded considerations of formal schooling. Sarah and Fatima are examples. As girls and when they were still primary school age, they fled their countries, Sudan and Ethiopia, to live in refugee camps in Uganda and Kenya respectively. Within the refugee camp context, how to survive from one day to another was the priority, not schooling.

8.2.2 English language education: English as a school subject

The women's experiences in primary school show how the importance of English as a global language influenced their schooling experiences albeit to a small extent. The importance of English was reflected in macro-education policy with the women reporting that they remembered being taught English as a subject in class. Below is a typical example of a conversation with participants, in which Mercy explains her experience with English language learning in Sudan.

Extract 8.2

VWT: Okay. So where did you learn English?

MERCY: I learn English before.

VWT: Yeah.

MERCY: Yes I know the before when I in Sudan.

VWT: Yes.

MERCY: The a,b,c there.

VWT: Yeah.

MERCY:	I finish my every a, b, c, d.
VWT:	Yeah.
MERCY:	That time I didn't have any feeling to get the, the, the …
VWT:	English?
MERCY:	the English. (Mercy: 60-72)

Typical of the participants, those who had learnt English in pre-migration contexts where it was a foreign language and not part of everyday community languages, and as primary school children, paid little attention to it as subject then. Below is how Doris explained the extent to which she had learnt the language and what she could recall in English she learnt in school:

Extract 8.3

| VWT: | Did you do any English or only Arabic? |
| Doris: | No it's just that we do have a few English but it's not like here. You know that like you know where is your ear, where is your eyes all that stuff that's it @@@ yeah not that really English not that hard English. (Doris: 201-205) |

As a result of their limited educational opportunities none of the women in this group had much English when arriving in Australia. However, they were all keen to learn English on arrival as reflected in their uptake of their English entitlement as they all enrolled in English language classes provided in the AMEP.

8.2.3 Summary

This section has centred on women's pre-migration experiences of no or low schooling and their (lack of) prior contact with English, all of which are of importance to their post-migration experiences and settlement in Australia. The women's educational experiences reveal gendered pre-migration characteristics and sociocultural factors that influenced disruptions to their education. The section also showed that some of the women had contact with English in class when they attended school, but the level they were able to complete in

school did not enable them learn it for communicative purposes. Consequently all of them needed to learn English for settlement in Australia.

In the exploration that follows next, we find out about how they fared in their post-migration language learning and settlement experiences.

8.3 Post-migration English language learning

This section looks at the post-migration English language learning and settlement experiences of the women and men who arrived with low education and low to no English proficiency. Similar to the previous section, the analytical focus adopted here centres on women's experiences in the discussion of language learning experiences and issues emerging for them. In addition to the women's comments in the data set for this group, I also consider other data sets that contain comments from participants with spouses who share the characteristics of this group, and data from conversations with key community members that help to illuminate the women's nuanced language learning experiences.

Emerging within this category of women with low education and learning English in the migration context are different sub-groups. Those who at the time of the interview had completed their allocated hours in formal English study (Ajara, Ishetu, Mercy, Charity, Felicia) and those who were studying English in in-class mode (Alice, Isabella) or stay at home mothers who were studying in out-of-class mode with weekly home tutor visits (Doris, Fatima). Reflections of women from the sub-groups showed a lot of similarities. Firstly, they all found language learning challenging. All of them talked about their formal language learning experiences in general terms using descriptors such as "hard" and "difficult", and they talked about the level at which they started and the outcome of that learning. The women in the first sub-group had all completed their AMEP entitlement and elaborated on what they were able to attain such as going into further training at TAFE after leaving the language learning classroom, as shown in the example below:

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Extract 8.4

It was hard. I started from level zero. I finished all the hours. After that I went to TAFE for the hairdressing certificate and we started the business. (Ishetu: 90-93)

That example comes from Ishetu who was the only one among them in paid employment, having started an African hairdressing business with Ahmed, her husband. The quote illustrates a few points. Firstly, while learning English was hard, it is not impossible for African migrants as L2 learners to progress from limited education and no proficiency in English to attain sufficient proficiency in English and literacy in English to engage successfully in professional training at TAFE. Secondly, it is not impossible for migrants arriving with limited education and no proficiency in English to build enough linguistic, social and cultural capital to negotiate space in employment by rejecting mainstream employment and strategising to cater to a niche migrant community (discussed in more detail in Section 8.4.2).

The four remaining women (Ajara, Charity, Mercy, Felicia) in this first sub-group were not employed but seemed satisfied with the level of English they had attained by the time of their interview. Two of them indicated that they were looking for work (Ajara, Charity) and they felt their English was sufficient for the work they were targeting. Indeed, Charity had worked previously as a bilingual aide for children in child-care and had left to take a fulltime home duty role after the birth of her own baby. The two remaining women, Mercy and Felicia, also felt their English was sufficient for employment and were training at TAFE and hoping to get jobs in aged-care and child-care when they completed.

The main issue for the women (Alice, Isabella) in the second sub-group, those who were studying in the in-class mode, was the slow progress and their struggle to learn English. (As mentioned above their experiences inform the two case studies for this chapter.) The gist of their comments was that while they were keen to transition from English study to work, they had not attained sufficient English for that transition. Their struggles were similar to those

mentioned by participants (e.g. Obi, Osman, James) whose wives had similar backgrounds. It was usual for the men to share their thoughts on their wives' language learning challenges and this topic features prominently in talks with community leaders (e.g. Mark).

Like Alice, Obi and Osman's wives had their schooling in Ethiopia with Amharic as the MoI and did not attend school beyond the primary level, and unlike Isabella who had no schooling experience in Sudan, her country of birth, or in Uganda and was learning English and having an in-class experience for the first time in Australia. The women's difficulties take on familial dimensions as we see with male participants' discussion of their wives grappling with language learning difficulties. Obi talked about his wife Naomi's "big challenge". Naomi was not interviewed for this study. Nevertheless, Obi found it very important to discuss Naomi's language learning difficulties during his interview. Obi said in Ethiopia he was the sole bread winner. He had worked as a teacher and political activist while Naomi stayed home to look after their six children. He said that that traditional family arrangement was suitable for them and worked well for them. However, they knew that in Australia they needed to negotiate new family dynamics and both Obi and Naomi wanted to enter paid employment to support their family. He was training as a teacher but Naomi was stuck with little progress in language learning.

> Extract 8.5
> So on my part, I had no problem I know different things I'd read about the western world, how people live, how things are done, then the major problem is on was on my wife because she is not educated, and the children. The children they just caught up very quickly. Children you see learn very quick. The problem with my children was just the first 2 to 3 months and the issue was solved. So on my part, on the part of my wife, it was a big challenge because of the language you know because when you are old, particularly after having children, learning another language is really very difficult. This was a major problem with my wife. (Obi: 48-60)

Below is another telling story from James who talked about how his wife was "afraid" to talk on the phone.

Extract 8.6
When we came she couldn't understand English, because she study in Arabic so she is really feeling you know, she had to work hard […] So she came, she even you know was afraid to answer telephone. (James: 435-437)

As well as the familial dimension, there were community dimensions to the women's difficulties. It was common for some of the elders within African community groups to comment on women's language learning difficulties as they had observed them for the women characterised in this group. Some of these community elders (e.g. Mark) had professional backgrounds in bilingual education and they offered insights on bilingual language teaching and learning processes that they saw as essential but found lacking in the monolingual methodology being applied in this context. Mark is also one of the participants in this study (see above). Below is what he said about the proven success of the bilingual language teaching methodology for women with low schooling and no print literacy learning as opposed to what he had seen with the monolingual teaching methodology which had so far failed some of the more mature women in this category.

Extract 8.7
Yeah that is erm that is one thing that has been difficult for me as I see some of these people particularly the women, some of them have been in TAFE all the years, and even today they hardly you know can speak English. And when I look back at some of the work we have been doing in Africa with the refugees you know, we help. We have taught the same English language to people. They have never been to school you know. They speak, they read, they write and on top of that, they do it fluently in their own mother tongue. So I have talked with the other people that if […] I would I would like to be around some of the TAFE [AMEP] teachers. Let them do it in English and then let me do it in the language that some of these people understand. That will build you know, confidence and then after that, because erm the

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problem today is that some of these have been hardened you know with the with the straight away with the English, and so all that they do is you know yes, yes, no, no and really it is sad. (Mark: 589-609)

In the above, Mark suggests a rethink of teaching methodology from a monolingual one to utilising learners' previously learnt bilingual skills. In Mark's concluding comment above he painted a picture of the psychological and emotionally incapacitating effect for the women who have been failed by the system as follows: they "have been hardened you know with the with the straight away with the English, and so all that they do is you know yes, yes, no, no and really it is sad". That calls for according due attention to the issues raised so that the language learners receive help to reach their full potential and engage more actively the new context and by so doing facilitate language learning so that the post-migration trauma picture painted for the women is avoided.

Therefore, for the women in this sub-group, in-class learning may be helpful with input skills for the women but may provide few speaking opportunities to help learners produce meaningful spoken language. Sociocultural perspectives on language learning (e.g., Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2001) stress the importance of opportunities to practise in meaningful oral conversations and how these cannot be overlooked for language learning and must accompany receptive skill provision in the classroom. There is evidence of this in what Abenet pointed out in a comment about Alice's language learning experience: "She understands but there is a problem". Therefore Alice and the rest of the women may be able to understand – have comprehensible input – but their main challenge, which typifies classroom learning with little opportunity for out-of-class practice, was with speaking. Outside of English class and in their day to day lives the women had very few places and opportunities to practice in English. Alice for example said she was only able to use formulaic English in transactional interactions such as boarding the bus to go to class, for shopping, and when she visited her African hairdresser who is of Sudanese background. Also,

her family attended a church where as part of a strategy to improve her English she volunteers to look after the toddler group but so far this has entailed very little conversation and the family is still looking for more ways to help with Alice's language learning.

The last sub-group is made up of women (Doris, Fatima) who were learning at home with weekly home tutors visits while looking after their under-school-aged children. Both women had plans to enter the workforce once their children started school. Fatima for instance was looking forward to finding work as a cleaner.

The section has outlined some of the challenges that women face as language learners with some making progress while others continue to struggle and were still learning English. The next section will look at what these challenges entail in respect to job opportunities.

8.4 Finding jobs in Australia

This section explores the participants' experiences (Ishetu, Isabella, Ahmed, Timothy, Ajara, Doris, Mercy, Charity, Felicia, Alice, Fatima, Sarah, Philip, Peter) in everyday practices in terms of challenges and opportunities for employment in Australia. Two of the four men (Timothy, Ahmed) were both employed in low-skill jobs before Ahmed started his own business with his wife (Ishetu) and Timothy found a job as a factory hand with a car parts manufacturing company. The rest of the men (Philip, Peter) were learning English at the time they were interviewed and were not actively looking for work. Prior to coming to Australia, Ahmed ran his own retail business in Sudan and Timothy worked as a labourer in Sudan and as a driver/delivery person in Egypt. Philip and Peter were previously engaged in hands-on jobs such as the one Philip describes below:

Extract 8.8
I'd done some job but not in carpentry. I'd done brick laying. I done. I was trained on job because I did it. If you don't do it you will not survive so I had to learn it. I have to start and

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learn it. So I did it. I tried. It was a hard job but I did it for about two to three years I did it. (Philip: 220-225)

Philip's description of his job is typical of the sorts of jobs whereby some of the participants accumulated uncertified skills in labour jobs. Similarly, the women also described uncertified skills mostly in gendered job areas such as child-care and hairdressing (see also Violet in Chapter 7). The women's backgrounds show that before coming to Australia, gendered expectations had already shaped their language learning (see above) and job areas. Charity and Mercy both had child-care jobs in Sudan. They were trained on the job and did not receive any certification for these skills. Both of them also worked as cleaners when they were in Egypt. Ajara, Felicia and Doris did not work in Sudan but worked as baby sitters when they lived in Egypt. Fatima worked as a kitchen hand in the refugee camp and Ishetu, Alice, Isabella and Sarah were fulltime homemakers before coming to Australia. In Australia, gender continued to play an important role in their workforce participation in addition to other factors.

In Australia, of the ten women in this group only one (Ishetu) was employed at the time of the interviews. The rest of the women (Isabella, Ajara, Doris, Mercy, Charity, Felicia, Alice, Fatima, Sarah) were not employed at that time. However, three women (Charity, Isabella, Ajara) had previously held paid jobs but were no longer employed due to family and health reasons. Charity had worked as a casual bilingual support person in a child-care centre and was no longer working because she had recently had a baby. Isabella had worked as a casual cleaner for a year and took holidays to visit family overseas. Ajara had worked as a volunteer in an office role but did not like it. Later she found work in aged-care but was not working at the time of the interview because she had fallen sick and was recovering from a long illness. These women and men's challenges and frustrations with labour market constraints, and some of the strategies the few who were employed and those who were previously employed

had drawn on to negotiate some of those barriers to be able to find jobs in Australia are discussed next.

8.4.1 Job challenges

Both women and men talked about intense difficulties and frustrations with finding jobs in Sydney as well as in C-Town. Barriers to finding jobs drew the following themes for the participants: poor language or language learning outcomes (e.g. Ahmed, Isabella, Alice, Mercy), lack of social networks (e.g. Isabella, Mercy), no previous paid work experience (e.g. Alice), over regulation of low-skill jobs (e.g. Mercy, Isabella, Ahmed), no documented qualifications (e.g. Ahmed, Charity, Mercy), discrimination and racism (e.g. Ahmed, Timothy), and settlement conditions in a small country location with limited job opportunities (e.g. Timothy, Mercy). Each of these themes is discussed in turn next.

Poor language or language learning outcomes (Ahmed, Isabella, Alice, Mercy): Isabella and Alice, who were learning English at the time of their interview, felt that they were not able to get jobs because their English was not good enough for employers. Mercy said she was told by prospective employers she had approached to go and learn English. Ahmed also felt that difficulties in the different jobs as a labourer initially in Sydney (before he started his own business with Ishetu) were due in part to language difficulties and also racial discrimination (see Extract 8.10).

Lack of social networks (Isabella, Mercy): All the participants felt that social networking had an important role in linking people to jobs but most had none to help with this transitioning in Australia. Isabella, for example, had initially drawn on the help of a contact in her network to connect her to a casual cleaning job. After working for a year, she had taken time off to go on an overseas holiday but when she returned her job was no longer available and her friend was also no longer available to help with finding another job. With no one to vouch for her abilities, she was told by prospective employers to go and better her English and so she went

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back to English classes. A lack of social network also meant Mercy could not find a job which Charity did with the help of friend when an opening in a care-situation became available.

Over regulation of low-skill jobs (Mercy, Isabella): Most of the women found that there was over regulation of low-skill jobs in which they had previous experience and felt they would perform well. For instance, Mercy cited her cleaning experience in Egypt and how there was no difficulty in getting cleaning jobs but the situation was different in C-Town. Mercy's experience is quite telling in terms of job challenges for the women who felt that low-skill job such as cleaning is highly regulated and not available.

> Extract 8.9
> No jobs, no anything. I go to other place, I want to do the cleaner, they say no. Your English is not instead to do some. If you come here, we what will we do about you? And I say no, just the cleaner because in Egypt, it's easy for us, we work in their homes. We clean, the Egyptian places and we get the money in there. This is why we live in Egypt for long time. We stay like the Egyptian. No not something hard for us there. Because we working in job the cleaner, I can do it, this is it's not it's not difficult for me to do it, and they say no. (Mercy: 532-542)

Despite Isabella's proven experience in a casual cleaning job, she too was not able to find another one.

No documented qualifications (Ahmed, Charity, Mercy): Most of the participants like Philip (see Philip's description of his previous work experience above) did not have certified qualifications. Pre-migration skills they accumulated were mostly learnt on the job with no certification. Without paper evidence of these skills, it was difficult for them to provide proof of them to apply for jobs.

Discrimination and racism (Ahmed, Timothy): For the men, low-skill jobs were readily available both in Sydney and C-Town, but they found that work conditions were not

conducive to job stability, mobility and collegiality in workplaces which they expected would lead to self development and a sense of belonging in Australia. One of the most telling examples of job challenges comes from Ahmed who, compared to Timothy, had lengthy work experience in Australia and who recalled his experiences in different jobs in great detail as follows.

Extract 8.10

AHMED: I have many problem. I cannot tell you all of them because I actually worked in many places. Simply I don't know. Because of my English is not good, because of my colour, I don't know because of I don't know much about here. Because I always find it difficult, always, all the time. I worked in the farm, I worked in the meat factory, I worked in the demolition, I worked in erm you know I worked in a lot of places but the work is, something has to face me, always it has to face me.

VWT: so give me an example of something that happened to you

AHMED: Like last time here when I was working in Sydney, the demolition, like they treat me like no matter how I work, I'm just behind them. And anything that for example is, it look like not very good or hard, they send me.

VWT: Hmmm?

AHMED: Yes. I worked there for two years. I was working and I thought they're doing this one because I was new, they want to test me. It's no problem, I will handle it. But the thing is keep going, keep going. After two years I realised that it never change. I'm just like that. Even if somebody came, today he start working, he is in front of me. I am behind. I'm always behind and you know what I'm talking about. When you're starting actually some time they give you work which they don't give it to others. But for me it is like I'm not moving from here. I'm always here (using hand gestures). But if somebody come today he start working, he is in front of me. I'm behind (more hand gestures).

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VWT:	Still behind?
AHMED:	Yeah still behind until one day I told myself I cannot handle this one so just too much. So I just leave the job.
VWT:	Did you talk to the boss?
AHMED:	I talked to the boss. Actually the thing is between me and the boss. Before it was from the other colleagues, and I thought maybe the boss is not involved. But now when this one happened from the boss himself, then I realised that all whatever they doing to me is from THE BOSS. He liked it. Because I thought maybe he doesn't know. But now when he did it to me that is when I oh my God. So I couldn't handle it. I said bye-bye. I quit the job. (Ahmed: 56-101)

Ahmed's experience shows hard manual work (demolition, abattoir work) requiring no high skills and English proficiency was easily available to him. He was not afraid of hard work and he was prepared to work to support his family so he took those jobs. However, he met harsh work conditions which he felt were underpinned by linguistic discrimination and or racism – "Because of my English is not good, because of my colour" – that did not allow him to stay with those jobs and he exercised his agency by leaving them. He found work conditions to be discriminatory – he expected that he would progress in the jobs or at least he would be treated in a manner similar to his colleagues but that was not the case – "anything that for example is, it look like not very good or hard, they send me". He also realised that in the hierarchy that existed in those jobs, he was stuck on the bottom rung: "Even if somebody came, today he start working, he is in front of me. I am behind. I'm always behind". For him, it seemed unlikely that he would ever attain mobility in any of those jobs. Ahmed also talked about a time when he worked on a three-month trial with a promise of a pay rise from fourteen dollars to twenty dollars at the end of the trial period only to be terminated two months into the trial period.

In the extract below, Ahmed summed up the treatment meted out in those jobs as dehumanising:

> Extract 8.11
> It's not easy to work with someone believe me. What you're recording here somebody may listen to it and may not believe it. But believe me it's VERY VERY HARD working for somebody. People like that. We do work but it's putting pressure on us, put pressure on us and that level you can't actually handle it for long. You've got to stop. Because I'm human being. Yeah I'm human being, I'm not actually a machine. So if you don't treat me nice, even if I need that job, one day I'll stop. (Ahmed: 147-157)

Similarly, Timothy's employment experience in C-Town showed his resistance to undesirable jobs including the readily available abattoir work for newly-arrived African migrants as discussed below in the section on the participants' job challenges in small town locations.

Settlement conditions in small country locations with limited job opportunities (Timothy, Mercy): Timothy said that when he arrived in C-Town abattoir work was the norm and he, like most of the African migrants he met there, were employed in the local abattoir. He said that the nature of abattoir work was such that one did not need to have previous skills and proficiency in English to be employed there. However, it was hard work and can be unpopular with locals, so much so that some abattoirs have had to recruit foreign workers from countries such as China on temporary work visas to fill job vacancies (Piller & Lising, 2014).

Timothy seemed like a good candidate for abattoir work. He was young and in good health. When he arrived, he did not have proficiency in English and he only had primary school level education, both of which were considered as suitable for abattoir work. Yet he was determined to not do abattoir work – Colic-Peisker and Tilbury have labelled abattoir work as one of the "3D" – dirty, difficult, dangerous – jobs (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2003, p. 81).

His resistance to abattoir work seemed to be based on three factors. Firstly, he felt that it was not suitable for him and his young family who were used to urban life-styles in Northern Sudan as well as Cairo. In recounting his experience, as an able-bodied young African man, he was pointing at the tension between how race and gender intersect to inscribe a low rank in class, and stereotyping certain migrant groups as suitable for particular low-ranking labour market positionings (see Browne & Misra, 2003; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2003). Secondly, he believed that working there would limit opportunities for English study towards educational training, a good job and the future he wanted for himself and his family in Australia. Thirdly, he understood the positioning of African migrants as fit for certain undesirable jobs to be part of racism in Australian society and he contested that positioning. After a few months Timothy left the job. But Timothy wanted to work. He also wanted to improve his English. He wanted the opportunity to work in an environment where there would be opportunities to speak in English and get better from practice in English by speaking with work colleagues. Since that was not possible with abattoir work, he continued with fulltime English study and tried to cope with increasing pressure from Centrelink as well as mainstream discourse on welfare recipients until he was able to land a job with the help of his neighbour (see Section 8.4.2)

The above shows that job barriers were quite challenging for both men and women. While manual labour and low-skill jobs were readily available for the men, they found racialised work conditions to be harsh and dehumanising in some cases. For these men, too, working conditions took them away for extended time from family and there was no opportunity for improving their English skills and even forging relationships in the workplace and wider society. For the women transitioning to work was primarily difficult without networks to link them to jobs. It was also quite gendered and with cleaning jobs over-regulated, care-jobs seemed to be the main job areas they could consider entering.

8.4.2 Job opportunities

The above has shown that finding jobs and negotiating employment barriers to (re)establish careers was not straightforward for both men and women in this group. Experiences of these men and women who were working (Timothy, Ahmed, Ishetu) or had worked previously (Isabella, Charity) in Australia showed the strategies they drew upon to find jobs in Australia. These included accepting any low-skill job for survival which did not always work out as we have seen above with Ahmed and Timothy; starting their own 'ethnic' business to avoid discriminatory workplace practices (Ahmed, Ishetu); performing volunteer work to gain Australian experience and also to gauge their ability to survive in an Australian work place (Ajara); and using a social network as a point of contact for jobs (Timothy, Charity, Isabella, Ajara).

Starting their own 'ethnic' business to avoid discriminatory workplace practices (Ahmed, Ishetu): It is not unusual for migrants to start their own businesses in response to discriminatory mainstream workplace practices (see Chapter 2). That is exactly what Ahmed and Ishetu considered when they realised that the mainstream jobs that employed him did not treat him well (see above). Ahmed is from Sudan and Ishetu is from Congo (DRC). He grew up with Arabic and went to school up to primary level with Arabic as the MoI. On leaving school, he began his working life doing odd jobs before going on to start his own small retail business which he ran for fifteen years. His business entailed frequent travel for "goods" in the two countries (Uganda, Kenya) where he informally learnt English and Kiswahili. In this group he is the only one to arrive with "a little bit" of English. Ishetu, on the other hand, did not have English when they arrived. In the Congo she grew up speaking Lingala, her mother tongue, but she had also learnt Kiswahili, Arabic, Lugbara and Kakwa. Ishetu and Ahmed met in the refugee camp in Uganda and had their first child there before coming to Australia in 2003.

Unlike Ahmed, Ishetu had no previous working experience and was the homemaker. She had hair braiding skills but there is no way to certify this skill. On arriving in Australia, she enrolled for her English learning entitlement, finished her hours and went on to formalise her hairdressing skills at TAFE. She acknowledged that her linguistic abilities in the languages she brought helped her with learning English and further study at TAFE so that she was able to train successfully in hairdressing to earn the certificate which enabled her and her husband to start their own hairdressing business. She also used her linguistic abilities in key lingua francas within the wider African community, Kiswahili and Arabic, to communicate with a wide range of prospective clientele and to build a varied customer base. Coupled with her husband's previous business skills these were all very useful resources they were able to draw on to run their business. At the time of writing they have opened a second shop in another suburb.

Ahmed and Ishetu's location in Sydney with a larger African population compared to C-Town was also helpful in building up their business. Observational data gathered from fieldwork in C-Town showed that hairdressing salons and African ethnic businesses were not present in C-Town's landscape. Most of the women visited homes for hairstyling having learnt through word of mouth about the women with hairdressing skills. In C-Town hairdressers were "informal 'kitchen beauticians' to their friends, relatives, and acquaintances" (Jacobs-Huey, 2006, p. 18) and home-based hair-care practices are the norm. All the participants mentioned that they travelled to neighbouring capital cities like Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney, mostly for African staples and supplies. Therefore Ishetu and Ahmed's location in Sydney placed them in better stead to start their own business compared to their counterparts in C-Town.

Performing volunteer work to gain Australian experience and also to gauge their ability to survive in an Australian work place: Only one participant, Ajara, engaged in a volunteer job.

That role was that of a bilingual aide in an office situation. Ajara said she found the office situation stressful, she felt isolated, and most of the time she did not feel a sense of belonging in that space. When her volunteering period was over she decided to go into aged-care which she describes as "more hands-on work" and "not boring work". She worked in aged-care for about a year before falling seriously sick which forced her to leave work.

Using the help of social contacts as points of reference for jobs (Timothy, Charity, Isabella, Ajara): The experiences of two of the older women (Charity, Mercy) and one man (Timothy) were the most illustrative of the importance of social network for getting jobs. These two women had quite similar characteristics. Both of them were in their forties and lived in C-Town. Both had similar educational backgrounds: primary school education and previous work in child-care in Sudan where they learnt on the job but did not have any certification of their skills. Both had done cleaning jobs in Egypt when civil unrest took them to live there prior to migrating to Australia in 2003. In Australia, both of them hoped that they would be able to master the language as quickly as possible to get jobs. Both of them finished their English study within two years, but only Charity had found a job. This was as a bicultural support person in a child-care centre which was in line with her pre-migration career area, and was found with the help of her social network.

> Extract 8.12
> VWT: How did you find out about that job?
>
> CHARTIY: Through friends. I have friend she is working in the university and then I think they ring her and she ring me too to ask me if I need, and then yeah. I have to fill the form and go through police check and all that and then they accept me.
>
> VWT: ok. So when you were given that job were you confident that you can do it?
>
> CHARITY: Yeah because I was working in child-care before for eleven years in Sudan. This is my job and I want to do that. Yeah I need to do certificate three and four. (Charity: 96-107)

Charity held that job till she became pregnant and had to leave to take up a fulltime homemaker role.

Mercy on the other hand did not have that connection – social capital – that had worked so well for Charity. She had completed her English study, confident that she had the proficiency to back up her previous cleaning experience, although those skills did not travel well and were not so easily translatable in the new context. For Mercy, what was lacking was that point of contact. Mercy was also unsuccessful with cleaning jobs despite having done that previously in Egypt (see Extract 8.9). Mercy's experience shows a mismatch between her views of her cleaning job in Egypt and what is expected of her to access cleaning jobs in Australia. While her linguistic capital travelled well in Egypt, in the sense that she had command of Arabic and perhaps a network to connect her to cleaning work, in the context of Australia things were different. What Charity had and Mercy lacked was an established contact that would link her to child-care work or even cleaning work like another participant (Isabella) had done previously (see her case study below). Another mismatch in Mercy's comment is the contradiction between English proficiency requirements for cleaning and that for further training. On the one hand her English was rejected as insufficient to satisfy language requirements for a low skill job not requiring a high command of English and on the other hand that same level of English was sufficient enough for study at TAFE in a course which required relatively higher linguistic skills. As a result of such experiences, for Mercy and some of the participants, there was no real incentive to keep on investing in English learning to master the language. Indeed, she chose to forget about formal language learning and looking for cleaning jobs. Instead she felt that enrolling for training for local qualification in child-care would provide her a better chance of getting a job and this time in a skill area.

The interplay between social welfare and employment was a key factor in Timothy's access to his current work, and so too was his agency which drove him to challenge being seen as a

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"dole bludger/welfare cheat" (e.g., as depicted in the racist flier mentioned in Chapter 3) in a conversation with his neighbour who happened to be a supervisor in a car parts manufacturing company in C-Town. Through that exchange, Timothy was employed in a car parts manufacturing company when we met in 2008. That was an unusual job for newly arrived migrants in the country town and an unusual job for an African migrant who had only been in the country for two years and had arrived with no English and low schooling.

Extract 8.13

VWT: So how did you get the job?

TIMOTHY: I have my neighbours.

VWT: From?

TIMOTHY: Australian one.

VWT: Australian neighbours?

SERENA: Yeah.

TIMOTHY: Because he supervisor.

VWT: Okay.

TIMOTHY: Yeah. And then one day I will stay here and then he ask me, he say why you you Africa you stay at home and receive money from Centrelink, you don't want the job. I tell him no because not like that, we need a job but here it's difficult for us because we are, some people put the application and then they tell me call you back, and nothing. If you apply for [Name of abattoir] they call you immediately. Why? (Timothy: 568-583)

This reported interaction between Timothy and his neighbour presents interesting features.

Timothy had enough cultural knowledge to identify the remark as derogatory and to understand the implication of the interlocutor's positioning of his individual and collective identity as an inferior racialised "other" who took advantage of Australia's welfare system. He used the interaction as an opportunity to enlighten his neighbour about his and his

community's job-seeking problems and also to appeal to the well touted Australian value of a fair go.

Timothy was able to employ linguistic resources at his disposal to function effectively in the reported interaction by refuting the racialised accusation and negative positioning of a social welfare cheat and presenting himself and his community instead as a people denied equal opportunity to employment. He explained that they do make efforts to penetrate the job market but these efforts remain futile because employers do not recognise them as qualified to fill advertised positions other than abattoir work. Therefore, it is not their fault but the cause of their unemployment, in his opinion, was the external social and systemic factors which work to deny them job opportunities. This is then followed by his reported counter attack with the statement and the simple question that followed it thus: "[i]f you apply for [Name of abattoir] they call you immediately. Why?" These two utterances have embeddings of Australian cultural values that Timothy alluded to and which his interlocutor understood as speaking to the Australian value of a fair go. By questioning the availability and unavailability of certain types of jobs for certain types of people, Timothy was pointing out the unfair ordering of a socially stratified society which put certain jobs off limits for him as an individual and his community as a collective. The monosyllabic interrogative, "why" to which the neighbour responds and acts upon by providing him a network into his work place, is a question that is posed at two levels. It is directed immediately at the neighbour as an individual at the micro-level and is also directed at the macro-level to institutions whose wheels are meant to be turning by way of the Australian ethos of the fair go and who also has the added duty of care as a humanitarian, receiving country to see to the resettlement of these new migrants and their inclusion in society. At the time of the interview, Timothy was studying English during the day and working in that company in the evening. He told me that he was happy with the arrangement and he was also enjoying his English classes and had plans of doing work-related training at TAFE later on.

Social networks, even as combative as Timothy's was with his neighbour, or less confronting, as is usually the case, play an important role in introducing people to jobs and is not a phenomenon exclusive to the participants in this study. This is what a white female community worker I met in C-Town told me about her own experience with the important role that a social network plays as a key point of contact for work in C-Town.

> Extract 8.14
> You need also network. Without contacts it is very difficult. Unless you know someone it's very difficult to have that start. The interviews are often equal opportunity. Workplaces are conscious of treating people with fairness but it still helps a lot to have that contact and I have experienced it myself. (Fran: Community worker)

Yet a social network is clearly challenging considering these are new migrants and mostly do not have proficiency in English to build such a network, let alone draw on it.

8.4.3 Summary

This section explored the tensions between post-migration language learning and employment challenges and opportunities for men and women arriving without English proficiency and low education. For the men, manual labour jobs were readily available although the two men in this chapter showed resistance to taking such jobs. In addition to harsh conditions the men found that taking readily available manual labour jobs may provide immediate financial benefits, in the long run they can also limit one's job prospects. For the women, the majority of whom were not employed, there were no such readily available jobs. Similar to the women in the previous chapter (Chapter 7), women are in care-work as housewives which is unpaid work and not considered important because of how wages are attached to work. They also found that even basic cleaning jobs required them to have proficiency in English as well as social networks to forge a link to jobs. The only woman who was employed was running an 'ethnic' hairdressing business that she and her husband had started as part of their strategy to avoid harsh and discriminatory work conditions that he had

met previously doing manual work in the mainstream. In the two case studies that follow next, I use two mature women's experiences to further illuminate issues that adult African migrant women from low educational backgrounds face with language learning and settlement in Australia.

8.5 Case study 7: Isabella

In this section, Isabella's story is drawn on to provide an illustration of the complexities of language learning and settlement experiences of a mature-aged woman with no previous formal schooling and no English proficiency on arrival in Australia. We will see how language and education were not the only obstacles in the transition to paid work and economic independence.

Isabella is in her fifties from Madi ethnicity in Sudan. She speaks Madi and Arabic. Isabella did not go to school as a child and was in her teen years when she and Benjamin (another of the participants) got married. Her husband was the sole bread winner of their family and she was fulltime homemaker and very busy raising their seven children in Sudan before they fled to Uganda in 1992. The last two of their nine children were born there. In 2001, together with Benjamin as main applicant and eight of their children, the family arrived in the refugee visa stream for resettlement in C-Town in Australia. Isabella did not have proficiency in English unlike Benjamin and their children who were educated in English in Uganda. A few weeks after her arrival, she had her first-ever experience of formal learning. She started studying English in the pre-CSWE class in the AMEP. She described that daunting experience of learning English without having prior formal language learning and formal schooling experience and the major role the teacher played to ensure she was able to write:

> Extract 8.15
> VWT: You started a, b, c here?
>
> ISABELLA: A, b, c, that's teacher (makes hand gestures)

VWT:	Held your hand?
ISABELLA:	Yeah. Very funny.
VWT:	So now you can write your name by yourself?
ISABELLA:	Yeah I write my name and my address, I write it now. Yeah but very hard too for me.
VWT:	Yes. But you've come a long way and you've done well.
ISABELLA:	I don't know.
VWT:	Why?
ISABELLA:	Yeah. Yeah, very hard for me.
VWT:	Not easy for you.
ISABELLA:	Yeah because I go that is that is after I find Benjamin, up to I born kids, they still refugees. (Isabella: 290-303)

For Isabella, arriving with no formal education and no proficiency in English had meant struggling to move forward with her language learning to have sufficient English to access employment. She constantly referred to her "history" as a central factor in her language learning challenge and language use challenges. She said the initial years were the most daunting:

Extract 8.16

ISABELLA:	I was no go to school.
VWT:	Okay.
ISABELLA:	That is start here in Australia.
VWT:	You started learning English here?
ISABELLA:	Yeah. Before I come, my history like me, I come here, before come talking I can't understand, I crying and cry. Looking at here, I go back yeah, not to more now. (Isabella: 230-239)

Isabella's quote demonstrates her experiences of sitting in class for the first time to learn both oracy and literacy in a new language and the frustrations and sadness of an adult language

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learner who struggled in order to understand the classroom situation. In her last comment she compares her pre-migration hardships to what she faced as a language learner, and at that time, to her going back to face the life left behind was more appealing than the challenge of learning to speak, read and write in a new language all at the same time.

But she explained that she stuck with language learning. Through social interactions outside of class she was able to feel less inhibited with language on the social front. She said she did not have fluency but her speaking has improved through social interactions in English as follows: "Just I pick [English] from people, Australian people". Not only did she pick up English but she was also able to impress one of her social contacts to help her negotiate a casual cleaning job – her first ever paid job. Isabella held the cleaning job for a year in 2004/2005.

Isabella said that having a job enabled her to be financially independent. It also allowed her to save up towards a trip overseas to participate in a family reunion in the United States of America in 2006. For the first time in her life, Isabella travelled alone with the self-confidence and courage of having learnt to communicate in English as our below conversation shows:

> Extract 8.17
> VWT: You went alone to America?
>
> ISABELLA: Mm.
>
> VWT: Were you able to speak English?
>
> ISABELLA: No, yeah. Yeah they help me.
>
> VWT: And you found your way to America?
>
> ISABELLA: Yeah.
>
> VWT: You must be proud of yourself?

ISABELLA: Yeah. I find them. Yeah I find my brother, my nephew living in Dallas. I live in Dallas there one month and half. I go to Nebraska, my youngest brother's in Nebraska. Then I take the Christmas there, yeah.

VWT: Wow. So do you see that you are doing well? When you came you couldn't speak English, zero?

ISABELLA: No zero, zero. (Isabella: 276-289)

Isabella acknowledged that learning English allowed her to perform in some social practices such as travelling on her own for the first to reunite with family in the US. However she is not happy because she has not made enough progress towards sufficient oracy and competence in the language to impress prospective employers. For two years since her trip she was unable to get another job. At same time she was concerned about not getting a job and very worried about being stuck in the language learning classroom and feeling uncertain about the future. She shared her frustration as follows:

> Extract 8.18
> Yeah now I got difficult also, have to notice for me, they are growing now old. So they say oh, can you look to the job. Why I find job? Say no, no job go [Name of AMEP Centre]. I say ah, that I find very hard because I'm child, I'm not going to school. I grow just refugee like that. But I find [Name of AMEP Centre] will, if they know you go like that, they take. (Isabella: 230-242)

When I met Isabella, she had been in Australia for seven years, and had been studying English for most of that time – she learnt to write from scratch, and she was able to write her name and address. She was still struggling with English and constantly referred to how a lack of previous formal learning was impacting her learning – "I find very hard because I'm child, I'm not going to school" – suggesting that not being understood and accommodated in the methodology being applied to teach her might be compounding the issue.

As her experiences show, learning a language from scratch and getting a job are serious challenges that compound the settlement processes of adult women who, through gendered pre-migration norms, were marginalised in their pre-migration contexts in relation to formal education. Without English proficiency and formal education, and in addition to learning oracy in a new language, they must also learn to read and write in the same new language. Despite being highly motivated to learn, as we see in Isabella who keeps going back to the language learning classroom, these women seem stuck to classroom situations with which they are not familiar. It is also the situation that pedagogical provisions which have mostly been formulated with other learner groups in mind and without familiarity with new learners such as Isabella, there is a mismatch between their needs and what is on offer. As Bigelow and Schwarz (2010) and their colleagues explain (see Chapter 2), existing SLA research has so far failed to provide the much needed theoretical resources for language educators to draw on to help new migrants learners. They point out that what exists are modelled mostly on traditional learners whose backgrounds and characteristics are quite different from what we see with learners such as Isabella.

8.6 Case study 8: Alice

The present case study is another exploration of what happens when women whose pre-migration lives evolved around gendered educational opportunities and unpaid reproductive work find themselves faced with the need to re-negotiate new identities as their gendered realities are impacted by new realities in settlement. Alice's experiences will further highlight how the issue of women's pre-migration gendered lack of access to education and no proficiency in English has consequences for them and their families in the post-migration context where they must learn a new language and literacy in that language to access paid work. Similar to Isabella's experience it will highlight the mismatch between language provision and her learner needs.

Alice is in her thirties from Anuak ethnicity in Ethiopia. She speaks Anuak and Amharic. Alice grew up and went to school in Ethiopia up to primary level. At school Amharic was the MoI and she said she is able to read and write a little bit in Amharic which has a different script from English. Alice is married to Abenet, also from Anuak ethnicity. Alice was eighteen at the time of their marriage and soon afterwards had their first child. Abenet was a high school teacher and the bread winner in the family. As in Isabella's family situation, Alice's role was the homemaker and looked after their two children. In Ethiopia, Abenet's political leanings often landed him in trouble with the authorities leading to his repeated imprisonment until after his final release from prison in 2003 he fled the country into Kenya. Alice and their children later joined him there and together they migrated on humanitarian visas for resettlement in Sydney.

Alice did not have proficiency in English when she and her family arrived in Australia in 2004. Her husband and their two children had enough English to enter mainstream training at TAFE and school respectively while she enrolled for her English language learning entitlement with the AMEP at the pre-CSWE level. Within the year she had completed her allotted hours in the AMEP and went on to more English study at TAFE and was still studying English when I spoke to her in 2008. Alice felt that within the four years her progress in English language learning had been very slow. She had not attained enough fluency in English to apply for jobs confidently and was feeling rather frustrated. Her frustration about her language learning difficulties and slow progress in English was shared by Abenet. He talked about how despite studying English for four years she was "still struggling with the language" and how the family was also "struggling to help her with the language".

During the interview which was conducted mainly in English, Alice and I were able to understand each other in English most of the time but Abenet was on hand to act as

interpreter on the few occasions when we got stuck due to language barriers. That provided the opportunity for him to comment on her language learning progress.

> Extract 8.19
> She finished the 510 in 2004 and then they sent her to another centre [Name of AMEP Centre] to start in level one again. But she is not moving forward. She is not educated so that has been the problem. Why she is not moving forward is there a problem in methodology or the reason why she is not moving forward? She understands but there is a problem. (Abenet: 954-961)

Alice told me that outside of her English class she had very few places where she spoke in English. She used formulaic English in transactional interactions such as boarding the bus to go to class, for shopping, and when she visited her African hairdresser from Sudan.

> Extract 8.20
> VWT: So tell me about your English.
>
> Alice: Not speaking English. A little bit is good. Writing is good. Reading is good. Problem for talk, talk too much.
>
> VWT: Do you speak English with your children?
>
> Alice: At home my language outside maybe sometimes.
>
> VWT: What about on the bus to school?
>
> Alice: Now no problem not like before. Now I talk for people. I went to school, and talk for people in the classroom. (Alice: 239-247)

On weekends, Alice and her family attended a mainstream church where she helped with looking after the toddler group but that entailed very little conversation.

Alice wanted her English to improve to get a job and help provide financially for the upkeep of her family. However, the jobs she was aiming for – child-care or aged-care jobs – both required training. Without sound oracy and literacy skills in English, Alice would not be able

to access training in the targeted job areas. She is feeling a lot of pressure also because she feels isolated without English to participate in social situations with other people.

Extract 8.21

Alice: Yes this year English. Good English I go to job. Now English little bit little bit. No job@@@@@ all the time at home, not good. Work good. You come home. All the time at home at home you feel not good.

VWT: Do you like living here in Australia.

Alice: All the time at home not good.

VWT: Ok what would you like to be better?

Alice: Work good. (Alice: 164-171)

From Alice's experience and also Isabella's above, women who arrive without proficiency in English and without well-developed literacy skills in another language face an uphill journey as language learners first and foremost before confronting even further challenges with getting into jobs.

These women are the ones who were still struggling with their English despite investing many years into language learning. As we see, these women do not lack the motivation to learn English. On the contrary, they persist at learning English as they see it as the conduit that will eventually link them to jobs because jobs will provide not only economic independence but also social participation and a sense of belonging. These women have previously learnt the languages they speak through social participation but social participation as a mode of language learning is limited in Australia. Mostly they have only family members to talk to and most of that is conducted in their own language. Their experiences suggest that the provision being made in the classroom with traditional pedagogy that teaches from a literacy perspective, and limited social participation to support language learners, is not adequately meeting these learners' needs. Hence, their particular ways of learning through interactions and social participation, and their capabilities as adults with

previous skills have not been accommodated. Thus, they find themselves in a double bind: they are people who need social participation to learn but they also need language first for social participation to occur. Consequently, and without the language and people to bridge that gap, they continue to feel isolated, and without jobs they are bound to the home domain which further compounds their isolation because of lack of social participation.

8.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have looked at language learning and settlement experiences with participants from low education and low English backgrounds. The chapter aimed to understand the language learning and settlement challenges of these adult men and mostly adult women. The data showed that all the participants were keen to learn English and understood its importance for getting jobs and for social participation. While this was a difficult task, some had completed their study with sufficient English and confidence in English to study towards jobs or find jobs. However for some, mainly women, language learning challenges and classroom setting teaching methodologies on offer did not seem to understand and accommodate their learning styles. Adult women learners who arrive without English and without schooling have previously learnt other languages through social participation and that characteristic suggests the application of a teaching methodology that would be able to better identify their needs and capabilities and help them progress in their language learning (Bigelow, 2010; Grossman, 2010). Therefore it is urgent that these are given consideration to address the mis-match between language training and language learner needs.

Regarding the issue of finding jobs in Australia, gender was at play in job availability for men and women. For the men there was readily available low-skill manual work which did not require them to have proficiency in English to be employed, although they found work conditions on those jobs to be harsh and discriminatory. The men rejected such jobs. Yet they

were keen to work and found strategies for entering work they found desirable. One of them and his wife (who is also a participant in the present study) started their own 'ethnic' business – hairdressing – and the other capitalised on a conversational interaction with his neighbour to find work in the car parts manufacturing factory. For the women it was a different story. Low-skill manual work was not available and even basic cleaning jobs required proof of English proficiency as well as a social network to broker access to highly regulated cleaning jobs. Social networking emerged as the one key resource that had helped to bridge that gap to employment for all the women who had previously held jobs in Australia and were no longer working for various reasons including looking after family, recovering from sickness and taking holidays to meet transnational duties overseas. In addition, some of the women bring skills that do not fit into what the West regards as formalised work and these alternatives could be further researched and tapped into for alternative ways of bridging the gap for women's entry into jobs.

CHAPTER 9

9. Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

Can black African migrants settle successfully in Australia? The last four chapters have explored that broad question with reference to four groups of black African migrants and their experiences. This thesis concludes that, from the perspectives of black African migrants, settlement success is a complex process arising from interactions between their pre-migration backgrounds; the norms, values and resources they bring; and what awaits them in the new context and how they are able to negotiate boundaries in that context. Black Africans move into white Western societies with a rich array of multilingual repertoires, diverse educational backgrounds and a multiplicity of lived experiences which are often poorly understood and continue to remain under-studied. Despite the fact that some arrive with considerable levels of education and proficiency in English, predominant language ideologies lead to their uncritical positioning as language learners whose 'lack' of proficiency in the dominant language limits their access to employment and settlement success. Furthermore, the intersection of race and gender stereotypes essentialise them as undifferentiated black African men and women. These stereotypes lock them into stereotypical pathways such as care-work for women and thus mask systemic failure to help them build on their abilities for settlement success.

In this thesis, I have analysed the stories of 47 black diaspora African men and women who arrived in Australia between 1999 and 2008. I have used their pre-migration experiences as a starting point to show how they draw meaning from them for their post-migration language learning and settlement decisions in Australia. I have described and documented the research participants' diverse sociolinguistic backgrounds, and examined the relationship between

their educational opportunities or lack thereof, their medium of instruction at the highest level of pre-migration education attained, and how these play out in their identities as racialised migrants and second language users in Australia. The analysis was informed by sociocultural concepts of language and power, language ideologies and SLL from which my thesis argues, following Piller (2011, p. 139), that "language in and of itself is not actually enough to make for successful settlement" because contextual constraints and power inequities complicate considerations of a one-on-one relationship between language and settlement success. One of the key findings of the study shows that women who have been marginalised in pre-migration by gendered educational practices are also the most marginalised and affected by gender ideologies in the post-migration context. For these women, gender has a significant impact on the difference between their pre-migration socialisation and their settlement trajectories. For them, the provision of language training and of other services does not equate to access to the desired resources because their realities are not only complicated by learner needs and abilities that are not understood, but also by racialised gendered inequalities that mediate their experiences.

African migrant settlement in Australia is often viewed through lenses that focus on mode of entry, and perceptions about Africans with refugee backgrounds. However, little progress has been made towards the development of theory and narratives representative of this rich mixture of people from diverse African sociolinguistic and educational backgrounds and with diverse settlement experiences. My research contributes to extending our perspectives on African migrants. Taking an ethnographic approach allowed the departure from preconceived notions about African migrants, and the thesis documents black African settlement experiences informed by an exploration of participants' pre-migration backgrounds and linguistic repertoires and the educational and cultural resources they bring with them into settlement. These brought into focus black African identities, ways of life, cultural values and

practices, prior to relating them to their experiences in the host society, a context which in itself is complicated by African racial positionings and existing structural hierarchies.

In this concluding chapter, I revisit each of the research questions the study was designed to address and provide a summary of the findings. Next, I compare the four groups that were the focus of the analysis, namely, those with low and high levels of education and those from Anglophone and non-Anglophone countries. Finally, I present the implications of my research and suggest directions for future research.

## 9.2 Revisiting the research questions

9.2.1 Research question 1

How do African migrants' pre-migration backgrounds shape their language repertoires and English proficiency?

As I explain in Chapter 1, this question was aimed at exploring the participants' sociolinguistic backgrounds, that is, the languages they speak and valorise, how these were learnt and what those languages tell us about them and the sociohistoric backgrounds from which they have moved to settle in Australia. To answer this question, Chapter 4 provided an analysis of participants' biographies and language knowledge to show how participants' pre-migration linguistic experiences varied as a result of their diverse African sociolinguistic backgrounds, nationalities and/or the country in which they spent most of their lives.

The data analyses show the participants to be multilinguals whose practices linked well-developed oracy skills in heritage languages and African lingua francas to, in most cases, informal learning and social solidarity. As such, knowledge in these languages is not accorded much prestige. In contrast, they placed more value on the knowledge and use of their ex-colonial languages (English, French, Portuguese) which are marked for status and prestige. Knowledge in these languages, which in most instances are the medium of

instruction at secondary school and beyond, are linked to educational opportunities, good jobs and social status. Therefore, all of the participants accepted that to be considered as educated is to have had formal education and proficiency in these languages and not one's L1.

The participants' countries of origin or countries in which they grew up, the medium of instruction at their highest level of education in these countries, and their educational attainment are the basis by which I identified a matrix of four groups.
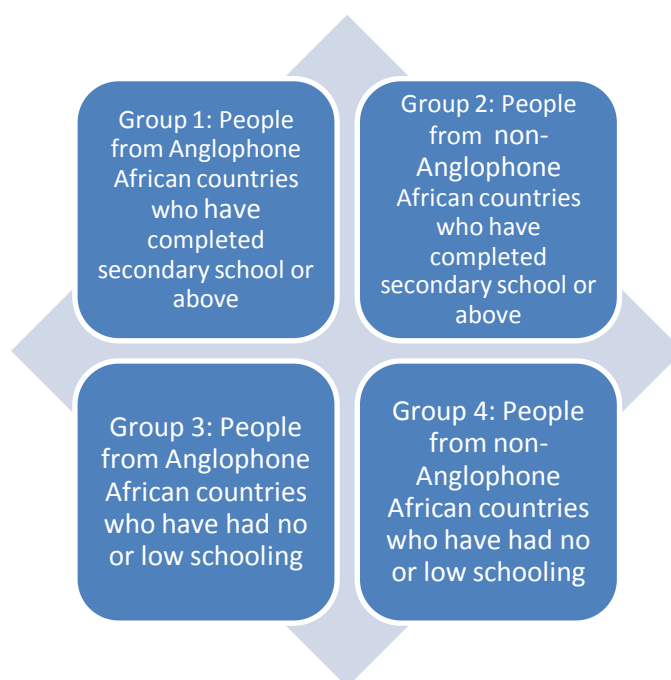
Figure 9.1   The four groups that emerge from participants' pre-migration countries and education

9.2.2 Research question 2

What are the English language learning experiences and settlement trajectories of migrants who arrive with English proficiency and high educational credentials?

This research question sought to understand the perspectives and trajectories of participants identified in the participant matrix as Group 1, namely, people from English-speaking African countries who had completed secondary education or above. This question was addressed in the analysis presented in Chapter 5. Most of the people in this category felt that their level of education in English accompanied by high oracy skills and well-developed

literacy skills in English were resources which did not need further enhancement in the form of formal language learning. As a result they mostly rejected post-migration language learning. Indeed they were very proud of their Englishes and often pointed out that their English was the 'Queen's English' and believed they spoke it very well. Their African English identities were invested in their varieties of English and they felt that through interactions, and as they became familiar with the destination society, they would be able to grasp nuanced uses of English in Australia and switch between that and their own Englishes as needed. They understood and were keenly aware of differences existing in terms of 'slang' and 'accent' between their Englishes and Australian English but they did not feel that it was due to any inadequacy on their part as English speakers. Most of the people in this group who, through their mode of entry as humanitarian arrivals were eligible for language training, reported that they found the training to be below their standard. As a result, those who initially enrolled in the program, did not complete the training. They left to look for work or to take up further study.

The greatest difficulty faced by people in this group in relation to employment was finding work commensurate with their backgrounds and skills. Mostly, they had to take jobs beneath their qualifications or face the prospect of extended joblessness. Some have taken low-skill jobs in which they feel stuck. Some also spoke of racist and discriminatory work practices in these low-skill jobs. Others have seized on educational opportunities and have taken up further study and training to improve their chances of building their careers and getting better jobs. A few have been able to penetrate into job opportunities after local training. Most of them, however, find that even after accumulating local qualifications, their hopes of better jobs are hard to fulfill as structures that exclude them are firmly in place and race continues to mediate their qualifications. As a result, there is no direct relationship between their existing resources – linguistic and educational credentials acquired both overseas and locally

– and gaining access to employment commensurate with their linguistic and educational credentials.

9.2.3 Research question 3

What are the English language learning experiences and settlement trajectories of migrants who arrive without English proficiency and high educational credentials?

This research question sought to understand the perspectives and trajectories of participants in Group 2, people from non-English speaking African countries who had completed secondary education or above in a LOTE (Arabic, French). The analysis was presented in Chapter 6. As the chapter explains, in the pre-migration contexts, the people in Group 2 have had their linguistic repertoires shaped by French or Arabic analogous to the way English shaped the identities of people in Group 1. Moreover, because of its status as a global language in their countries, English was mostly accorded a foreign language status, that is, it was taught as a foreign language and learnt as part of the school curriculum. Therefore, while they had been aware of the important status of English as a global language, it had not played a major part in their social and day to day lives in their countries of origin. As such they did not feel their identities to be inscribed in English as their counterparts in Group 1 did.

On arriving in Australia, people in Group 2 embraced their positioning as English language learners and were keen to acquire English as Australia's dominant language of power and prestige. They believed that learning English would enable them to transfer the pre-migration skills they had accumulated in a LOTE. Consequently, all the participants in this group who were eligible for state-funded English training took up the opportunity in the belief that it would enhance their employment prospects.

The major hurdle Group 2 faced in relation to employment is to do with ideologies of English proficiency and lack of information on the transfer of skills from a LOTE to build their careers or access skilled jobs. At the time they were interviewed all the participants in this

group were learning English or were engaged in further education to attain local qualifications in order to get a job. Most of those engaged in further education had studied in the French medium and those who were continuing with English language learning were all Arabic medium educated. The data reveal the issue of misinformation that surrounds LOTE-educated migrants without access to information due to systemic barriers and or linguistic challenges. Lack of access to information meant that for some of them the quality of advice they received from their social networks – both bonding and bridging networks – gave little appreciation to their previously acquired resources and some even doubted the veracity of their credentials, leading to fraught advice. This was not helped by the fact that the system itself was not structured to accommodate their career aspirations.

9.2.4 Research question 4

What are the English language learning experiences and settlement trajectories of migrants who arrive with some English proficiency and low educational credentials?

This research question sought to understand the perspectives and trajectories of participants identified as Group 3, namely, people from English speaking countries who had no or low schooling. Most participants in this group had well-developed oracy in English but no or low literacy. This question was addressed in Chapter 7. Participants in this group, too, have multilingual repertoires and they have learnt and used an African variety of English or an English-based Creole in their pre-migration contexts. Their self-reported English proficiency is linked to language ideologies that allow only those who have formal education to claim proficiency in English.

Consequently, on arrival in Australia, all participants in this group welcomed the provision of state-funded English language training and initially enrolled in AMEP classes with high expectations. Considering their existing English oracy, they expected their English would improve quickly to the degree that they would be ready for a fast entry into employment.

However, the classroom context was not adequately meeting their needs and their linguistic capabilities were poorly understood. Consequently, four participants dropped out of the English learning classes and only one participant persisted for the idiosyncratic reason that the class provided adult contact and was a means to overcome loneliness. The key challenge for this group was to be placed in classes with learners from high-literacy backgrounds. They experienced this situation as face-threatening and a constant reminder of the stigma attached to low education. Furthermore, given their high levels of oracy in English, there was a mismatch between their existing skills and what the curriculum – which was aimed at learners with low proficiency in English but high levels of formal education – had to offer.

In terms of employment, two out of five participants in this group were in paid employment. Both worked in aged-care and disability-care but found themselves stuck on the lowest rung of the job. Consequently, they were considering venturing into operating a small African retail business or opening an African restaurant. The other three participants in this group were not looking for paid work. In the same way that their gender – all participants in this group are female – had constrained their educational opportunities back in their home countries, their gender constrained their settlement experiences. They preferred to serve as stay-home mums and as a grandmother looking after their families. For them looking after the needs of children and grandchildren in their families was more important than material gain from paid work. They saw that as an investment which will pay off in the longer term.

9.2.5 Research question 5

What are the English language learning experiences and settlement trajectories of migrants who arrive without English proficiency and low educational credentials?

This research question sought to understand the perspectives and trajectories of participants in Group 4, namely, people from non-English speaking countries with little or no formal

education. In contrast to Group 3, this group had not had the opportunity to develop oracy in English either. This question was addressed in Chapter 8.

Unsurprisingly, all the women in this group identified as language learners. They all wanted to learn English, a task that for most needed to be undertaken from scratch. Despite the magnitude of the task before them, some of the women in this group had progressed to the degree that they were admitted for further study at TAFE with prospects of getting into paid work – for the first time in their lives. The data analysis of the experiences of these women reveals a paradox. On the one hand they embraced shifting relationships with language learning and new gender identities that come with proficiency in English, and on the other hand they held on to traditional gender ideologies and their understanding of their traditional arrangements and roles such as how to be a woman, a wife, a mother and a daughter. For most of the women, investment in English language learning meant negotiating new ways of life in the new language and new identities, new roles and new levels of participation outside of the home (Norton, 2000). Investment in English language learning also meant juggling new roles such as doing paid work and negotiating new norms including gendered positionings that were not part of their previous socialisation processes and practices.

Most of the women in this group were not looking for work because they were taking care of their pre-school-age children. Those who were looking to enter paid work were studying at TAFE and mostly looking to enter care-work after completion of their studies. The rest were studying English and felt stuck; employment seemed out of their reach. As these women's English tended to be measured only on output and by perceptions about their performance, they were judged as incompetent in their language learning and also marginalised in relation to the jobs they applied for. In this group, the only woman employed was working in the hairdressing business she and her husband started when she completed her English studies and a hairdressing course at TAFE and qualified to practice as a hairdresser.

In sum, for the women in this group, particularly the older women, who were learning both oracy and literacy skills from scratch in a new language, the process is a struggle and they felt stuck in the language learning class. The classes were not structured to meet their needs adequately or to build on their capabilities. These women understood that they were learning English 'from scratch' and they expected the task would be difficult. However, they were made to feel they were the problem especially when younger women with whom they started class were able to progress while they did not. Some of these older women have prominent roles in their communities and knowledge in running their lives but, without English and stuck in class, they were made to feel inferior and powerless.

9.3 Comparing the four groups of African migrants

As the above has outlined, the findings challenge the assumption of a simple and linear relationship between education, language learning and these migrants' quick entry into jobs. What follows next will show how the four groups compare starting with Table 9 and followed by a summary of the findings for each of the four categories.

Table 9.1 provides an overview of the four groups compared in relation to their post-migration investment in language learning and the employment opportunities that were available to them. We can see from the table that, overall, what the four groups have in common is a mismatch between their profiles and the settlement services available to help them transition to paid employment. Their experiences indicate that attaining employment and settlement success is not a linear process. For the employed, their trajectories from language learning and its link to employment is complex and it is even more so for those who have not been able to reach their employment goals. This mismatch between pre-migration experiences and post-migration trajectories was specific to each group.

Table 9.1   Pre-migration education and English in relation to post-migration English language learning and employment

Pre-migration characteristics	Post-migration experiences	
	Formal English language learning	**Employment opportunities**
Group1: Well-educated with English proficiency	Rejected further investment in formal ELL; expected easy transfer of linguistic resources and skills	Most are employed but not in their area of expertise. Those not prepared to accept low-skilled work engaged in further education. See racist and exclusionist practices as main reason for employment challenges.
Group 2: Well-educated without English proficiency	Accepted investment in ELL; believed that language development will provide ease of resources transfer	Most are not employed; felt their skills must be enhanced with localised education and English language proficiency to enable them to work.
Group 3: No or low schooling with low English proficiency	Accepted investment in ELL – mainly literacy development; but found mismatch between needs and curriculum	Mostly stay at home mums or employed in care-jobs; felt lack of English places them in lowest rung of care-jobs from where they may need further English training for mobility; may leave to start 'ethnic' type businesses.
Group 4: No or low schooling without English proficiency	Accepted investment in ELL with mixed results: some progressed to job training at TAFE, others, mostly older women, found mismatch between needs and curriculum	Mostly not in workforce as they are stay at home mums with pre-school aged children; those in further education were in training for care-jobs and confident of finding work, or struggling with English study and struggling to find work; one example of employment success is the story of wife and husband starting their own 'ethnic' type business.

Group 1: The pre-migration resources of proficiency in English and educational credentials do not result in automatic transfers of local job opportunities commensurate with those resources. That leads the participants in this group to assume that racism shapes their settlement outcomes in significant ways. Women's access to work was further constrained by racialised gender ideologies.

Group 2: The pre-migration resources of educational credentials in a LOTE did not readily translate into the local job market without English. The participants in this group were all at the stage of pursuing English language learning and/or further training to enter the workforce. For them, language is the main barrier and there is no way of knowing if they will end up faring better in the job market compared to Group 1. After their language learning with or without further training, if they do not fare any better than Group 1 in the job market, then their experiences would further strengthen Group 1's conclusion of racist barriers to employment. On the other hand, if they end up doing better in the job market compared to Group 1, that would mean Group 1 may have to reassess the value of their pre-migration English. Alternatively, for Group 2 it could also be the case that language learning and/or further education is a strategy to defer the disappointment that will eventually follow.

Group 3: As women from Anglophone backgrounds who have a strong sense of proficiency in English linking to formal education, this women-only group embraced English learning with expectations that having proficiency in English would provide resources such as literacy skills and paid work. However, their experiences show a strong sense of mismatched support mechanisms in terms of the AMEP provision not meeting their needs and abilities as people with oral fluency in (Creole) English but no or low literacy in English. This group finds education daunting. While they are able to get entry level care-jobs, they get stuck with no prospects of mobility because of the lack of higher literacy skills. Some may opt to stay as housewives.

Group 4: This group is mostly made up of women who, like the women in Group 3, embrace language learning and assume that English learning will result not only in proficiency in English but also paid work. Their experiences show the AMEP's English language curriculum can pose problems for some who face the daunting task of learning both oracy and literacy in English from scratch. Their experiences show that they require more assistance than is currently being provided. As a result of the mismatched support

mechanisms, they find themselves stuck in language learning classrooms. Furthermore, they are not able to find jobs as there tend to be no public/mainstream roles available for them. Consequently, these women stay as housewives.

Comparing the four groups' ideologies about language learning, whether they choose to learn English or not (if they are eligible), their job situations and their lived experiences as black African migrants in Australia demonstrates the complex nature of their settlement trajectories in Australia. Their experiences also show contradictions. We see that those who arrive with proficiency in English language and education find that their Englishes and credentials do not guarantee acceptance into their skill areas. They attribute their challenges to systemic barriers, mainly racism. Although their counterparts who arrive without English were studying and yet to enter the workforce, over time and after attaining proficiency in English it would be interesting to see how they fare. Perhaps similar to the first group, they may end up attributing their challenges in translating credentials into skill areas and employment entry difficulties to racism. We see also that those who arrive without English and previous formal skills may find low-skill entry level jobs. However, no mechanisms and services are available for their progress later on. So they find themselves stuck in these jobs with no chance of mobility or full participation in other mainstream job areas. Both have the effect of limiting their participation in society at large. Rather than staying in such dead end mainstream jobs, some make contributions to the economy and their communities by starting ethnic businesses that cater to niche clients with whom they find belonging and create their own social identities.

In effect, the study complicates the simple assumption that language learning leads to employment and full participation in host countries. This assumption puts the blame on the new migrant as the 'problem'. However, as the experiences of the participants in this study show, the process is complicated and there are mismatches of their needs and abilities to what the system is set up to offer within prevailing social structures. Therefore, their experiences

speak to systemic gaps which have implications for research and for the policies and programs in place to help these new migrants in their settlement. With these points in mind, I will now turn to consider some implications the study's findings have for SLA research and then for settlement policy.

9.4 Implications

9.4.1 Second language learning research

As discussed above, the diverse sociolinguistic backgrounds that the participants came from influence the meanings the participants attach to having proficiency in English and their responses to their positioning as English language learners in the settlement context. The study has outlined how their repertoires can be attributed to different levels of contact with English. The findings complicate the notion of the English language learner and point to differences between language learners that need to be taken into account in SLA theorising. Previous level of education and variety of English spoken has implications for theory particularly nowadays where English language learning in one way or another is almost ubiquitous around the globe. These complexities can be illuminated by reviewing the different types of language learners presented in each group.

Group 1: They have prior education and literacy skills in English and do not think of themselves as English language learners although they may still be positioned as language learners because of the variety of English they speak. Their experiences index the prevalent view of English speakers from a dichotomised native speaker and non-native speaker perspective which perceives the latter as deficient speakers of English. Therefore, their second language speaker characteristic is used to invariably position them as English language learners rather than as the speakers of diverse varieties of English that they believe they are. It is important for second language learning research to address the differences in varieties of English, particularly how where the level of learning continues to relate to

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racialised groups who are not able to 'pass' (Piller, 2002b) or 'cross' (Rampton, 2010) as native speakers because of language ideologies that see them as embodied 'non-native' speakers.

Group 2: They have education but embrace and do not challenge their positioning as English language learners. As such there is no mismatch between their self-perception in relation to English and the way they are seen. In addition, because they know how to get along in formal education contexts, as English language learners they do well or should do well in a classroom setting because they are transferring previously learned skills. Opportunities for learning at higher levels and provision of learning resources at par with existing skills will enhance the effectiveness of language training for them.

Group 3: They have oracy in English which is not matched by their levels of literacy in English. Their experiences show that they are good at picking up languages, they thrive in social language learning situations but they find themselves mismatched in formal language learning classrooms. These people tend to operate in traditional literacy teaching modes. In the sorts of settings where they underperform, they are made to see themselves as illiterate and that self-perception erases any intention of continuing, risking being positioned as inferior in relation to their peers. Consequently, they reject language learning. It is important that for the learners in this group, needs as well as abilities are taken into consideration and resources developed to work with them.

Group 4: They have oracy skills in LOTEs but not in English and have not developed literacy skills in the languages they speak. Therefore they see themselves as English language learners and there is no mismatch between their self- and other-perception for that matter. However, they have an extremely daunting task ahead of them; needing to gain both formal education and English proficiency from scratch. As curriculum developers tend to come from highly literate contexts which have not supplied the experience of learning both oracy and literacy in a language from scratch like the learners in this group, the enormity of the task this

group faces tends to be overlooked. The continued application of existing resources in traditional curriculum designed with the needs of traditional learners, and which do not work for these non-traditional learners, tends to position them as the 'problem'. For the learners, if that task proves too difficult, host societies including Australia have no conventional resources from the existing second language learning theory to draw from (Bigelow, 2010). Consequently, when learners in this group see that their peers have succeeded where they have failed, they may also interpret themselves as the 'problem'. That works to further deplete their confidence as learners, impacts on family dynamics and their view of themselves in relation to their roles and positions in their communities.

These findings call for SLA theorising to provide knowledge about different learner groups with considerations for their diverse multilingual learning and educational experiences prior to migration. The findings also call for SLA research into different learner groups and identities to provide learner-centred evidence-based resources which will better inform existing language learning policy and programs aimed at helping new migrant learners.

9.4.2 Settlement policy and new migrants

The ethnographic approach and the findings with the four groups in this study clearly illustrate some of the mismatches between the language learning and employment opportunities available to migrants and their prior experiences and expectations. There is no mechanism in place for those who arrive with English and credentials – particularly those with refugee backgrounds and those in the family reunification streams – to facilitate their prompt entry into jobs commensurate with their qualifications. As the main pathway into settlement in Australia is through the English language settlement program, it was particularly participants in Group 1 who were left without a clear pathway into employment and who were left to struggle on their own. For all others, while English language training seemed an appropriate pathway into settlement, their experiences show a disconnect between these particular groups of new migrants and the training programs available to them. The

experiences of the participants challenge the assumption behind much migrant settlement policy that there is a direct link between language learning and entry into the workforce. The well-educated groups experienced problems with the recognition of their English language proficiencies, their educational credentials and their prior experience. By contrast, those who lacked prior education were in effect excluded from taking full advantage of the training opportunities available to them because they are designed for language learners who have a substantial level of prior formal education or who have lived in high literacy contexts. These findings point out that the task for policymakers is that they must ensure that the provision of language training for migrants equates to migrant access to the intended resources.

The individual case studies presented of the eight women in the four groups whose settlement experiences were analysed demonstrate how racialised gender ideologies further mediate women's access to participation in employment. Differences in the women's experiences show how those who were previously marginalised in terms of pre-migration gendered educational practices are the ones doubly marginalised in their settlement processes (see also Pavlenko & Piller, 2001). Women are also the ones targeted for care-type jobs while men, regardless of their pre-migration qualifications, are expected to engage in low-skilled manual labour and survival-type jobs (see also G. Creese, 2011). These findings also necessitate greater policy considerations of differences in racialised gendered processes mediating the settlement experiences of black African women and men.

In sum, findings call for migrant settlement policy to be more informed about the diverse backgrounds of new migrants in order to design programs with a deeper understanding of new migrants, the better to provide services suited to their needs. In addition, the findings call for policy which recognises migrant abilities in relation to contextual constraints migrants must navigate to effect agency in the settlement process, and provide services accordingly.

9.5 Future directions

This study has attempted a deeper understanding of the everyday lives and practices of black African migrants in Australia. As the study captured the participants in the early stages of their settlement, a crucial matter for future research is to build on this research with a longitudinal approach to find out how the groups have fared over time. Within that approach, I could consider how their perspectives and beliefs about language and employment have changed. For those who were unemployed and studying at the time of research, have they found jobs? How do they negotiate belonging in the workplace? Having learnt English, as particularly those in Group 2 will have done by now, have they been able to translate their skills into local employment or have they met with similar barriers to those faced by Group 1 from the onset, and how different are their experiences?

A second direction for future research is to do with further explorations about how language, gender and race intersect and mediate employment for women. This could be explored with a focus on African migrants with no or low education who, as we have seen, are mostly female. It would be important to explore further how family dynamics change in relation to women's economic development and employment participation, and their traditional roles and what these tell us about gender in migration as well as their children's future in Australia.

A third direction for future research is in relation to African migrant identities as distinct from and also as part of Australian social and linguistic landscape. As mentioned in the Chapter 3, during fieldwork, a key site for recruiting participants was a hairdressing salon where mostly women from different African nationalities and language backgrounds converge. That alerted me to the importance of hair and hair dressing as part of black African women's discourses and has sparked an interest in how the women signal identities, solidarity and belonging in Australia. In addition, hair and hairdressing discourse is one of the key ethnic businesses that make black Africans visible in Australia's multicultural landscape.

These as well as other such practices are worth documenting for African migrants in Australia.

Finally, the present research has found that women were overrepresented in the no or low schooling groups which face the daunting task of learning oracy and literacy from scratch and experiencing a mismatch of services in their transition into formal employment. Therefore, future research also needs to include engagement and consultations with the women to further explore their in-class experiences as well as resources in their past learning and life experiences and how these can be used to enhance second language training resources in the current context.

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Appendices

Appendix I Interview questions

The interview questions were in three parts. First, the participants were asked general background questions regarding:

a.   Age
b.   Gender
c.   Migration category
d.   Ancestry/place of origin
e.   Languages spoken
f.   Family situation in Australia
g.   Number of years in Australia
h.   Number of years of education
i.   English proficiency level
j.   Previous work situation/profession
k.   Current occupation
l.   Affiliation/non affiliation with the AMEP

Next, participants were asked the following open ended semi structured questions which are based on three overlapping ethnographic interview forms adapted from Madison (2005, p. 26) as follows:

1. Oral history question

How was your life before you came to Australia?

2. Personal narrative

How has your life been so far in Australia?

3. Topical interview

Describe how you feel about learning English to live in Australia.

Finally, more semi-structured open-ended questions followed from themes that arose throughout the interview.

Appendix II Ethics approval

29 October 2007

Mrs Vera Williams Tetteh
2 Braddock Place
Baulkham Hills   NSW   2153

Reference: HE28SEP2007-D05463

Dear Mrs Williams Tetteh

FINAL APPROVAL

Title of project: *Measuring the effectiveness of English language training with respect to participants' broader integration into society*

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your responses have satisfactorily addressed the outstanding issues raised by the Committee. You may now proceed with your research.

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:
1.   Approval will be for a period of twelve months. At the end of this period, if the project has been completed, abandoned, discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are required to submit a Final Report on the project. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. The Final Report is available at http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human/forms
2.   However, at the end of the 12 month period if the project is still current you should instead submit an application for renewal of the approval if the project has run for less than five (5) years. This form is available at http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human/forms. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report (see Point 1 above) and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).
3.   Please remember the Committee must be notified of any alteration to the project.
4.   You must notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
5.   At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University (http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human).

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project **it is your responsibility** to provide Macquarie University's Research Grants Officer with a copy of this letter as soon as possible. The Research Grants Officer will not inform external funding agencies that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Officer has received a copy of this final approval letter.

Yours sincerely

Dr Margaret Stuart
Director of Research Ethics
Chair, Ethics Review Committee [Human Research]
cc. Professor Ingrid Piller

IILTR08.2 : CRO File: 07/1175   ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (HUMAN RESEARCH)   Portrait (85%)
                                                MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY (E11A)
                                                SYDNEY, NSW, 2109 AUSTRALIA
              Secretary: Ph: (02) 9850 7850 Fax: (02) 9850 4465 E-mail: ethics.secretariat@vc.mq.edu.au
                                              http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human

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Appendix III Written consent form for participants

Written Consent Form for Individual Participants

Title of Project: **Measuring the effectiveness of language training for settlement outcomes: a case study with African migrants**

You are invited to participate in a study of African migrants' English language learning needs for settlement into Australian society. The purpose of the study is to explore and evaluate the English language training of migrants provided by the Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP) for settlement in Australia. This is a Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship funded by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

The study is being conducted by Vera Williams Tetteh in fulfillment of a PhD in the AMEP Research Centre (RC), within the Linguistics Department of the above mentioned university. Prof Ingrid Piller, Director of AMEP RC is supervisor. Contact details for further information are as follows:

Vera Williams Tetteh (researcher)   Prof. Ingrid Piller (supervisor)

Ph 9850 6335   Ph 9850 9646

Email vera.tetteh@ling.mq.edu.au   Email ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au

As the research findings will contribute to the AMEP RC Special Project Research Programme, participants in this research may be involved in other related studies in the centre.

If you decide to participate, the researcher will follow you to observe and maybe audio record your language use with people in your home and in public places including the AMEP service centre. Before agreeing to be part of the research, it is important that you have consulted and discussed with all members of your family who might possibly be recorded whilst communicating with you during the research. If they object to being involved in any way, you could still be interviewed. All forms of data collection will be discussed with you in advance.

Interviews will be on a one-on-one basis by the researcher in a public place or in your home. During interviews, the researcher will ask questions relating to English language training and settlement in Australia. The questions will be broadly on language training and are not likely

to induce any discomfort. The interview will be audio recorded and the researcher may take some notes. The interview will last for one hour or less at a time. You may be interviewed more than once.

For AMEP students selected as core participants, the researcher will also seek access to their assessment records and any available records of their classroom learning.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. This is ensured by code names being used on all data records, analysis and publications. No individual will be identified or identifiable in any publication of the findings.

Digital audio recorded data will be downloaded as electronic files and stored on a password protected computer in the AMEP RC. The researcher' home computer is also password-protected. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the data.

You can request a review of any quotes that will be attributed to you and family members by contacting the researcher on 9850 6335 or the supervisor on 9850 9646 and by their emails above. A written abbreviated copy of the thesis will be made available and you can request a copy when the study is completed.

If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I ………………………………………….(block letters) have read/have had read and explained to me and understand the information above. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I am aware that de-identified data may be made available for use by other researchers in the future. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Signature: _____Date:

Investigator's Name (block letters): _____

Investigator's Signature: _____Date:

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix IV Written consent form for teachers

![Macquarie University Sydney logo]

Written Consent Form for AMEP Teachers

Title of Project: **Measuring the effectiveness of language training for settlement outcomes: a case study with African migrants**

Your consent is being sought to use your classroom as a site for research in a study of African migrants' English language learning needs for settlement into Australian society. The purpose of the study is to explore and evaluate English language training of migrants provided by the Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP) for settlement in Australia. This is a Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship funded by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

The study is being conducted by Vera Williams Tetteh in fulfillment of a PhD in the AMEP Research Centre (RC), within the Linguistics Department of the above mentioned university. Prof Ingrid Piller, Director of AMEP RC is supervisor. Contact details for further information are as follows:

Vera Williams Tetteh (researcher)   Prof. Ingrid Piller (supervisor)

Ph 9850 6335   Ph 9850 9646

Email vera.tetteh@ling.mq.edu.au   Email ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au

As the research findings will contribute to the AMEP RC Special Project Research Programme, participants in this research may be involved in other related studies in the centre.

During the course of the research, the researcher will be observing and audio recording language use in the AMEP classroom. You and the class will be informed before any recording is commenced.

Observation will entail noting participants' positioning in the classroom – whether they sit in the back or front; who participants sit next to in class – their sex, age, race; student dynamics and how participants engage in lessons – if they volunteer answers to questions and how often they do this, their behaviour during class activities and if they look comfortable being a part of the class; classroom paraphernalia and how participants handle them during class.

The researcher will also seek access to assessment records and any available records of classroom learning of selected core participants.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. This is ensured by code names being used on all data records, analysis and publications. No individual will be identified or identifiable in any publication of the results.

Digital audio recorded data will be downloaded as electronic files and stored on a password protected computer in the AMEP RC. The researcher' home computer is also password-protected. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the data.

You have explained to your students that those who object to being part of the observational phase of the research will be excluded from the observation. Those students will be assigned an alternative task and will not be observed by the researcher. They will not have to give a reason for objecting to being observed and their exclusion will be without consequence.

You are aware and give approval for some of your student to self select to be core participants for research outside the classroom.

If you decide to give permission, you are free to withdraw it at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

You can request a review of any quotes that will be attributed to you and your students by contacting the researcher on 9850 6335 or supervisor on 9850 9646. A written abbreviated copy of the thesis will be made available and you can request a copy when the study is completed.

I ……………………………………………(block letters) have read and have had explained to me and understand the information above. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to the researcher using data my class has contributed to in this research, knowing that I can withdraw my consent at any time without consequence. I am aware that de-identified data may be made available for use by other researchers in the future. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Teacher's Signature: _____Date:

Investigator's Name (block letters): _____

Investigator's Signature: _____Date:

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR TEACHER'S] COPY)

Appendix V Racial Discrimination – Creative writing by Nii Tetteh

Racial Discrimination

By Nii Tetteh

Blind hate for a brother
Hate for each other
we ignorantly discriminate
it's an ongoing cycle
it just won't end
We would rather exclude a
"Nigger" than try to befriend
we make insensitive jokes, laugh, point, stare
slap on racial labels without a care

"Hey, if my friends are doing it, I suppose that makes it alright?
I'll avoid other cultures, or hot-headedly launch into a fight
I'll assume Muslims are terrorists
hiding bombs under their shirts,
pull at my eyes when I see an Asian
what do I care if it hurts?"

And you don't realize
You're thinking like a white supremacist
But it's not just whites
Who think with this kind of stereotypical view?
No, not at all
It could even be you!

It's because of the media
And how they portray races
The lifestyles, accents and physical appearances
All match up to certain faces
And when people think like that
They're classified as racist
Once these views are put into action
It becomes racial discrimination

It's society
that the government needs to educate
People pay taxes
So that's plenty to facilitate?
The minds of people persuasively polluted
This may not even be intentional
But the threats this can cause
Can have quite some potential
To do some irreparable damage
Victims attacking back
May even be defined as savage

It can't go on forever
People will decide that they have had enough
It may result in people giving up
Or people fighting back, striking and rioting
And this of course, once again
Becomes the basis of yet another racial stereotype

Society will look at these people and say
'They think they can do whatever they feel like'
But this is of course not the case
None more so than the revenge icing
on the racial discrimination cake
Racial discrimination is like a butterfly
First you see a caterpillar
Now something different meets your eyes
We can knock racial discrimination off its feet
But people just don't realize

Society needs to stop living in a shell
and ignorance is not an answer
And neither is 'oh well'
Racial Discrimination is spreading like a cancer
And people don't know they're infected
So it's time to be rid of your disease
And get your dose of racial equality injected.

Appendix VI No Racism – Drawing by Addo Tetteh
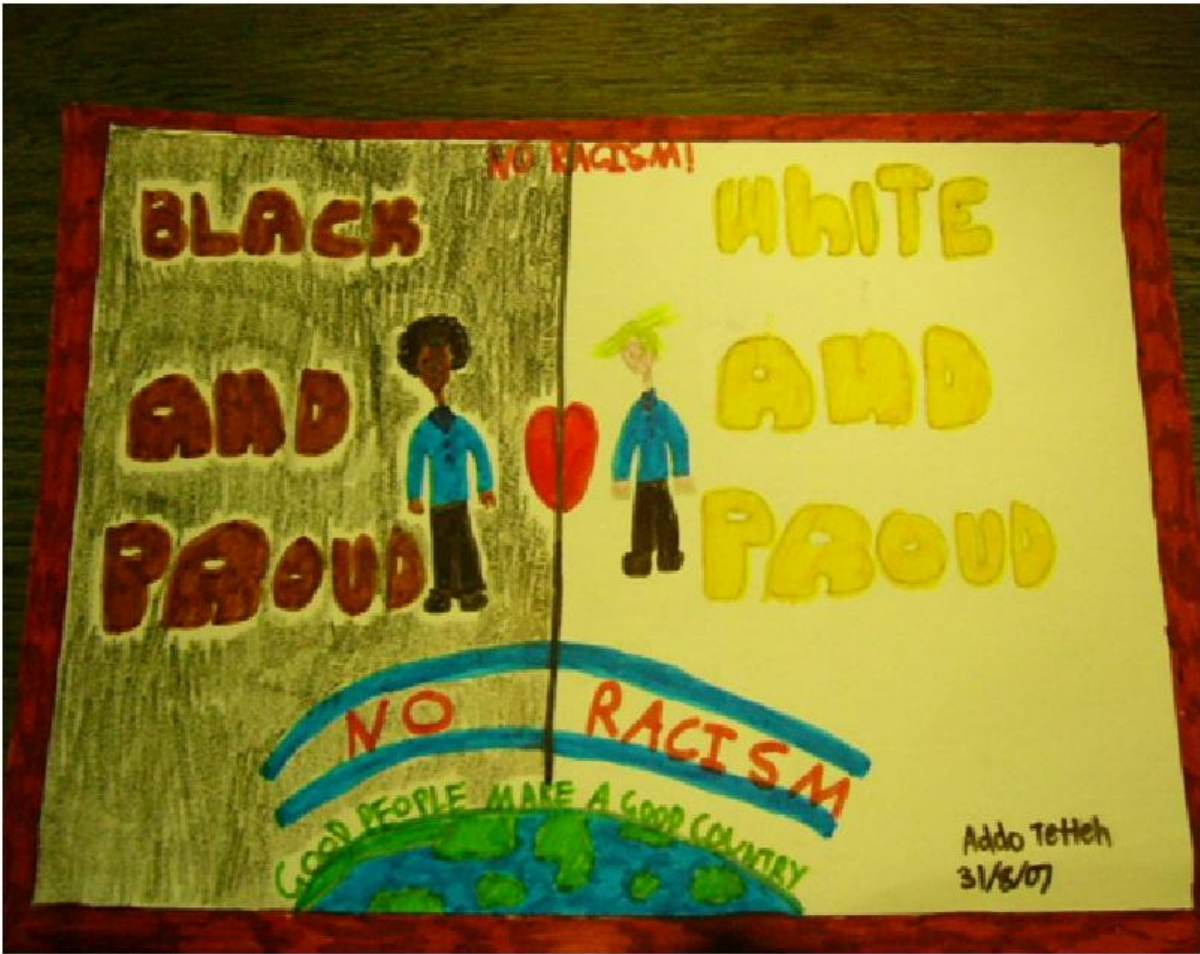
Appendix VII Explanation of Participants' Visa Codes

Visa sub-class 200	The Refugee visa (subclass 200) is for those living outside Australia, are living outside their home country and are persecuted in their home country. To be considered for resettlement in Australia under this visa, they would usually need to be referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to the Australian Government. The Refugee visa (subclass 200) is a permanent visa. (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2015b)
Visa sub-class 202	The Global Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 202) is for those living outside Australia, and living outside their home country, are subject to substantial discrimination amounting to a gross violation of their human rights in their home country, and are proposed by a person or organisation in Australia. This is a permanent visa. (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2015a)
Visa sub-class 457	The Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa is designed to enable employers to address labour shortages by bringing in genuinely skilled workers where they cannot find an appropriately skilled Australian. The subclass 457 visa allows businesses to employ overseas workers for up to 4 years in skilled occupations only. Subclass 457 visa holders can: • work in Australia for a period of between one day and 4 years • bring any eligible dependants with them to Australia — dependants can work and study • after entering Australia, have no limit on the number of times they can travel in and out of Australia. (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2014b)