Imagined Identity, Remembered Self:

Settlement Language Learning and the Negotiation of Gendered Subjectivity

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Table of Contents

Abstract

This ethnographic study explores the impact of English language learning on gendered subjectivity, specifically in the context of transnational migration. With interactions spanning a twenty-two month period, it follows the language learning and settlement trajectories of a group of nine recent women migrants to Australia. The resulting analysis is based on a large corpus of narrative data derived from personal interviews, discussion groups, email journals, blogs, and personal communication. Adopting a critical, feminist approach, the study foregrounds the reported experience of migrant women in order to understand how coming into voice in English impacts a learner's sense of self and settlement aspirations. Examining data from three interactional domains, corresponding to the experience of subjectivity in family, society and work, the analysis looks at issues related to language, race, and gender that impacted the participants' settlement trajectories. It finds that the impact of attitudes to race and gender subjectivities in Australia, and the ways that migration is a gendered process, are deeply involved in the impact that learning English has on aspiration and selfhood in this context.

In addition, the study explores the way that identity is articulated in both theory and practice, ultimately proposing an inclusive approach, one that aims to advance the theorisation of identity in sociolinguistics by accommodating a poststructuralist multiplicity alongside the individual's perception of a core self.

Statement of candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis, entitled "Imagined Identity, Remembered Self: Settlement Language Learning and the Negotiation of Gendered Subjectivity", has not previously been submitted for a degree, nor has it been submitted as part of the 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 properly 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 the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, as noted in Ethics Approval HE28MAR2008-D05694.

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Glossary and abbreviations

ABS — Australian Bureau of Statistics

ADD — Attention Deficit Disorder

Adelaide — capital city of South Australia

Aged Care — occupation providing institution-based care workers for older Australians

AMEP — Adult Migrant English Program, Australia's federally funded settlement English program, providing 510 hours of classes for the majority of eligible migrants; administered via competitively tendered five-year contracts

BBC — Brazilian-born Chinese person

BBJ — Brazilian-born Japanese person

Central — Central Institute of Technology, a Perth-based post-secondary training college, formerly known as TAFE; delivers the AMEP contract in Perth

Certificate III — an intermediate level Certificate in Spoken and Written English, the highest of four certificate levels offered in the AMEP

Certificate IV — a post-intermediate level Certificate in Spoken and Written English, the highest of five certificate levels offered outside the AMEP at Central Institute of Technology

Cooperative Development

model for non-judgmental, peer-assisted reflective practice, used by language teaching professionals

Darwin — city in the far north of Australia, capital of Northern Territory

David Jones — Australian department store chain

DIAC — Australian federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship

ELICOS — English Language Instruction Course for Overseas Students; the sector delivering English tuition to Australia's international student cohort

ESL — English as a Second Language

FECCA — Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia

HBF — Hospital Benefits Fund; a health insurance provider in Western Australia

H1N1 — a subtype of Influenza A virus, responsible for the 2009 flu pandemic

ISLPR — International Second Language Proficiency Ratings scale; used by the AMEP in new student placement assessments

ISLPR 2 — proficiency, if achieved across all four macro skills, at which students are no longer eligible for tuition in the AMEP

IT — Information Technology

IVF — In-vitro fertilisation

JPN — Japan

Labor Party — the major centre-left political party in Australia

Liberal Party — the major centre-right political party in Australia

L1 — first or primary language

L2 — additional language, learned subsequent to L1

NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (United Kingdom)
NOOSR	National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition; the national body responsible for evaluating an Australian equivalence of qualifications gained outside the country
Northbridge	entertainment district in central Perth
OQU	Overseas Qualifications Unit; the state-based body responsible for evaluating an Australian equivalence of qualifications gained outside the country
Oz	nickname for Australia
Ozzie	nickname for an Australian
Scarborough	popular, upmarket seaside suburb of Perth
TAFE	Technical and Further Education; Australian post-secondary education institution delivering (primarily) vocational training
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WA	Western Australia

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

1.1   Motivation

Prior to beginning my PhD, I had for some time been working in the AMEP, the Australian government-funded settlement English program, and I had often taught classes that were entirely or almost entirely composed of women. Some of the women in these groups were mothers with small or school-age children, which meant that learning English was only one of the activities they engaged in each week, and was prioritised behind being a mother and/or a wife. Many of these women had aspirations related to undertaking further studies in the future, either academic or vocational in nature, with the goal of gaining paid work in Australia, but for now a major focus of their week was taking care of their young children and managing a home. Still other women could only attend part-time English classes because they were already engaged in paid employment, so had to fit their studies around work schedules. There were also older women who had migrated to Australia to join family members already here, and they were not interested in studying full-time, or aspiring to paid employment in Australia. Rather, they were interested in developing their understanding and practice of English for better social inclusion.

The influence that the class cohort had on me as a teacher was that I often incorporated in the lessons learning themes derived from our shared experience of being women – from issues relating to women's equality, both in interpersonal relationships and in the law, being a mother, a student, having a professional life, having a voice and being heard. The influence it had on me as a person was to begin to wonder more deeply about the position of the women sitting in such a class; how it felt to be developing a voice in English, and how that made them feel about who they were, and about how they might choose to present themselves in this new language, who they could or would become. I also wondered what it was like for these language learners, as women coming to live in

Australia, and whether their ideas of what it meant to be a woman, developed in societies sometimes quite different to the one they now found themselves in, were at odds with what they perceived of the expectations of and about women in Australian society. In this, the experiences of women migrants would be different to those of men, so I wanted to research among only women to try to get a sense of the specific effects on them of finding a space and a voice in a new language and culture.

1.2   The AMEP

The participants whose experiences are the focus of this research were recruited from Central Institute of Technology's Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), which is one of a string of national providers of federally-funded settlement English tuition in Australia. The AMEP offers English tuition across four competency levels, with learners ranging from 0 on the International Second Language Proficiency Ratings scale (ISLPR), including those with little or no prior competence in English and learners who do not have literacy in their first language, through to learners with ISLPR 2 across all macro skills (roughly Intermediate).

The AMEP is administered federally by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), and the direction it takes is tied to immigration policy, which is broadly aligned to government economic goals. Immigration policy in Australia "has always aimed at specific economic objectives: the recruitment of labour; the filling of skilled vacancies, variously defined; the avoidance of those likely to become unemployed or welfare dependent; and the encouragement of workers likely to become adaptable" (Jupp, 2002:143). Since AMEP providers bid for fixed term contracts in what is seen as an increasingly competitive market, they use government press releases and policy statements to anticipate the direction the government will take in its framing of future contracts. During the time the

participants were studying English in the AMEP in Perth, which coincided with the lead-up to the announcement of a new contract round, the program saw a deliberate shift towards linking English language learning with outcomes in paid employment. This included the following measures:

- A greater vocational focus for language learning outcomes (eg, writing a resume, doing a job interview)
- Special elective English courses with an employment or employability focus
- The development of industry links for transitioning AMEP students into low paid service sector jobs, and vocational training links to jobs in, for example, Aged Care and IT
- A shift away from personal plus vocational counselling to only vocational counselling provision
- Client individual learning plans, which required learners to identify employment and educational goals

Measures such as these coerce the language learners in the AMEP into constructing an employment identity in Australia as an English language-learning goal. Yet, no consideration is given to the barriers to employment constructed around race, and the language learner is seen as someone deficient in English, rather than as an emerging bi-or multi-lingual. There is also no explicit consideration of gender, in spite of the fact that women now constitute the majority of migrants to Australia (DIAC 2009:17) and the AMEP consistently registers greater numbers of women than men nationally, across all providers (Yates, 2010:7).

As a result of my experience and understanding of settlement English tuition in Australia, I identified the following research aims and questions.

1.3   Aims and research questions

In undertaking this research, the fundamental question I wanted to answer was: How is a woman's sense of self affected by developing an ability to communicate in English? I wanted to look at how the sociocultural context of English specifically impacts on her

identity, and her gendered subjectivity. I believe the sense of self incorporates not just a static or established vision of subjectivity, but also the aspirations (Appadurai**,** 2006), in this case of women who have moved into a new geographical, social and linguistic setting, and in the process have engaged in multiple 'border crossings', some of them "cultural borders historically constructed and socially organised within maps of rules and regulations that limit and enable particular identities, individual capacities, and social forms" (Giroux, 1988:166).

My research aimed to find out if, as a woman develops greater competency in English and spends more time in Australian society, her aspirations shift, and also to see how the dominant culture constructs her as the 'other', imposing subjectivities that work to colonize her sense of who she has the right to be in Australia. In addition, it aimed to determine the ways in which a woman's possibly changing sense of self affects her key family relationships, to see if gaining a voice in English affects the form and manner in which she interacts with her family, in the central roles of wife and/or mother.

My specific research questions were as follows:

Research Question 1: How does developing a voice in English impact on a woman's sense of self and aspirations, and her negotiation of key family relationships?

Research Question 2: How does the way a woman is constructed in Australian society impact on her sense of self and her settlement aspirations?

Research Question 3: How does the way a woman is constructed in the pre-migration language and society impact on her sense of self?

1.4   Thesis outline

The thesis is organised as follows. In Chapter Two, I develop the academic context of my research by outlining and discussing theories and concepts that were important to its formation as an inquiry into the way language learning impacts identity within the transnational migration and settlement trajectories of women. In Chapter Three, I outline the research methodology, establishing its location in the tradition of narrative inquiry and problematising the role of the researcher. In Chapter Four I introduce the research participants, and in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven I provide a detailed analysis of the data. In the final section, Chapter Eight, I discuss the main findings in relation to my original research questions, then outline their implications and make recommendations for further research on language learning in the context of transnational migration.

CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   Introduction

In this chapter, I locate my research within the poststructuralist literature of identity, of language learning, and of gendered subjectivity, with emphasis on how these relate to the experience of transnational migration. In addition, I examine the Australian context of migration, looking at how migration is perceived as an economic policy goal and how migrants are positioned within the ideology of the nation state. Since I initiated this study in order to find answers to questions that had arisen from my practice as a teacher of English to women migrants, I turned to the literature in order to validate the relevance of my questions and to establish that they had not already been answered. Therefore, in light of previous studies of gender, migration and language learning (see for example, Creese and Wiebe, 2009, Kim, 2010 and 2011, Norton, 2000, Warriner, 2007) I locate my study within the need for further qualitative research among women migrants, who currently represent the majority of transnational migrants, both globally and to Australia, and who make up the majority of students in the Australian settlement English program, from where the research participants were drawn. Finally, in preparation for my own research, I discuss aspects of feminist theory and methodology that are relevant to transnational migration and gender.

2.2   A sense of self: Social construction and the core self

The pursuit of my research questions made me want to clarify at the outset what I understood to be involved in a person's 'sense of self.' This, in itself, became an intellectual journey. My reading revealed that, with links to the work of early American Pragmatists such as George Herbert Mead, William James, and Charles Cooley, and more overtly, to the work of Foucault (eg, 1980), poststructuralism views identity not as something fixed in early life and singular, but rather multiple in nature and constructed

across space and across time in the speech acts and social roles of the individual. It is also

negotiated within the dynamics of inequalities of power (Gee, 2000, Skeggs, 2008). Such a

construction of identity is of significance to the experience of language learners and people

crossing cultural and linguistic borders (Giroux, 1988) in acts of transnational migration,

as is evident in the work of, for example, Norton (1993, 2000), Pavlenko (2001), Piller and

Pavlenko (2001), and Weedon (2004). Such work takes account of what Skeggs claims

about identity; namely,

> …that for many identity is a position that is forced, that has to be occupied, for
> which there is no alternative and which is attributed with no value and hence cannot
> be mobilized as a resource for enhancing privilege, or a resource to the nation, to
> belonging (Skeggs, 2008:26).

However, this poststructuralist theorising of identity in the context of language learning

left me with the feeling that something was being missed by theorising identity primarily

as the performance of multiple selves. I felt that there must also be a core self who engages

in these identity performances, who acts and is acted upon, socially and via language, to

create these multiple selves. According to Giddens, "All human beings, in all cultures,

preserve a division between their self-identities and the 'performances' they put on in

specific social contexts" (1991:58). This sense of an underlying self is apparent in popular

media representations of identity, such as the following, both taken from a single edition of

the Guardian Weekly newspaper.

> I'm aware that success can overwhelm you…The perception of you can be elevated
> to such a status that it's not you any more. But you start playing you. You have to
> leave the real you at home because the fake Chris Ofili has been invited to dinner.
> (Chris Ofili, quoted in Younge, 2010:32)

> I've always played sport, I like exercise, and I wanted something that made me feel
> like me again… I've stopped going out to the pub with friends but now I've
> replaced it with this. I wanted something different and something that wasn't being
> a mum. Here I can just be me.
> (Louise Esposito, aka Tanya B Hind, quoted in Osborne, 2010:48)

These two quotes reveal how the speakers have a sense of themselves playing roles,

performing constructed identities, but also an assumption that these are contrasted with a

'real' self, that is separate to these roles they need to play in the course of their daily lives. Such an assumption seems at odds with the following, taken from a recent book abstract from the poststructuralist tradition.

> […] a commitment to view self and identity not as essential properties of the person but as constituted in discursive practices and particularly in narrative. Moreover, since self and identity are held to be phenomena that are contextually and continually generated, they are defined and viewed in the plural, as selves and identities (abstract for Bamberg et al, 2007).

When I began this project, my own position with respect to identity was in line with the sentiment expressed in the two newspaper quotes above. This was confirmed by the way in which the self is conceptualised in moral philosophy (Giddens 1991, Taylor 1989). For Taylor, there *is* an underlying, knowing self, defined by its sense of the good, and "being a self is inseparable from existing in a space of moral issues, to do with identity and how one ought to be" (1989:112).

At this stage of my thinking, and prior to beginning data collection, I engaged in an email debate with a colleague over my uncertainties about identity in poststructuralism. This debate included the following excerpts.

> The identities defined by sociocultural theory are not really identities, but social roles, and I think that I want to see beyond them and try to get at the underlying self. If we are nothing more than our performance in specific social roles, then how is it that we still manage to be uniquely identified, one from the other? And why is it that in some situations, and with some certain others, we feel more of a coming into ourselves? Where this is not developed, but felt in an instant of recognition. This must surely point to the existence of an underlying 'self', who is more than the sum of all the social roles 'interpellated' on us. […] And how is it that my parent could say, in exasperation, "I don't know how you turned out the way you did; we brought you all up the same". And why does [author] Yiyun Lee instinctively feel more comfortable writing in English - a language she only learned as an adult? She feels it better communicates her self. What is her self? (Email from Donna, March 18, 2008)

> I don't think that I need a sense of an underlying self that is somehow more 'real' or 'independent' or 'coherent' (or whatever) than the interacting sum of the influences that have produced me thus far. Your parents 'bringing you up the same' is an umbrella for unimaginable variety, and the 'butterfly effect' can explain the rest. It's enough for me, anyway, to accept that my continuing mix, partly still evolving,

partly dying, is unique, and that's what makes the me-that-continues through different situations, or recognises affinities, or falls in love. After that, I think it's a question of definition and who is in charge, as Humpty Dumpty said.
(email from J, March 19, 2008)

I still feel like there is a self underlying all the things that happen to me, all the roles I play and the 'identities' I assume. They are all parts of, or possibilities of something which is my self. Unique. Donna. I can hope to figure out, over the course of my life, exactly who she is, but she is. I feel her. In a coming together of the body and mind, which I feel is part of the life purpose. Of being. And I think that her existence is proven by what is unique that I bring to all the roles I may play. […] Anyway, I am intrigued by your not needing a sense of an underlying self. Does that not make you feel disembodied, at times? A schism? Like you are living outside of yourself, in a series of convincing walk-on parts? (email from Donna, March 19, 2008)

It is not an argument against uniqueness, it is an argument for uniqueness, and for 'self' being not fundamentally something that you have, or are, but something that you do and construct.[…] You could call these 'walk-on parts' in the sense that they are always a part of something bigger, in and through which they are constituted, and that the parts change, as the intermental/intramental interactions go on. But I don't see them as 'walk-on parts' in the sense that there is an actor separate from the parts. That is exactly what makes the difference between play-acting and life-acting. In life, what we do (in the fullest sense) is all there is. (email from J, March 20, 2008)

These attempts to understand better the way identity is both theorised and practised were important to my research, and not only because I needed to be clear about what exactly it was I was enquiring into when I asked women how their sense of self was affected by learning English. I also needed to find a way of accounting for the fact that, although philosophers and sociologists might see identity as a social construct, if the individual experience of identity remains rooted in the perception of a core self underlying the social roles we play, and if it was individual perceptions that I wanted to investigate, what is the relationship between the two? I return to the issue below (see 2.7), when I present from the literature a critical analysis of the way identity is theorised in poststructuralism. I begin my account of identity as a social construct (with specific relevance to Research Question 3) with the emergence of a sense of self in primary socialisation.

2.3   Language and subjectivity

According to a Vygotskyan theory of the relationship between social organization and individual consciousness (Vygotsky 1978, Lantolf 2000, Lantolf and Thorne 2006), sociocultural norms are mediated by and through language and the ontogenetic process of their internalisation occurs, via linguistic means, from social speech, which is then adopted into private speech, and later into inner speech, where fully internalised ideas and beliefs may no longer consciously be held in linguistic form. What is meant by mediation is:

> …the process through which humans deploy culturally constructed artifacts, concepts, and activities to regulate (ie, gain voluntary control over and transform) the material world or their own and each other's social and mental activity. (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006:79)

In the process of mediation, involving the use of cultural artifacts such as language, we first have to bring the sociocultural meaning into our thinking process – to learn to think this way – but eventually we internalise this process and assume agency. Agency is a person's "…capacity to mediate and regulate his or her own activity through culturally organized mediational means" (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006:69). By the time a person reaches adulthood, she has already internalised the beliefs and social norms of her culture - which include the social constructions of gender - that define her subjectivity. When a person assumes agency in a social role they have taken up the position of subject, but the way they enact the role is itself shaped by the sociocultural context in which they were formed and is mediated through the language(s) they speak. Agency "is never a property of a particular individual; rather, it is a relationship that is constantly co-constructed and renegotiated with those around the individual and with the society at large" (Lantolf and Pavlenko, 2001:148).

From this account, the importance to my research of the socialisation into adulthood of my informants in their original environments is clear, as is the critical relationship between

language and the sense of self that they have already developed. This importance does not decrease when we focus more specifically on the gendered subjectivity of women and the learning process through which subjectivity is derived, as explained by sociocultural theory (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006).

2.3.1 Language and gendered subjectivity

> Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is *constructed*. (Weedon, 1987:21)

Subjectivity consists of "an individual's conscious and unconscious sense of self, emotions and desires" (Weedon, 2004:18). However, after Althusser (1970), individuals are not the authors of their subjectivity, for this is interpellated on them by their social context, and the relationship between an individual's subjectivity and her self is therefore imaginary. Ideological state apparatuses, "such as religion, education, the family, the law, politics, culture and the media produce the ideologies within which we assume identities and become subjects" (Weedon, 2004:6). These ideologies are internalised in an individual because they "repeatedly perform modes of subjectivity and identity until these are experienced as if they were second nature" (2004:7).

When women learn to be and find ways of expressing their gendered identity, they are not articulating a unique expression of the self, but choosing from among the socially and historically determined possible subjectivities of 'woman'. These are constituted in language:

> As we acquire language, we learn to give voice – meaning – to our experience and to understand it according to particular ways of thinking, particular discourses, which pre-date our entry into language. These ways of thinking constitute our consciousness, and the positions with which we identify structure our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity. (Weedon, 1987:33)

However, rather than being natural or inevitable, subjectivities are created from society's desire to maintain a gendered power imbalance, which is embedded in, and mediated by, language (Irigaray, 1993:32). Gendered subjectivities may differ over time, among social systems, and in expression through languages. Thus, Weedon says "The meaning of the signifier 'woman' varies from ideal to victim to object of sexual desire, according to its context. Consequently, it is always open to challenge and redefinition with shifts in its discursive context" (1987:25). Taking this further, Butler (1990) reasons "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results" (1990:34). As such logic demonstrates, the process of internalisation of sociocultural norms is not simply imitative, but mutually transformative, as the individual performs roles derived from their social surroundings (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006).

Not only does language shape and give expression to subjectivity, but it also gives voice to our resistance and influences our understanding of change. How we interpret the social construction of our world, as conveyed through language, will determine whether specific aspects of it are challenged and transformed, or accepted and maintained. "If language is the site where meaningful experience is constituted, then language also determines how we perceive possibilities of change" (Weedon, 1987:86). Consider, for example, the social construction of gender roles in English dominant cultures over the past forty years of feminism, and how they have shifted as women have challenged and contested various manifestations of inequality, including such linguistic representations as gendered pronominal reference and what constitutes the unmarked form.

If the relationship between a woman's subjectivity and her self is imaginary, rather than necessitated by a material reality, if it is derived from internalised sociocultural norms

which are themselves mediated by language, what then does it mean to be a woman who speaks English in Australia at the start of the twenty-first century? With this question, the focus of my search of the literature shifts towards Research Question 2 and the way a woman migrant is constructed in Australian society.

2.4   The self in the context of transnational migration

In this section, I will discuss the social inclusion of transnational migrants, via participation in language learning communities of practice, including the ways that participation is reduced or denied in this context, and how transnational migration racialises subjectivity. I will then look at the ways that the post-migration society exerts coercive norms that position the migrant language learner as 'other' within the ideology of the nation state. I will also examine some of the language ideology and economic objectives underpinning Australian migration policy and settlement English provision.

2.4.1   Social inclusion and marginality

'Social inclusion' is a term that dates to European policy objectives in the 1990s towards achieving full participation of the economically marginalised in society through employment (Piller and Takahashi, 2011b). It is also associated with the inclusion of people from diverse cultures in the mainstream; indeed, Otsuji and Pennycook refer to social inclusion as the "new multiculturalism" (Otsuij and Pennycook, 2011:423). However, as Piller and Takahashi point out, social inclusion in the age of globalisation and transnational migration also implicates language in modern, multicultural societies, where proficiency in an officially recognised language is (often misleadingly) seen as key to social, and economic, inclusion, and where attitudes to multilingualism can determine the way that the social inclusion agenda is articulated.

The social inclusion of newcomers to a community of practice, such as learners of a language, occurs when they become more integrated in that community through a process of "legitimate peripheral participation" (Lave and Wenger, 1991, Wenger, 1998). "Peripherality provides an approximation of full participation that gives exposure to actual practice" (Wenger, 1998:100). For example, by engaging in naturalistic target language practice, after formal in-class language training, new migrants may become more experienced in the practices of the language community. They are also involved in the duality of participation in and reification of new language identities. Where such peripheral activity is supervised or guided through formally acknowledged mentoring by more experienced community members, the learning process and the movement into full social inclusion is eased and ensured. In the movement into and within different communities of practice, Wenger suggests we are on trajectories of identity, towards fuller or lesser participation. Thus, transnational migrants may take on "inbound trajectories" of identity, where their identity may at present be peripheral, but "their identities are invested in their future participation" (1998:154), following development in the target language.

However, some migrants, perhaps through difficulty with linguistic acculturation, always remain on "peripheral trajectories", where full participation never occurs but identity is still influenced by the community of practice (Wenger, 1998:154). Others may be persistently marginalised within communities of practice, due to racial, cultural or gender discrimination, where "non-participation prevents full participation" (1998:166). For example,

> Women who seek equal opportunity often find that the practices of certain communities never cease to push them back into identities of non-participation. In such cases, forms of non-participation may be so ingrained in the practice that it may seem impossible to conceive of a different trajectory within the same community. (Wenger, 1998:166-7)

14

Although subjectivity is discursively constructed, we are not constructed equally: "Those who [have] access to the techniques for knowing and telling [are] able to use it as a *resource* for drawing distance and distinction from others" (Skeggs, 2008:14). When people have unequal access to dominant language resources, they are not able to exert agency in the negotiation of identities in that language, or to challenge the identities imposed on them in that social context. In this case, "self-consciousness has no primacy over the awareness of others, since language – which is intrinsically public – is the means of access to both" (Giddens, 1991:51). There is a sense in which personhood is denied when an imposed identity has primacy over the discursive construction of self, and this is also true when the individual is rendered invisible, through the exclusionary use of language.

For example, a significant finding from Norton (2000) is that the persistent denial of migrant participation in English workplace communities of practice means that employment is not necessarily a means of supporting inbound trajectories nor is it always a venue for legitimate peripheral participation and social inclusion. When the material or symbolic resources of the migrant are not valued, there is less opportunity for her voice to be heard and therefore less opportunity to improve and develop English: "It is clear….that opportunities to practice English cannot be understood apart from social relations of power in natural or informal settings" (Norton, 2000:72). Being socially marginalised hindered the women's language development, since when the material or symbolic resources of the migrant are not valued, there is no opportunity for their voice to be heard and therefore less opportunity to improve and develop English. "To speak under such conditions would have constituted what Bourdieu (1977) calls 'heretical usage'"(Norton, 2000:128). The women's English language development was therefore negatively affected by how they were being constructed within the social environment in which they used English.

One of the benefits of settlement English programs such as the AMEP is that they do provide a venue for legitimate peripheral participation, and the potential for not only curricular knowledge of English but also the mentoring relationships for newcomers to develop as participants in the community of practice.

> Granting the newcomers legitimacy is important because they are likely to come short of what the community regards as competent engagement. Only with enough legitimacy can all their inevitable stumblings and violations become opportunities for learning rather than cause for dismissal, neglect, or exclusion. (Wenger, 1998:101)

However, as Piller (in press) shows, attitudes to multilingualism, and the effects of systemic racism can work against the assumption that broader social and economic inclusion will result from participation in settlement English language programs such as the AMEP.

2.4.2 Race and subjectivity

As newcomers to an existing culture, migrants may experience being marginalised by the identities that are imposed on them, according to assumptions based on essentialising racial and/or cultural labels, which deny the individual the right to personhood. This results in what Gilroy (1987) refers to as "the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness" (1987:66), and operates according to inequalities of power between the migrant and the post-migration society. Given such power differentials, Blackledge and Pavlenko (2001) suggest that the idea of negotiating an identity may not be possible. For example, the position of new migrant in a lower social standing may not be open to challenge by the migrant if the dominant culture refuses to see her any other way. Pavlenko (2001) notes how being a migrant automatically confers a certain downward shift in status: "upon arrival in the USA, many newcomers discover that dominant discourses of identity link the identities of a foreigner and an immigrant with poverty, humility, and illegitimacy" (2001:337). Similarly, Creese and Wiebe (2009) finds reduced linguistic capital and racial

discrimination in the labour market for African migrants in Canada, and Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2006) links racial stereotyping and the downgrading of qualifications to Australian labour market segmentation that assigns low-status service sector work to migrants from African and Middle Eastern countries. In addition, Piller (in press) provides a case study of the way that language proficiency in English is used as a blind for racial discrimination in the Australian labour market, and Warriner (2007) shows that "proficiency in English does not necessarily confer the social, cultural, economic, or political capital necessary to achieve "substantial citizenship"" for Sudanese migrants to America (2007:355). These recent studies are part of an emerging body of work that problematises the social inclusion agenda in multicultural, multilingual societies and point to the need for further work that critically examines language learning in the context of transnational migration.

2.4.3 Coercive norms

The pressure to conform to dominant societal norms lies at the heart of identity construction and the individual's sense of alienation or belonging, and it is of particular relevance to the settlement trajectories of transnational migrants. This is discussed in Blackledge (2003), which looks at the discursive construction of otherness in the approach of the British education system to the practice of migrant families taking their children out of school in Britain for extended holidays in their country of origin. Blackledge demonstrates how, in spite of an official vision of Britain as a multicultural society, the education authorities racialise this practice, thus constituting it as outside the imagined practice of someone who is 'in' the society.

Language ideologies also work to coerce normative goals for identity and belonging among transnational migrants, and Schieffelin and Doucet (1998) claim that such

ideologies are often the location of images of 'self/other' or 'us/them', which are enacted

in the pressure that the post-migration society places on migrants to learn to express

themselves in the dominant language (in Blackledge and Pavlenko, 2001:251). The recent

introduction of an English test for Australian citizenship, implemented in October 2007, is

an example of such pressure, because of its assumption that you cannot be a citizen of

Australia if you cannot use English to a prescribed competency. A further example is the

necessity for all transnational migrants to have their overseas qualifications assessed

against Australian education standards, which are established and arbitrated exclusively in

English. In this process, the migrant's prior symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991:72) is

considered non-existent until rendered into the language and institutional hierarchies of the

nation state, a process that often results in the downgrading or disqualification of such

capital, and the consequent interpellation of otherness on the migrant (see Chapter 7.4).

While a nation can be seen as "an imagined political community", projected as an

ideologically mobilising entity from the minds of those who imagine it (Anderson,

2006:6), it may also include conflicting linguistic representations (Blackledge and

Pavlenko, 2001). On the one hand, the dominant official view might be of a linguistically

homogeneous, monolingual nation state - for example, Australia as an English-speaking

country - while on the other hand, its residents and citizens might imagine themselves as

members of a multi-ethnic, multilingual community. "This tension between a dominant

ideology of national homogeneity and actual heterogeneity has important implications for

multilingual identities and social justice in liberal democratic states" (Blackledge and

Pavlenko, 2001:250). In multicultural Australia, which has long used migration to support

its economic development aspirations, language ideologies that privilege English

monolingualism coercively position non-English speaking migrants as excluded from the

imagined nation state. "[…] it is a self evident truth that a shared language is one of the

foundations of national cohesion" (Robb, 2006a). Heller (1995) refers to this as the 'symbolic domination' of one group over others, which occurs because "language norms are a key aspect of institutional norms, and reveal ideologies which legitimate (or contest) institutional relations of power" (1995:373).

The nation state is not just defined by language, but also values, and in Australia the requirement for migrants to accept and adopt 'Australian' values was projected, in the political discourse of the Howard conservative government (1996-2007), as a socially unifying goal. "The one point on which there must be universal agreement is that those who come here should unite behind a core set of values, a shared identity" (Robb, 2006c). Such discourse evokes a homogeneous community, defined by a prescribed set of cultural values, but also a construction of the 'other' in "those who come here", an attitude "typical of the way a nation comes to be artificially constructed as an imagined community" (Leung et al, 1997:553).

I have referred above to examples from the settlement ideology of the Howard Australian government, which was in power from 1996 to 2007, in part because they were in power when this research project was initiated, but also because a similar ideology still persists in the framing of settlement English language provision in Australia, which is focussed on teaching English and Australian culture and values for the social and economic inclusion of new migrants. I am aware of no specific review of this practice in the AMEP; however, Hatoss (2006) suggests, from a review of similar practices in the Australian ELICOS sector, that the teaching of culture needs to avoid stereotypes of Australian culture and "shift from teaching 'culture-specific' content to developing intercultural competence" (2006:64). Nevertheless, the current government policy of requiring applicants for residency visas to read a booklet entitled *Life in Australia* (DIAC, 2007), and to sign an

agreement to uphold 'Australian values', would seem to suggest that a specific culture is in mind. The booklet depicts a clearly Anglo-European basis for Australian culture and values, alongside images of Australians who are almost exclusively white, all of which emphatically establishes norms for Australianness and Australian values that marginalise or exclude non-English, non-European cultures.

The second reason for focussing on the Howard government political discourse on migration is that I believe it is aligned to popular representations of the imagined Australian community. While Labor, initially under Rudd in 2007, introduced the rhetoric of social inclusion to the ideology of the imagined nation state, this did not initially translate into a serious policy revision of the Liberal party's effective denial of Australia as a multicultural, multilingual nation state, under Howard, a point made strongly by the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA) at their 2009 national conference. Furthermore, whenever the Labor government is seen to be 'talking tough' in media discourses on migration, as Gillard did in her 2010 plan to establish another off-shore refugee holding facility, it is attributed to the need to pander to the votes of middle Australia, whose imagined community is widely considered to be more closely aligned to the conservative ideology depicted in Howard's English-mediated 'Australian values' discourse.

It was not until I was writing up this research report that the Gillard Labor government finally responded to lobbying from FECCA by announcing in 2011 a new Australian Multiculturalism Policy aimed at "addressing the realms of belonging, participation and contribution of multicultural Australians" (FECCA, 2011). It remains to be seen how far such a policy initiative will go towards reversing the English-mediated, monocultural imagined nation state projected in political and media discourses of turn-of-the-century

Australia. In urging a more socially inclusive approach to multilingualism, however, Piller and Takahashi (2011) and Otsuji and Pennycook (2011) both caution against adopting a view of diversity that sees multilingualism, through monolingual eyes, as the performance of a series of discrete languages, rather than an integrated identity performance.

As it is to the understanding of such integrated identity performances that my research attempts to contribute, I would like now to look at the literature on how the development of a voice in English affects a woman's sense of the person that she is and wishes to become.

2.5   Translating the self

Pennycook (1994) defines voice as "the coming to language amid different discourses and subject positions" (1994:320). If we see different languages as constituting different discourses for the individual, does English then become a potential site of struggle for women who encounter conflicting versions of their gendered subjectivity? According to Weedon (1987), "The individual who has a memory and an already discursively constituted sense of identity may resist particular interpellations or produce new versions of meaning from the conflicts and contradictions between existing discourses" (Weedon, 1987:106).

In this way, women undertaking transnational migration involving language change are negotiating a path among potentially conflicting multiple discourses of the self. They are also engaging "the capacity to aspire, the social and cultural capacity to plan, hope, desire, and achieve socially valuable goals" (Appadurai, 2006:176). Transnational migration involving language change is a transformative experience that engages the capacity to aspire, and to imagine new language-mediated identities in the post-migration society. "Through imagination, we can locate ourselves in the world and in history, and include in

our identities other meanings, other possibilities, other perspectives" (Wenger, 1998:178).

Aspiration is also central to a learner's investment in the target language, and it is the

learner's "historically and socially constructed" relationship to it that impacts on the

language learning experience (Norton, 1997:410). Women engaging in transnational

migration hold expectations about the post-migration society, and imagine the kind of life

they will be able to establish there. In the era of globalisation, migration may now be seen

as either a temporary or permanent transition, but its outcome is ultimately created from

negotiating the divide between the aspirations of the migrant and the affordances of the

post-migration society.

The learning of English, therefore, and the development of voice, are inextricably

interwoven with the learning of the culture in which English is spoken. This unitary

concept is referred to by Agar (1994) as 'languaculture', a term that became important in

interpreting the post-migration identity constructions of my participants.

2.5.1 Languaculture

When learners develop competence in a new language, there is the potential for them to

negotiate an identity in that language that is distinct from the one they have assumed in

their other language(s). In this way, people who undertake transnational migration

involving language change become learners who "must often deal with conflicting forms

of individuality and competence as defined in different communities" (Wenger, 1998:160).

These conflicting forms of individuality may also form paths of influence that operate back

into the migrant's first language identity, such that when a woman learns to speak a new

language, and especially when she has internalised the structure to the point where she

thinks in that new language, she will also begin to have a different sense of her self, one

that is shaped and conditioned by the sociocultural norms of the new language.

This is true of the subjects in Pavlenko (2001) whose first-person narratives of identity change through additional language development reveal identity as a site of struggle, between the writer's first language, gendered self and that of the second language person she becomes. This struggle also takes in the way the writers, all of whom are published authors and academics, are constructed in the dominant languaculture. For writers like Eva Hoffman (1989), the loss of their sense of who they were in their first language is problematic while for others, such as Kyoko Mori (1997), the person she has become in English affords a more satisfying expression of her sense of gender equality than she can achieve in her L1, Japanese. Indeed, Mori finds that, after 22 years in the United States, she prefers to speak English, even with a male Japanese colleague, because if she speaks Japanese she is forced to invoke a submissive female identity she does not experience in English. In explaining her preference, Mori says "The language I use should not automatically define me as second best" (1997:12). Both of these writers refer to the fact that, after so many years living in US America, English is the voice of their thoughts - "when I talk to myself now, I talk in English" (Hoffman, 1989:272).

However, it is not just the voice of the new language, but also its thinking that has taken up residence in her head. "To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (Fanon, 1967:17-18). The language learned is not neutral, and nor is its effect on the person who learns it (Pennycook 1994, Kubota 2000, Shohamy 2000, Edge 2003), and the way that language learning and language learners are constructed also has a significant impact not only on how language learning progresses but also on whether it confers symbolic capital. In the social context of post-migration

language learning, the learner needs to be aware of the requirement to respond actively to the sense of self that she might otherwise be led to accept.

2.5.2   Responding to colonizing subjectivities

The imposition of essentialising subjectivities by the dominant society means that, in struggling to define and assert their identity, minority groups can be ghettoized within a limited range of compelling, yet colonizing subjectivities. This colonization of the self is represented in de Beauvoir's (1952) theorisation of woman as 'object', as constituted by a male dominated culture, and contested by Irigaray (1985) in her assertion of a feminine "specificity" that exists outside of male-centred subjectivity (1985:153). hooks (1990) also challenges imposed subjectivities, but in relation to race, when she says:

> Fundamental to the process of decentering the oppressive other and claiming our right to subjectivity is the insistence that we must determine our legitimacy. We are not looking to that Other for recognition. We are recognizing ourselves and willingly making contact with all who would engage us in a constructive manner. (hooks, 1990:22)

The importance of having a voice, of representing the self, instead of being represented as an other, is an essential aspect of responding to colonizing subjectivities. Speaking of the need for blacks to critique essentialist images of African American history, hooks (1990) asserts that: "Part of our struggle for radical black subjectivity is the quest to find ways to construct self and identity that are oppositional and liberatory" (1990:29). Not just accepting imposed subjectivities, but constructing them, according to one's own set of values. This has also been one of the defining aspects of post-modern feminism – the struggle to identify a way of speaking about women's lives that comes from women, a way of speaking about the world in terms that represent the woman's voice, rather than that of the historically validated male voice (Belenky et al, 1986, Butler 1990, Irigaray 1993, Scott 2001). Kramsch and van Hoene (2001) suggest that:

> By exploring the material and psychic sites of difference that had previously been denigrated and excluded by masculinist and colonialist discourses, feminism has resignified that which has been considered the "other" and enabled those who have been marginalized to speak for themselves. (Kramsch and van Hoene, 2001:285)

Another important contribution to a feminist perspective on subjectivity is embodied in the work of Black feminist theorists like Patricia Hill Collins (1986, 1990), who introduced the term 'Intersectionality' to articulate the interlocking ways that race, class and gender oppression defined the experience and standpoint of Black women in America. Intersectionality "treats the interaction among multiple systems as the object of study" (Hill Collins, 1986:S20), and provides a useful lens for analysing the experiences of women transnational migrants to Australia, who may negotiate identity construction at the intersection of issues related to language, race, and gender. In addition to theoretical approaches to gendered subjectivity, feminism has also provided methodologies that give voice to subjectivity, which I discuss, with examples, in 2.8 below.

As this review of the literature has made clear, the development of an ability to negotiate identity construction needs to be central to the type of support that settlement English language programs provide, and I would like to return now to this area, the context in which my original research questions arose (see 1.2).

2.6   Settlement English program goals

Although the assumption that English has a culturally defining role may be problematic, English competency can still be seen to play an important economic role, as the then director of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) in Britain, Alan Tuckett, pointed out: "Lack of fluency in the language condemns many people to poverty" (Tuckett, 2006). The Australian Government has a long tradition of support for the provision of a comprehensive migrant settlement program, one that is predicated on the

notion of making an investment in the present for the future wellbeing of new migrants and their successful integration in Australian society. As a model of settlement service provision, this program, the AMEP, is second to none in the English-speaking world, and the Australian government continues to look for new ways of developing and aligning it to social, political and economic goals. For example, labour market strategies have had a direct impact on the shaping of English language programs and their increasingly vocational focus over the last five years, to align them with a stated desire for migrants to fill shortages in service sector labour supply.

In both his address to the 2006 AMEP National Conference and his 2006 address to the Council of Australian Imams, Andrew Robb, then Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, referred to the possibility of an unhelpful "victim mentality" on the part of migrants and, in the case of the AMEP address, followed this reference with a statement about the expectations of the host society: "It should be about building an expectation, from the outset…that they are expected to quickly join the workforce, not rely on the welfare system" (2006b). In the same address, Robb also talked about qualities that make new migrants who have come from difficult circumstances "very marketable in the workplace soon after their arrival", including "a willingness to do jobs many Australians reject". As I stated above (see p20), although the Rudd Labor government initially asserted a vision of a more socially inclusive Australia, their immigration policy remained consistent with that of the previous Liberal government, as the following quote from the then Labor minister for Immigration reveals:

> Increasingly, immigration's role is as a job matching agency for the nation. […] As Australians take up the skilled work opportunities available, shortages of labour in the service and regionally based industries will become more and more acute.
> (Chris Evans, 2008)

Such clearly articulated policy goals, while reflecting labour supply planning priorities, do not address systemic barriers involving language and race that face migrants to modern multicultural states where migration is a key feature of economic development (Booth, Leigh and Varganova, 2009, Creese and Wiebe, 2009, Colic-Peisker and Tilbury, 2006, 2007, Piller, in press, and Piller and Takahashi, 2011a). These studies reveal the social and economic exclusion of migrants, based on language and race, and the imposition of colonising identities of reduced symbolic capital by the dominant society.

My research, arising from experience in the provision of English language support programs, aims to increase the awareness available to such programs in the provision of settlement education that will more adequately address these deeper and broader issues.

Before I move on to the research itself, however, I would like to return to the theme of the intellectual journey that I began in 2.2 above, and report on the understanding that I have reached so far with regard to the fundamental issue of seeing the self as core, or the self as a set of relations.

2.7   Evaluating the poststructuralist self

Brubaker and Cooper (2000) argue that the way that 'identity' has been widely overused in the social sciences – specifically by "stipulating that identities are constructed, fluid and multiple" – has left us "without a rationale for talking about "identities" at all" (2000:1). Similarly, Bendle (2002), in a critique of the theorisation of identity in sociology, suggests that globalisation has led sociology to "theorize people as possessing identities that are extremely adaptive to social change" (2002:1). He believes that this situation has resulted in "an inherent contradiction between a valuing of identity as something so fundamental that it is crucial to personal well-being and collective action, and a theorization of

'identity' that sees it as something constructed, fluid, multiple, impermanent and fragmentary" (2002:1-2). This theorisation seems to negate the idea that the individual has any core, underlying self, linking identity performances both spatially and temporally. Bendle believes that such an approach constitutes an "undertheorized model of the human personality that radically generalises the notion of identity" and "dissipates its analytical power" (2002:12). Taking up this critique, Block (2007) suggests that, to more fully understand the language learner as individual, one has also to look to psychology, and specifically to psychoanalysis, for a complete theorising of the effects on identity of second language socialisation. This would allow "an examination of the inner core self, not entirely stable and surely conflicted, which acts as a constraint on human development" (Block, 2007:873). Although problematic for applied linguists to undertake, Block suggests this kind of inquiry might provide a more complete historical account of the language learner as individual, and of the self, formed in early socialisation, that second language socialisation acts on. Riley (2007) offers a more simple explanation for the problems with 'identity', suggesting that "a principal source of difficulty lies in the fact that the term [identity] is used in two very different ways", both to refer to one's individual awareness of self, and also to the social roles we play (2007:87).

Although I began the project with a, perhaps humanist, belief in a separate, core self, as expressed in 2.2.1 above, by the time I came to analyse the participant data, some two years later, I had arrived at a position closer to that of my colleague's (see p8-9). I had by then realised that the notion of an extant self, separate to its manifestation in identity performances is, in a sense, irrelevant, since it does not exist beyond language and culture and is mediated experientially through them. Or, as Althusser (1970) maintains, we are always-already subjects.

> … ideology hails or interpellates individuals as subjects. As ideology is eternal, [it] has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects, which amounts to making

it clear that individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects, which necessarily leads us to one last proposition: *individuals are always-already subjects.* (Althusser, 1970)

What remains for the individual who experiences subjectivity is a 'sense' of themself as subject, where the self is a composite of imagined and remembered identities, all of them mediated through language, and performed in a specific sociocultural context. Such a conception of the self is explained by Teich (1992) as follows:

> The "whole person" of humanist psychology signifies the recognition that such attributes as affective and cognitive, or rational and intuitive, comprise a self of multiple parts - or, as we might say now, multiple selves in the various conditions and situations of one's existence. This multiplicity of selves, moreover, need not be integrated into an ideal organic unity; rather, the multiple self could function within the postmodernist environment of difference, indeterminacy and contrastive individual and group qualities. The "whole person," then, is the sum of a variety of interrelated but necessarily harmonious parts. (Teich, 1992:11)

Similarly, Holstein and Gubrium (2000) locate the self at the intersection of internal thought and external actions, concluding: "The empirical self is neither more nor less a part of internal or external life. Rather, it is an integral part of a working subjectivity, wherever that is experientially located" (Holstein and Gubrium, 2000:27).

And Wenger (1998) suggests that, rather than viewing our different identities as fragments, we should see them as a "nexus of multimembership" (1998:159), which can account for the possible influence of separate identities on each other.

Perhaps, then, it is useful to speak of *identities* as the multiple relations, formed and mediated linguistically, we perform in social action and interactions, and the *self* as the sum of these real, imagined, and remembered identities. This is the approach I have taken to considering identity constructions and the impact on the self of language learning in the context of transnational migration. I have sought to inquire into the reflexive experience of selfhood in the language learning and settlement trajectories of recent women migrants to

Australia, believing that it is from a sense of self, or personhood, that a woman is able to discursively construct and rationalise her multiple, sometimes conflicting, language-mediated identities. I have assumed that the concept of the core self is the most likely one with which my informants will be working, whereas the concept of self as a set of relations, or identities, is the one articulated in the poststructuralist literature. One key to my research, therefore, is not to see these two concepts as being in conflict, but to see them as being in relation, as I have outlined above. I hope to use the set-of-relations concept in such a way as to illuminate the impact of language learning on the core selves from which my informants might see themselves as speaking.

In the following chapter, I discuss my research methodology, but before doing so I would like to outline here the fundamentals of my approach to methodology, as it has been informed by this review of the literature, specifically in relation to the ways that feminism has provided methodologies that give voice to subjectivity.

2.8   Feminist methodology

One of the ways that feminist researchers have represented the voices of women is through methodologies that highlight the use of narrative inquiry, which I discuss further in Chapter Three in relation to its relevance to my own project. On the value of narrative discourse to subjectivity, Weedon (2004) notes how the narrative genre positions the writer as a 'speaking subject', and is a powerful means of representing society and history. Similarly, Pavlenko (2001) argues that one of the strengths in using narrative data lies in the way that written forms of communication allow writers to "reinvent themselves" in ways that permit a more authoritative voice, where barriers to acceptance, such as accent, are removed. "Language ownership, and, consequently, the ownership of meaning, is the

key area where identities are renegotiated in cross-cultural autobiographies" (Pavlenko, 2001:326).

An early example of the use of narrative inquiry is Belenky et al (1986), a ground-breaking feminist study that revealed important information about how women experience gaining a voice and coming into knowing through learning. The authors conducted a series of in-depth interviews with a total of 135 women from across the US American socio-economic spectrum, asking them questions about how they viewed themselves, what their family environment was like, and their hopes for the future, as well as questions about their experience of learning and gaining knowledge. The data was analysed by grouping it into stages of knowing, represented in the lives of different women. If the stages were seen developmentally, in a single woman, they would prescribe a path from silence - no voice, no sense of self - to conscious engagement with systems of knowing presented by society - constructed knowledge. In this, there are similarities with a sociocultural theory of second language acquisition, where learning and development occur via the internalisation from social speech, through private speech to inner speech, of sociocultural knowledge. These stages are relevant to the experience of migrant women 'gaining a voice' in a new language and culture and, importantly, they are conclusions drawn from inquiring into how women experience learning and coming into knowing; that is, the research process allowed women to construct a reflexive narrative of the self.

On the importance of narrative discourse, Weedon notes that, if the voices are predominantly white, then this serves to "marginalize non-white readers, whose experiences are likely to be very different from this assumed norm" (2004:62). But where voices from outside the dominant languaculture are heard, it is possible that "the wide discrepancies between official discourses of cultural diversity and the lived experience of

ethnic minorities are documented and explored" (2004:67). It also provides a means of troubling the imagined community of the nation state. Writing about the experience of growing up Chinese in white-dominated Canada, Yee (1993) says: "For those of us who come from communities which have been silenced through histories of colonization, patriarchy and resistance, the pen is a powerful weapon we must learn to use well" (Yee, 1993:30).

Migrant women to Australia who cannot effectively communicate in the dominant language in a sense become silenced in their knowing, akin to Belenky et al's first category of knowing (Belenky et al, 1986:15), at least in terms of their engagement with and recognition by the dominant culture. Developing communicative competency in English provides the means to challenge this silencing, allowing learners to move "from silence to speaking as a revolutionary or oppositional gesture, reading, writing, speaking, listening against the grain" (Pennycook, 1994:321). However, it is not only a question of developing a voice, but also of being accorded the right to speak, and, as Norton (2000) reveals, migrant English language learners experience social exclusion in naturalistic language settings, so their ability to assert selfhood is negatively affected.

2.9   Summary

In this chapter I have discussed concepts from the poststructuralist paradigm that are relevant to a consideration of language learning and identity construction resulting from transnational migration. Beginning with an outline of the poststructuralist theorisation of identity, and later including its limitations, I have discussed the development of my own ideas in relation to this, which also take into account the way that identity is commonly experienced as the performance of selfhood. In order to account for the idea of the self-

who-acts in the performance of identities, I have chosen to view the 'self' as the sum of all the language-mediated 'identities' that an individual performs, spatially and temporally.

Subjectivity, or the social framing of the individual, is in reality no different from the self, since the individual is always-already interpellated as subject (Althusser, 1970), so never has consciousness of a self that exists outside of social conditioning. I have moved from a framework for considering identity and the self to discussing the process by which gendered subjectivity is derived, and the role of language as both a vehicle for gender socialisation and the means by which subjectivity is contested. These processes are central to my thesis, which explores the fundamental and specific ways that new language socialisation, in the context of transnational migration, impacts a woman's prior-language sense of self. I have discussed this process in relation to sociocultural theory and communities of practice for language learning and identity construction, including the role of legitimate peripheral participation and aspiration in language development.

I have also considered the ways that subjectivity is racialised in the context of transnational migration, and the manner in which new migrants are subject to coercive norms about the imagined community of the nation state and their position in it. Using evidence from both the Howard Liberal and Rudd/Gillard Labor governments, I have argued that, particularly non-European, new migrants to Australia remain positioned as socially excluded from the dominant view of Australia as an English-monolingual nation state, united under a single set of 'Australian values'.

Finally, I have outlined the contribution of feminist approaches to theory and research methodology that provide a framework for reporting and contesting the ways that subjectivity is experienced. Previous studies of women migrants to English-dominant

societies, such as Norton (2000), and Warriner (2007) have critically examined the social context of migrant language learning, and a number of studies (Besmeres, 2006, Pavlenko, 2001, 2005, 2006, Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000, Piller, 2002, and Wierzbicka, 2004) have looked at the identity narratives of bi- and multilingual English speakers in order to understand the way identity and emotions are mediated by language.

However, I believe there is a need for further research among recent women migrants, given that women currently constitute almost half of all global migrations (Kim, 2011), and the majority of transnational migrations to Australia. I believe there is a need for research, especially in the Australian context, that charts the synchronic impact, discursively constructed through first-person narrative, that language learning has on a woman's sense of self. As a contribution to furthering the important work being done in documenting the lived experience of transnational migrants, I have undertaken a holistic, longitudinal study of women, beginning as they are attending the Australian settlement English program. The study inquires into the impact of English language development and the women's experience of subjectivity in Australian society on their changing sense of self and settlement aspirations. In addition to charting the synchronic experience of a range of women, cross-sectional in terms of race and prior languacultures, my study is important because it contributes to an understanding of migration as a gendered process (Creese and Wiebe, 2009, Kim, 2011, McElhinny, 2007, Piller and Pavlenko, 2007, Piller and Takahashi, 2010, Ryan, 2002, Yuval-Davis, 2009), by seeking to forefront the experiences of recent women migrants in order to understand not only how the process impacts gendered subjectivity and aspiration, but also how destination countries like Australia might take account of gender and identity in their approach to supporting migrant settlement.

Given an ageing domestic population, migration flows are seen by both major political parties in Australia as an important key to continued economic development and prosperity. With the stated goal of maintaining labour market supply through migration, successive governments in Australia have increasingly tied the framing of settlement English program delivery to employment outcomes for new migrants. While there is a wealth of statistical data on migration flows and settlement outcomes documented in annual reporting for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (www.immi.gov.au/media/publications.htm), such data cannot account for the lived experience of transnational migration. However, until recently (Yates, 2010), there has been little ethnographic research done among language learners in the AMEP, including studies that specifically forefront the experience of women. This study aims to address this gap by providing an insight, through first-person narrative data, into the ways that migration and settlement are experienced as racialised and/or gendered processes in the Australian context. It also addresses the overt framing of the Australian settlement English program (AMEP) as an (vocational) employment-track course that nevertheless does not consider powerful factors related to gender and race that impact on identity construction and English language development, working against women being able to achieve their settlement employment aspirations. My research is unlike previous studies of migrant language learners because it provides a holistic analysis of the impact of English language learning on the self in both private and public interactional domains, in relation to family, society and work. As such, the study provides much-needed data on the lived experience of women migrants in the AMEP, a program that instructs more women than men nationally, across all providers, and which links English language development with employment outcomes, but which nowhere explicitly considers the role of race or gender in either the framing of its program goals or the instruction of its learners. I hope that my research can help to reverse this.

CHAPTER THREE – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

In this chapter I will outline the research paradigms that provide the theoretical

underpinnings to my approach and to the methodology adopted in the study. I will also

discuss some of the issues that arose for me in relation to objectivity and validity, and to

the role and position of the researcher with respect to both the participants and the study.

3.2   Multiple perspectives on multiple selves

3.2.1 Qualitative inquiry

This study is an exploration, using qualitative methods, of specific aspects of the migration

and language learning experiences of women. As stated in Chapter One (see1.3), the

research questions are:

- How does developing a voice in English impact on a woman's sense of self and

  aspirations, and her negotiation of key family relationships?

- How does the way a woman is constructed in Australian society impact on her

  sense of self and her settlement aspirations?

- How does the way a woman is constructed in the pre-migration language and

  society impact on her sense of self?

In adopting qualitative methodology, I accept that reality and meaning are co-constructed

by participants and contextualized, rather than having intrinsic meaning (Gray 2003,

Janesick 2003, Gubrium and Holstein 2003). I was interested in recording women's own

perspectives on the effects of learning English on their lives and on their sense of self,

because "what is important to know, what constitutes an appropriate and legitimate focus

for social inquiry, is the phenomenological meaningfulness of lived experience – people's

interpretations and sense makings of their experiences in a given context" (Greene,

1994:536). I accept that meaning is co-constructed, because "it is impossible to separate

the inquirer from the inquired into. It is precisely their interaction that creates the data that will emerge from the inquiry" (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:88). I also accept that, in undertaking qualitative research, the researcher cannot achieve objectivity, but should instead "acknowledge what we ourselves bring to our research in terms of our lived experience, certainly, but also our politics and our intellectual frameworks" (Gray, 2003:63).

The motivation for this inquiry was in a sense phenomenological, in that it sought an understanding of the experience of language learning and the ways it impacts on identity, as seen through the eyes of the experiencer. This can be achieved by "focusing on our self-understanding as active, meaning-making participants in the human world" (Richards, 2003:18). It also requires a methodology which includes bracketing the beliefs or prior understandings of the inquirer from the inquiry, something I do not believe I could have achieved as a woman inquiring into the lives of women. Instead, my methodological and analytical approach, rather than being phenomenological, is more closely aligned to that of the constructivist-interpretive paradigm, in assuming that there are multiple realities, that meaning is constructed between the researcher and the researched, and in deriving data from "a naturalistic set of methodological procedures" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008:32).

In designing and carrying out this research, I employed inductive strategies for gaining understanding, and I adopted the critical perspective of a postmodern feminist (see 2.8), by which I mean that I sought to inquire into aspects of women's lives, using qualitative methods, and to problematise the findings, as well as my role. This included situating the women's stories and experiences in the gendered social and political landscapes in which they took place, and examining the complicated and, at times conflicted, positioning of the woman researching. In doing so, I was drawing from feminist standpoint theory (Smith,

1987), which does not try to establish universal truths, but "creates the space for an absent subject, and an absent experience that is to be filled with the presence and spoken experience of actual women speaking of and in the actualities of their everyday worlds" (1987:107). In choosing methods of inquiry that foregrounded the multiple narrative voices of women, the study attempted to create a space for women, always constructed, to construct themselves.

In choosing data collection methods, I was inspired by Bonny Norton's doctoral research (Norton Peirce, 1993) among a small group of women immigrants to Canada. In her groundbreaking exploration of social identity and its impact on motivation and language learning, Norton analysed three explicit forms of data – personal interviews, group discussions and diary study entries. Because of the relevance of this study to my own inquiry into the impact of learning English on a woman's sense of self, I chose to replicate some of Norton's methods in my data collection. I was also influenced by the work of Belenky et al (1986), which explored, through extensive personal interview data, the ways that women came into knowing through experience and formal education. I was interested in how the researchers asked the women to describe themselves, rather than depict the ways that they had variously been described. By asking similar questions in a range of communicative genres, I aimed to accommodate the possibility that the women might reveal different selves in different social settings.

> We believe that, because social identity is a dynamic phenomenon, it should be studied with a methodology that is dynamic both in philosophy and in practice. No matter how detailed and carefully undertaken, onetime research cannot be adequate to study social identity, as social identity is often context bound, and therefore onetime research yields only one view of a complex phenomenon (Hansen and Liu, 1997:573).

If identities are multiple and constructed in the interactions we have (Norton 1997, Wenger 1998) and the roles we play, then the sense of another woman's self can only be created

through stitching together a patchwork of her communicative selves-in-action. Narrators construct multiple identities in revealing their life stories (Bloom and Munro 1995, Gubrium and Holstein 2001) and the narrative data collected must therefore be viewed as a composite image of the enacted self. According to Chase (2008):

> …when researchers treat narration as actively creative and the narrator's voice as particular, they move away from questions about the factual nature of the narrator's statements. Instead, they highlight the versions of self, reality, and experience that the storyteller produces through the telling. (Chase, 2008:65)

In reflecting on my project, and in choosing appropriate methods, I was concerned that the result should reveal the ways that migrant women thought and spoke about themselves, and about what they were undergoing. I wanted to show an interest in "…the other as a narrator of his or her particular biographical experiences as he or she understands them." (Chase, 2008:70) Arguing for the importance of experience as a methodological cornerstone in analysing and understanding the lives of women, Skeggs (1997) says woman "is a category which is classed and raced and produced through power relations and through struggle across different sites in space and time" (1997:27). Inquiring into the experiences of women, as a woman, is a way to participate in writing the sociology of women, "beginning in the world that both sociologist and those she observes and questions inhabit on the same basis" (Smith, 1987: 111).

The value of initiating data collection in a variety of settings became apparent when I realised that sometimes a woman was reluctant to reveal details of her personal life in the group, yet she was comfortable talking to me about them in personal interview. Roxanna, for example, told me one time when we met for coffee that she did not like to speak about herself so much to the other women during group discussions, but she would talk about her move to Australia in relation to her kids only. She was comfortable constructing a public identity as a mother, and discussing her position as a migrant in relation to how it intersected with that role, but not to reveal how being a migrant intersected with her sense

of self-as-individual. On the other hand, in personal interviews and when we met for coffee she spoke quite candidly about her life and the personal and relationship problems she has faced, even when she knew I was recording.

In contrast to this, Maria quite casually revealed for the first time what I felt was deeply personal information during an early group discussion, yet had not mentioned it during a prior personal interview. I remember feeling quite amazed when she suddenly revealed to the group details about a crisis point in her marriage, and the way in which her move to live in Japan was connected to saving her marriage. She had previously spoken in detail to me, during a personal interview, about her life in Brazil and then the move to Japan, without ever hinting at marriage troubles, or that her husband had preceded her to Japan by two years. She also revealed to the group her experiences of armed assault in Brazil, yet had not brought this up in talking to me in interview about life in Brazil, even though she had mentioned that there was a lot of violence there. At the time of these revelations, I felt a bit surprised that Maria was choosing to reveal such troubling personal information in a group setting, and later when I was transcribing the data I realised in this example the importance of engaging more than one method of data collection; methods that involved different kinds of communicative dynamics (see Wodak, 2009, for a discussion of identity construction as a function of discursive context).

3.2.2 Women's voices

Rather than begin with a hypothesis about language learning and identity construction, I began with a curiosity. From teaching English to women in a settlement language program and reflecting on the teaching-learning dynamic, I wanted to learn more about how women experienced language and cultural border crossings (Giroux, 1988), and specifically how the language learned might impact on a sense of the self. I was interested in whether

women could express themselves in English in ways that might limit or expand their sense of self, as previously articulated, and in how their sense of their own lives might have been affected by moving to Australia. I was also conscious that, due to the specific ways that all societies construct subjectivities of women that shape how they can imagine themselves (Althusser 1971, Irigaray 1985, 1993, Weedon 1987), women's experiences are different to those of men, and that this would be true in relation to migration and language learning experiences as well. As a teacher, I felt compelled to urge students to find ways of using English that suited their sense of themselves, to the extent that this were possible; to bring the language into themselves, rather than always themselves into the language. I began to wonder how such a process might operate, and whether speaking English might make a woman feel like a different person than she did when she spoke her other languages; whether she was aware of becoming a different person when she spoke English in her Australian life, and whether this was experienced in a positive or a negative light.

A number of writers have recorded retrospective first person accounts of the experience of becoming a speaker of English (Hoffman 1989, Mori 1997, Pavlenko 2001, 2003) and of moving between the language of early socialisation to that of a new language self in English. I was interested to record how women might view this experience as it was happening – during the initial period of socialisation to new language and culture.

DIAC does not approve external research projects involving AMEP clients that are undertaken during program hours; however, with permission, a researcher can recruit AMEP participants for research that is conducted outside their involvement in the AMEP. After securing permission from my program manager to recruit participants, I distributed flyers and spoke about my project at student information sessions in May 2008. This resulted in a number of women expressing interest in joining the project. I initially met

with a group of six interested women to explain the project further and to invite their comments. At this meeting I handed out a personal information questionnaire that was aimed at getting some background details on each woman's migration. I also set up a schedule for the first round of personal interviews, which began in early June, 2008.

Soon after I conducted these first interviews, one of the women informed me that she was not able to continue with the project, and withdrew. Then, in July 2008, I was approached by Tina, who had heard about my project from one of the other participants and was interested in joining. In August, I was invited by two of my colleagues, who were aware of my project, to come and talk to their students about it, because they felt there might be some women in their groups who would be interested in participating. As a result of this additional recruitment, a total of five more women expressed interest in joining my project. Of these, only three were ultimately able to participate, due to their other work and study commitments. I invited these three women, along with Tina, to join the discussion groups, which were just beginning, and I arranged a time to conduct personal interviews with each of them. In total, I had nine continuing participants, and by the end of October 2008, I had interviewed each of them and begun the series of group discussion sessions, the last of which was completed in April 2009. Data collection continued until March 2010, when the last of the final interviews was conducted. By this stage, all of the participants had left the AMEP and were pursuing further English and/or vocational studies, were looking for work, or were engaged in homemaker and parenting duties.

3.2.3 Narrative inquiry

Many theorists (for example, Gubrium and Holstein 1998, Riessman, 2001, Saukko 2000, Pavlenko 2001, Chase 2008, Sermijn et al 2008) have discussed the use of narrative data as a means of communicating participant voices, one that "allows individuals to regain

control over the self, the world, and their own life story narrative" (Pavlenko, 2001: 325). In her overview of narrative inquiry Chase (2008) outlines five major contemporary approaches, one of which derives narratives from questions about specific aspects of a person's life, rather than their general behaviour in communities of practice. Here, the researcher (sociologist) is interested in how the subject negotiates their sense of self through specific life events and contexts (2008:66-69). In my case, the narratives resulted from my inquiry into the participants' experience of being a woman, both in their society of origin and in Australia, and the impact on their sense of self of using English in the latter setting.

The importance of using narrative inquiry in my study must not be understated, for two reasons. First, my research was among migrants, and second, it was among women. In order for women to counter the ways that they are constructed as object (de Beauvoir, 1952) it is important for them to reclaim the right to speak for themselves, to have a say in how their experiences are represented. A number of poststructuralist feminists, including Irigaray (1985), Weedon (1987), and hooks (1990) have spoken to the need for disempowered people to develop voices of their own, rather than just to be spoken about, or to speak in the language of the dominant group. The tradition of using narrative inquiry in feminist research (Belenky et al 1986, Charmaz 2008, Devault 1990, Mullany 2006, Saukko 2008, Schiffrin 1996, Skeggs 1997, Smith 1987) addresses the importance of foregrounding women's experiences as a focus of sociological research, in order to explore and contest their subjectivities. In wanting to inquire into the lives of women, I chose to use narrative methods because "…narrative language contributes to the construction and display of our sense of who we are – our own personal being as an integrated whole, with properties of stability and continuity over time" (Schiffrin, 1996:168).

As migrants to Australia, and as learners of English, the women in the research project were constantly being constructed, usually in terms of their cultural, rather than their social, identity (Norton, 1997), by people who had some influence or control over their lives. These were, variously, language educators, settlement agents and immigration authorities, as well as potential employers and employment bodies that made decisions about the veracity and legitimacy of the women's prior work experience and educational qualifications. In addition, as recent migrants to Australia, the women had to suffer the imposition, by members of the Australian public, of often crudely judgmental stereotypes of cultural identity. In short, the women were very often constructed, as objects, but seldom in a position to foreground their own subjectivities during critical moments in their cultural and linguistic migration. My own conclusion, based on a number of years teaching adult migrants and reflecting on what I observed, was that the process of imposing identities on migrant learners of English resulted in thinking of such people only as objects, often as victims. I constantly asked myself the question: But would she describe/see her**self** this way? Would she think of herself as a victim, or would she experience a sense of agency in the circumstances of her life, even the challenging parts? Would she view the process as "an ultimate source of strength" (Pavlenko, 2003:178)? When I think of someone only as a disempowered victim, I feel that I am perpetuating a colonialist view of the 'other', and while it is important to recognise exploitation and discrimination when it is happening and fight for social justice, it is also important in the process not only to construct a fellow human as a victim/object, but to acknowledge her subjectivity, her agency.

In choosing specific qualitative methods of data collection, I ultimately made a conscious decision not to include solely observational data. In my initial research proposal, I had thought to include observational data, but as I moved into the collection phase, and thought

more about my efforts at allowing the participants to construct themselves, I realised that to record observational data would be counter to this goal. Although my fieldnotes from interviews and discussion groups constitute my making observations of the participants, they were not in instances where I was not also engaged in the interactional encounter. My reason for not taking up a position outside the interactions, as observer in the women's lives, was based on a desire to minimise the extent that the data became hostage to my own interpretations of reality (Skeggs, 1997), or to the women yet again being discursively constructed entirely by someone else. Instead, I used methods that provided a venue for the women to discursively construct themselves in communication with me, or with the entire research group.

When I had met with the six women who first responded to my recruitment initiative among AMEP class groups, I was struck by their enthusiasm, their eagerness to talk about their experiences, as migrant women living through the changes to their lives brought about by the moves to Australia and to English. I had the strong impression that they had already reflected on some of the issues I wanted to explore; they already had a story to tell, and my project triggered the chance to tell it. Chase (2008) speaks to this when she says:

> …the stories people tell *constitute* the empirical material that interviewers need if they are to understand how people create meanings out of events in their lives. To think of an interviewee as a narrator is to make a conceptual shift away from the idea that interviewees have answers to researchers' questions and toward the idea that interviewees are narrators with stories to tell and voices of their own (Chase, 2008:70).

The interviewer/interviewee dynamic is disrupted when the interviewee becomes the narrator and the interviewer the listener, with the former deciding how to answer the open-ended questions of the interviewer, and where to take the exchange, in order to tell her story, rather than merely respond to the interviewer (Chase, 2008). This was apparent in the personal interviews I conducted with the women in the project, and more obviously in the group discussions we had, which I had planned to focus on a single issue each time, but

which in reality went wherever individual women, operating within the dynamics of the group, chose to take it. Although I had moments of concern, all through the data collection period, about whether I was finding answers to the questions I had wanted to ask, I always came back to the realisation that what I had found was what the women had wanted to tell me, in response to the questions I had asked and the topics I had proposed. In this sense, the data collected revealed how the women interpreted my questions and what they had experienced in their lives that they thought was relevant to my line of inquiry. Since I had set out with a desire to discover how women felt about themselves, how they experienced linguistic and cultural border crossings, rather than only how they had been imagined by others, their choices about what to say and how to say it - their influence on the project findings - had to be legitimate.

Although the research interview dynamic may allow the narrator to exert control over the telling of her life story, in the subsequent interpretation of the story thus told, the researcher takes back the role of narrator, when she analyses and discusses what is revealed, reflects it back, in her own words, and through the logic of her own vision. As Josselson (2011) declares: "The primary goal of interpretation is not the passive repetition of what the speaker told us. When we listen to another's story, our intention is to bring our own interpretation to his or her material" (2011:39). Since the interviewer is also involved in shaping the story through her choice of questions put to the participant, I would conclude that the data from a project such as mine is a form of guided narrative.

3.2.4   Changes over time

Janesick (2003) discusses the beauty of qualitative methodology in its ability to make the research design adaptable to the subjects being studied.

> Qualitative research design has an elastic quality, much like the elasticity of the
> dancer's spine. Just as dance mirrors and adapts to life, qualitative design is
> adapted, changed, and redesigned as the study proceeds, due to the social realities
> of doing research among and with the living. (Janesick, 2003:73)

In carrying out research I had to adapt my data collection methods in response to how the participants seemed to prefer communicating. For example, in my original design, I had included an email journal covering issues related to the experience of using English. This was something that was important to me, because I felt the journal would be an appropriate means of recording feelings and experiences as they happened. I also assumed this would provide a more private expression of the self, and therefore would have the potential to elicit different material than was revealed in interview or group discussion sessions. However, much to my disappointment, as this part of the project unfolded, it became apparent that all but three of the women were not interested in writing about things that were happening to them in relation to using English in Australia. In spite of repeatedly decrying their lack of facility with spoken English, they all seemed very comfortable talking about their experiences, either in group or personal discussions; however, they were mostly unforthcoming when it came to putting these experiences down on paper. As a result of which, I eventually realised that I needed to adapt my methods to fit the women, and gave up on trying to encourage the women to write their journals. Instead, I scheduled an additional personal interview session, where I asked each woman to give spoken responses to the email journal topics.

The issue of writing was of interest to me, both as a researcher and as a previous language student. Over the course of the data collection, I became aware that some women avoided writing altogether, and with one woman, this was even to the point of responding to simple text messages from me by phoning me back. I was initially surprised that the participants seemed to prefer opportunities to speak than to write, and this surprise made me realise that I had assumed that speaking would present more anxiety for these English learners

than writing would. I base this assumption, not just in my experience as a language teacher, but also in my own experiences as a language learner, in grammar method style. Studying French, Japanese and Italian in classroom settings had made me feel more comfortable with the degree of planning control I could exert over my writing voice compared to the anxiety I would feel in spoken interactions. However, this did not seem to be the case for the women in the project. Realising that my assumptions were obviously not relevant here, I adapted the project to respond to the way the women appeared to prefer communicating and found appropriate ways to elicit responses. As a researcher, this change in plans involved not only coming to terms with having to change course in mid-stream, but also with the fact that now I would have the added burden of an extra set of interviews to record and transcribe.

Having said this, I do not wish to conclude that the issue of writing in English is so easily explained, in relation to the women in the project. Although most of the women did not respond as I had hoped to the journal-writing plan, all but one of them engaged in informal email communication with me, over the entire project period. Some women emailed me regularly, to communicate what was happening in their lives and to enquire into my own. Some women only wrote in response to my emails, or to send me photos of their new babies. Some women initiated email contact to wish me seasons greetings, or when we had not been in touch for a while. One woman wrote only infrequently, but when she did, it was to communicate her anxieties and difficulties in being a new migrant, the role of her religious faith in shaping her destiny, and her feelings about her children.

The English teacher in me noted that while some of the women wrote as they thought and spoke, some women sent texts of written English that would incur very few teacher corrections in a classroom setting. So, it wasn't that the women, bar one, did not want to

write at all, or even felt inhibited about writing; rather it was perhaps the prescriptive nature of the journal-writing task I had set them that they did not willingly respond to. In this sense, it could be seen that they exerted their own ideas about how they would be discursively represented.

3.3   Role of the researcher

3.3.1   Problematising the role of the researcher

Fontana and Frey (2008), speaking from an approach which views interview data as co-constructed by the protagonists (Gray 2003, Holstein and Gubrium 1997, Mishler 1986, Scheurich 1995), encourage the qualitative researcher to forget about even trying to imagine that the qualitative interview is, or ever has been, a tool for neutral-stance data collection, and instead accept and explore the role of "empathetic" interviewer, who not only takes up a political stance towards what is revealed, but is also conscious of how the interview is reflexively experienced (Fontana and Frey, 2008:116-118).

To what extent, then, is narrative inquiry dominated by culture-specific voices and positioning (Chase 2008), or by the dynamics of class (Skeggs, 1997)? As a researcher, I could not escape the fact that I approached my task from within a set of personal and social preconditions, founded in a particular moment in history, class, race, gender, and in language. "Every researcher speaks from within a distinct interpretive community that configures, in its special way, the multicultural, gendered components of the research act" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008:28). I approached the use of narrative inquiry from within a specific cultural and class context, which has its own set of assumptions about what narrative methods can reveal about identity and doing the self. Yet I exist in a culture that currently celebrates and normalises the interview-as-confessional in public media spaces, a culture that is historically, and increasingly obsessively, individualistic. So I must accept as a limitation of my methods the assumptions I have made about identity, and the value and

importance of the narratively constructed self. As Skeggs (1997), points out: "there is no such thing as a disinterested knower" (1997:26), and in interviewing women from a range of cultures other than my own, I brought my cultural history to bear on the questions I asked of them and how comfortable I expected them to be in responding.

3.3.2 My personal identity as a researcher

It made sense, on a personal level, that I had wanted to engage the voices of women undergoing change, since I was also undergoing changes in my life that I soon came to realise were perhaps connected to my interest in the lives and voices of other women. I had been in a relationship for about twenty years with someone who I felt increasingly alienated from and during the first year of my doctoral studies, we broke up. This event made me reflect on the ways that my personal circumstances may have influenced my line of inquiry into the lives of the women who joined the project. The process of alienation from what had once been a primary relationship in my life was connected to feeling that I had changed somewhat from the young woman who had entered willingly into the relationship, to the point where I no longer felt I could be myself, that my sense of who I was had been chipped away over the years by another person's often unwelcome constructions. When I became aware of the possible motivating effect of my personal life on my academic research, I wondered if there were any parallels with women developing a voice in a new language – in the realisation of the impact on the self of how others construct you, and on the possibility of finding a new space in which to construct an identity – for me, in being single, and for the women I studied, in a new language and culture.

Another factor in my own life that was relevant to my research interests was that I had also experienced migration, albeit to another country with English as a national language –

Canada. In the mid-eighties I moved to Canada in order to continue a romantic attachment, and was soon forced into marriage by Canada's refusal to recognise de-facto relationships under immigration law. Although I felt somewhat resentful at having to compromise my identity in order to remain with my lover, I accepted the state's construction of me as somebody's wife, in order to legitimise my presence on Canadian soil. In undergoing the subsequent immigration proceedings, which I found rather intimidating at times, I often felt like an imposter who would eventually be found out, in spite of the fact that our relationship was genuine. However, I was also struck, looking around the Canadian immigration office waiting room, at how privileged I was, as a white, English speaking, university educated woman from a developed nation; how easy it was for me, compared to many of the other women and men who were waiting to prove their worth before the stern-faced immigration officials. I also wondered and worried about all the women from more traditional cultures, and for whom English was not a strong language, when I had to undergo an immigration medical examination, which included an internal that transgressed all codes of decency in medical practice. How did all those other women suffer such an undignified assault? In short, then, by the time I was teaching English to adult migrant women in Australia, I had had some immigration experiences of my own.

In addition, I had grown up in a family that was made up, on my father's side, of European migrants. My father came to Australia with his mother and older brother, as a child of ten, to meet for the first time his own father, who had left Europe ten years previously. My grandfather had come as an unskilled migrant to make a better life for his family in Australia. Although he spent the remainder of his rather long life in Australia, his use of English was quite minimal, and I can remember as a young child standing in his work shed trying to teach him how to write his family name in English, on a piece of newspaper. I enjoyed his company, in spite of having limited shared language, and I was happy, when

visiting my paternal grandparents, to sit with 'language' washing over me, incomprehensible but familiar. It did not bother me that I could not decipher the meaning of the words; I was happy experiencing another language as a series of musical sounds, while watching the faces of the speakers, my family. I believe that these early experiences of cultural and linguistic 'otherness', and knowing my father's migration and language learning story, formed part of my attraction to teaching English to migrants and to the lives of people who had more recently made similar border-crossings.

I don't reveal any of the above with a self-indulgent desire to bare my soul, but from a more practical consideration of my role as a qualitative academic researcher who takes as a given, along with a large number of qualitative methodology theorists (Chase 2008, Denzin and Lincoln 2008, Fontana and Frey 2008, Janesick 2003, Miller, 2011, Scheurich 1995, Skeggs 1997), the influence of the researcher-as-whole-person on the project, and does not begin to imagine that it is appropriate to believe in researcher neutrality. Instead, I prefer to explore and explain the possible implications of the personal for the public endeavour of qualitative research, that the reader can more accurately contextualise the research project. This, for me, represents a contribution to research rigour.

3.3.3   My personal communication style as a researcher

I enacted the roles of interviewer and analyser reflexively, with an awareness of how my personality and interacting style might have influenced what was revealed and how it was revealed. When I listen to the personal interviews, in particular, I am reminded of my very engaged way of listening to people who are talking to me…which is a polite way of revealing that my enthusiasm for the exchange makes me interrupt at times, to ask more questions, to comment on or empathise with what is being said, or predict where the speaker is headed. While I cringe in self-criticism to imagine how this may have had a negative impact on the narrative flow, and I worked hard to moderate my natural

interactive style, especially after listening to the first round of interviews, I am aware that such enthusiasm for listening and engaging can also present a positive force for communication, in that it may inspire the speaker with confidence to continue, based on the obvious interest of the interlocutor. The possibility that this might be true became apparent at the end of the first interview I conducted with one of the women. When I turned off the recorder, she said that she really liked me and really liked talking to me, because she felt that I was a very kind person and made her feel very comfortable talking about herself… she felt like she wanted to tell me everything about her life. She also said that there were things about her, from her past, that she would like to tell me one day. Later on, another participant said, in an email to me, that I was an easy person to love. In both of these revelations, I felt an affirmation of the kind of person I was, and was encouraged to think that, instead of only being aware of my interviewing shortcomings, I should also acknowledge what I perhaps brought to the event that might have been good. In the spirit of which, rather than judge my interaction style as right or wrong, I reveal it as a contextualising detail of the data collecting events I engaged in.

3.3.4 Between researcher, teacher and friend

During both personal interviews and group discussion sessions, I was conscious that I could not comfortably take up a position outside the group, as observer and recorder, but needed to be an active part of what was happening. It felt false to stand back and observe, to 'do' the researcher, and much more true to enact my self, a woman who was interested in the participants as women, and in what they were saying. So I often engaged with the ideas revealed, I commented and asked questions, along with the other women, when one woman spoke to the group about her life or her concerns. The following data sample, from Discussion Five, occurs in response to Roxanna revealing some of the problems she was having with her older son and the way he and his new girlfriend behaved towards her. She had already paid for an expensive hotel for her son to spend Valentines Day in with his

girlfriend, and during our discussion session, he phoned her to ask that she also pay for an expensive Valentines' gift. When she ended the call, Roxanna shared with the group the content of their exchange and her feelings about it. Spirited comment and advice, copied below, came from four women present, one of whom was me.

Vesna: Maybe you just give everything to him without any, like, limits. You should put some border… what's he can take and what's he can't take, because he maybe know you can do everything for him. He should give something back

Donna: Or maybe another idea, to encourage him to be mature and make responsible decisions, is maybe give him a fixed amount… like, if you support him financially, then just say: "Ok, this is how much you get every month. You have to manage it, but there's no more, when it's finished." Do you know? Like, to teach him to make responsible decisions, and he'll screw up a few times, but it will be his responsibility to make it work, rather than always providing everything.

Vesna: Yeah.

Lena: Well, I would not pay the hotel with my son

Donna: No, not the hotel.

Lena: It's not your business. It's not my business, why I have to pay for hotel?

Donna: Setting boundaries is gonna be really important.

Vesna: It's not good to give with no…like, limits, because the kids…any kids, doesn't matter how good they nature …

Lena: It's never enough.

Vesna: Yeah, if they not respect with you.

Michiko: Exactly.

Roxanna: Many times… many, many times, I said …

Lena: […] to do some actions

Roxanna: I tell him …um… "You should have limits on spending money, and you should …er… earn money and save money". He says: "Oh, my father is rich and I don't want to and I don't need to work" (GASPS OF DISBELIEF FROM SOME WOMEN).

Lena: But it's your [his] father, it's not you.

Roxanna: Yes, I told him: "He's your father…" (INTERRUPTIONS FROM A FEW WOMEN, OFFERING OPINION)

Donna: How is he ever going to learn … (LOTS OF NOISE AND TALKING, SO ALL UNINTELLIGIBLE FOR A FEW SECONDS)

(Discussion Five, February 2009:19-20)

This data sample reveals the level of familiarity that existed in the group, and the way that women, myself included, did not hesitate to speak their minds and offer advice. During such moments, I was an unhesitating member of the group discussion, who freely spoke from the heart among women she enjoyed a comfortable rapport with.

However, as a researcher, I was also conscious that my own involvement in such openness was complicated, in that it was not always a simple case of saying what I felt, but at times one of feeling what I wanted to say and choosing not to say it. In this I was reminded of the conflicting roles I played - that I was not just an interested woman talking to her peers, but also a researcher collecting data. There were times, for example, both during group discussions and individual interviews, when I was conscious of a feeling of fascinated anomie while listening to a woman speak her mind. This happened when I felt that what a woman was candidly revealing as being important in her life was something I found trivial in my own, or could not agree with. I was aware of my instinctive response and let that sit for a while, marvelling at what was being said, in its being so foreign to my own sense of self and guiding beliefs. Then, a little further along I was conscious of letting go of that self and finding the person who could accept and be curious. Instead of empathising, I tried to let go of my common self and walk around in the other woman's shoes a while. I found this act quite liberating and enjoyable, but I had initially to work against my political instincts in order to achieve it, and I am aware that in doing so, I was being a researcher, because it was only as a researcher that I could take up such a position; the woman that I am would not have engaged a friend in this manner, but would have challenged the very basis of her beliefs in impassioned debate.

The following excerpt comes from Interview Two with Lena, after I had asked her how she was finding her life in Australia now. She responded by talking about how she could not find the kind of beauty treatments she was used to having in Russia, and we had a lengthy conversation about this, including the following segment. As we spoke, I went through conscious stages of being a feminist who was fascinated and a bit affronted by the topic, through to a realisation that what I thought did not matter, because this was important to Lena, and thus on to a move to step away from myself and engage with the ideas as a

researcher. By line 26 (in bold), I have reached an ability to work from the logic of an

imagined identity as a woman who engaged in such beauty treatments.

Lena: […] by the way, I did not see good … maybe good nails, yes I have seen it. And, good… I was talking with my girlfriends in Russia… when you see woman who has money in Russia, you can see what she is doing with her face, and she is very… how…
Donna: She has good skin?
Lena: Yes, she has good skin, and you can see she go to some good beauty salon, but here, for example, as I told you, we was at this table with these people… they are really rich, and um… I didn't see they had plastic surgery, or something like this. The guy…
Donna: You could see it?! That's not a good sign if you can see it!
Lena: Yeah, but skin is not good. They don't have the same treatment, what they could have. They could do it here, too, but maybe it's not popular. In Russia, every woman who has this money (LAUGHS), they have …
Donna: Really? Botox?
Lena: Ah, Botox and some vitamins injections…
Donna: Really?
Lena: Yes. Meso-therapy (?).
Donna: Did you do that in Russia?
Lena: Yes… (LAUGHING)… I did it!!
Donna: And you don't do it here.
Lena: Ah, actually, I found where I can do it, but I cannot go just like this, and …er, I don't know… I have only one skin (LAUGHING VOICE), and one face.
Donna: Oh, so you're worried, if it's a mistake. Oh, so that's really important.
Lena: Yeah.
Donna: **So you need to talk to more people…**
Lena: Yeah, that is why I thought ok, if I see some woman… among friends…
Donna: …who looks good. But you haven't found one yet!
Lena: No!! (LAUGHING)
Donna: Maybe it's not so important in Australia, so it hasn't attracted enough…
Lena: Yes, yes. That I was thinking.
Donna: Because I think in Australia it's very difficult to have good skin, because of the sun. So maybe…
Lena: But still, if you have no … this woman husband, he has maybe 300 millions… you can take care of your skin! (LAUGHING)
(Lena, Interview Two, February 2009:8-9)

In the excerpt above, instead of speaking from inside the topic, expressing experiential

knowledge and beliefs, I was conscious of standing outside and engaging my interlocutor

for the purpose of drawing her out, revealing her own attitudes and experience, for their

relevance to my project. In short, I was performing the role of researcher.

3.3.5   In search of truth

In some theorising of qualitative methodology there is reference to notions of an extant

truth – "the most important ethical imperative is to tell the truth" (Johnson, 2002:116) –

while in others there is a belief that truth is co-created by the interviewer and her

participants, and the result a "negotiated text" (Fontana and Frey, 2008:144). Taking this

point further, I would like to suggest that the final 'truth' of the research is also created in

the mind of the reader, and the more contextualising details she has to imagine the

endeavour, the more able she is to create a shared truth. The reader must imagine the lives

under examination, and in doing this, she is assisted and influenced by the analysis I

provide, and also by the details I include from the participants' lives. Conscious of the

power I hold in choosing what to include, I nevertheless include significant amounts of

participant data, from both spoken and written interactions, not only to foreground the

voices of the participating women, but also as a contribution to internal validity, via the

reader's ability to contextualise my claims against her own reading of the lives thus

revealed. In this, I reference the work of Paula Saukko (2000) and her 'quilting' technique

of exploring emergent themes by patterning segments of participant voices, along with the

researcher's emotional and intellectual response, and previous informed analysis of these

themes. The resulting analytical quilt provides a means for the participant voices to be

present on equal terms with that of the researcher and other stakeholders, and for the reader

to examine these various positions and finally form her own conclusions. Riessman (2001)

alludes to this in speaking of her own research in infertility among women in India: "my

approach here includes detailed transcripts of speech so that readers can, to a much greater

degree, see the stories apart from their analysis" (2001:701).

Having said all this, I must still confess to many moments of worrying, during the data

collection period, that if only I could think of the right questions to ask in interview, the

truth I was trying to uncover about identity and language learning would be revealed. I was not conscious of having a fixed idea of what I would find, rather a seeking after an extant but elusive truth – the hearts and minds of migrant women journeying into a new language and culture – and I felt that if I did not ask the right questions, I would not find that truth. So, in spite of the reassurances of postmodern theorists (Charmaz 2008, Chase 2008, Denzin and Lincoln 2008, Fontana and Frey 2008, Gray 2003, Richards 2003, Scheurich 2008), I still clung onto a bit of post-positivist anxiety about absolute truth and whether or not it would be revealed through my methods.

Reflecting on the way I engaged with my mixed role, as both researcher and active participator, in the individual and group communicative exchanges, I was at first concerned that I was sometimes falling short of a 'correct' researcher stance; one of withdrawn neutrality. However, as many postmodern theorists explain (Fontana and Frey 2008, Gubrium and Holstein 1998, Sermijn et al 2008) there *is* no withdrawn neutrality in such methodology; rather the data collected is a construction of the researcher, her questions, the participants, and how they choose to respond. Although I may continue to be self-critical of my attempts to 'get it right' in terms of the role I played in interacting with the women in this study, I am ultimately far more interested in the data that was co-created through my relationships with the women in the project than I could be in the data that a greater attempt at withdrawn neutrality on my part might have inspired. According to Skeggs, "validity is not just based on rigour, standards, responsibility and recognition of situatedness and partiality, but also on the connections that are made in the relationships established" (1997:34). I feel confident that I was able to establish a genuine rapport with all of the women in the project, and through this, an interacting space that may not have been neutral, but was definitely revealing. As Gubrium and Holstein suggest, the authentic

narrative is not essential or transcendent, but is locally attained, through authenticity of practice (1998:178).

In the final analysis then, I am comfortable that what was and what might have been are likely not the same set of data, but also that neither set is superior to the other. Fontana and Frey find that: "Each interview context is one of interaction and relation, and the result is as much a product of this social dynamic as it is the product of accurate accounts and replies." (2008:121) The data set that was created in my project is the product of a series of unique events that were constructed by the circumstances of our interactions, and by the impact of our personalities on each exchange. They were also impacted by my role as a teacher in the language school the participants were attending, and an Australian-born speaker of English, along with their roles as women who had recently moved into Australia and were communicating in a language that was not yet their strongest. Our exchanges were robust and lively, often humorous, with women giving their opinions and advice, as well as revealing many details about their personal lives and histories, myself included. According to Gubrium and Holstein (1998):

> …teller and listener must work together to create the conversational environment in which a story might emerge. Indeed, listeners are often active co-participants in both the elicitation and production of stories, working with the machinery of ordinary conversation to shape storytelling. (Gubrium and Holstein, 1998:177)

My part in the qualitative data that emerged was not neutral, and I believe that the larger contribution to integrity and validity in qualitative research lies more in my revealing the context of data collection events, and my role in them, than in trying to contort myself into what is fundamentally a non-qualitative stance.

> Acknowledgement of the partiality of any research production is necessary before any claims for objectivity can be made. Objectivity, therefore, requires taking subjectivity into account. Objectivity becomes the means by which connections are made between different knowing subjects who are always located. (Skeggs, 1997:33-4)

Janesick (2003) also speaks to this when she says that one of the strengths of qualitative design is in the way that researchers take ownership of their partiality, and that the research is ideologically driven.

> The myth that research is objective in some way can no longer be taken seriously. At this point in time, all researchers should be free to challenge prevailing myths, such as this myth of objectivity. As we try to make sense of our social world and give meaning to what we do as researchers, we continually raise awareness of our own beliefs. (Janesick, 2003:56)

I initiated this project because I wanted to learn more about how women came into voice in a new language and society, but I went into it with a belief that new migrants to Australia must face enormous barriers to establishing their legitimacy; a belief no doubt informed not only through my work teaching in a settlement English program, but also by an historical understanding of my father's experience as a new migrant to Australia. As a feminist, I expected this struggle for legitimacy to be even more pronounced for women migrants, due to the gender inequalities I knew still to be present in Australian society (Turquet, 2011), and I expected the women's gendered identities to be created and enforced by the cultures and languages they had been socialised in. As a fellow human being, I felt it would be wrong of me to ask something of the women who joined the project without trying to give something of myself in return. I took opportunities to help the women network in Australian society, I passed on my knowledge of local systems and I advised them in their study and employment endeavours. In the case of two participants, I made contact with people I knew in relevant employment fields, to arrange communication about possible employment opportunities in that organisation. In the case of one participant, this step led to her gaining professional employment with a large company operating in her chosen field. During this process, I was asked to be a character referee, and was subsequently interviewed, in this role, by her potential employer. I had no qualms about any of this, because I saw my researcher role as including a responsibility to

intervene in the participants' lives, when they sought my involvement, and to make myself as useful to them as they were being to me in agreeing to participate in the project.

3.4   Data collection

Data collection for this project spanned a 22-month period, from June 2008 until March 2010. There were five distinct types of data collection activities carried out among the participants over this period; namely, a short written personal information questionnaire, semi-structured personal interviews, group discussion sessions, structured writing tasks and unstructured personal email communications. In addition, I collected data from my own involvement in the research process, in the form of extensive field notes and a journal of Thesisnotes, which I kept to record my thoughts and discoveries, my ideas for how the project should proceed, and electronic exchanges about the project that I had with colleagues and advisors. I also engaged in Cooperative Development (Edge, 2002) with a colleague, during the early stages of the project, in order to address some of the issues that arose around planning and design.

Of the ten women who agreed to participate, one woman withdrew after the first interview, eight women contributed during all stages of the data collection, and one woman, Julie, stopped attending English classes and participating in the project in person soon after the first interview, in order to help her husband establish a business, in line with the requirements of their business-stream permanent residence application process. Although Julie was not able to participate in the group discussion, email journal or final interview phases, she did remain in sporadic email contact with me, and I visited her during the data collection period. Her email communications with me, although only sporadic in frequency, were rich with information about the trials and tribulations of establishing a life in Australia, and she filled them with reflections on her work and family life here, as well

as some of her encounters in English. For this reason, I have included Julie's data in my analysis in places where the content is relevant.

3.4.1   Personal information questionnaire

At the beginning of the data collection, I gave each woman a short questionnaire that elicited background information regarding the woman's circumstances, including when she had arrived in Australia, her family circumstances, her personal and family language use, and her reasons for moving to Australia. Of the ten women who commenced participation in the project, eight completed this questionnaire. The remaining two, although contributing to the project until its completion, never submitted this, despite my reminders and entreaties. Not wishing to be too insistent, with any of the data collection methods, I did not, after a point, continue pursuing it.

3.4.2   Interviews

In the initial research plan, I had proposed conducting semi-structured personal interviews at the beginning and end of the data collection period, in order to bracket the collection period and see how the women's lives progressed over that time. I was particularly interested to note any shifts that might occur in their sense of self or their aspirations for life in Australia, after such a period of using English and living in Australia. The interviews were semi-structured, as a compromise between, on the one hand, a desire to allow the women a space to speak freely about themselves, to construct their own identities through narrative (Sermijn et al, 2008), and on the other, the need to find answers to some specific research questions about language learning and identity.

3.4.2.1 First interview

A total of ten initial interviews were conducted on the premises of Central between June and September 2008. Each interview ran for between one and one and a half hours, and was recorded on a digital voice recorder, then transcribed later by me. Immediately after each interview, I made field notes about the session that not only described the setting and participants, but also summarised the key points revealed and my impressions. The questions I asked during each interview were located within a broad temporal continuum, divided into present, past, and future. Although I made a list of draft questions that I wanted the interview to cover (see Appendix C) I did not work through these, but kept them as a guide for myself, to make sure that our discussion covered them (Mullany, 2006). Often the course of our discussion provided answers to these questions without my needing to ask them.

I began by asking each participant to tell me about her present life, and talk about what was important to her, as a woman. This opened up the opportunity for the participant to talk at length about the circumstances surrounding her move to Australia. As each woman spoke, I asked questions that arose for me, in response to what she was saying, and I made comments and/or shared relevant details from my own life. The resulting exchange was a dialogue, rather than a narrative monologue about the woman's life, but it was a dialogue that followed the direction of the woman's narrative.

A specific question that I had wanted to ask came from the study by Belenky et al (1986), which explored the process by which women 'came into knowing', through experience and learning. A question they derived from previous work by Gilligan (1977) that I found relevant to my own study was to ask each woman to describe herself, the kind of person she felt herself to be, in her own eyes, as opposed to the way she understood herself to be

viewed and described by others. I felt that it would be revealing of a woman's sense of self to hear how she answered this question, so in each initial interview I conducted, I made a point of including it. I also asked it during the final interview, to see if the woman answered it differently following the intervening period of living in Australia and using English.

After inviting each woman to talk about her present life, I moved the narrative into the past, by asking her to speak about her life growing up. The aim of this part of the interview was to create a space for the woman to talk about the things that were important in both her family life and in the lives of women in her country, both then and now. I responded to what each woman told me about her experiences growing up by asking more questions aimed at broadening the narrative to include comment on the experience of women in general, their subjectivities and aspirations in that society.

The final section of the interview focused on the future, and I asked each woman to talk about her aspirations and to imagine her life ten years on, with specific mention of how she thought she would be using English at that time. I planned to compare each woman's answers across the initial and final interviews, to explore the possible impact of language learning on her aspirations.

3.4.2.2 Second interview

Although I had only planned to interview each woman at the beginning and end of the data collection period, I ultimately conducted an extra series of interviews mid-way through the project, for reasons explained below (see 3.4.5). In early 2009, I conducted a second set of interviews that focused on the issues I had wanted to cover in the email journal. I interviewed six women in February, and two women in April 2009. Although some of the

women had written at least a small number of journal entries, I decided I should interview each woman, whether she had written an email journal or not. Seven of these interviews were conducted on the premises of Central, and one was conducted in the home of the participant, since she was no longer studying at Central. Each Central interview lasted between approximately forty minutes and one and a half hours, and the interview conducted in the participant's home lasted approximately two hours. The questions I asked related to the women's positive and negative experiences of using English in Australia and to any changes they could perceive in themselves from living in Australia and using English (see Appendix C). For each interview encounter, I wrote fieldnotes immediately afterwards. I listened to each interview, transcribed six of them myself, and engaged a professional transcriber on two.

3.4.2.3 Final interview

Between August 2009 and March 2010, I interviewed eight women for a final time, to inquire about their present life, language use, sense of self and plans for the future. The interviews were spread over this long time period to ensure that each woman's final interview was conducted approximately the same length of time after her initial interview, other commitments notwithstanding.

Prior to each interview, I drafted a list of questions that I wanted the interview to cover, and while there were elements common to all, each list was tailored to that woman's circumstances, insofar as I picked up on things that she had said during earlier discussions or interviews, in relation to issues around English, Australian society, work or family life, and asked her for comment or updates.

These interviews were conducted outside of Central, with two of them being conducted in nearby cafes, at the suggestion of the participants, and five conducted in the home of the participant. The interviews ranged in length from approximately one hour to two and a half hours. An eighth participant, Kumiko, was not able to meet for the final interview, as she was by then on the verge of having her first baby. She was very reluctant to meet me, or anyone else, in person during this time because of an outbreak in Australia of the H1N1 (swine) flu virus, which coincided with the second half of her pregnancy. As this pregnancy had been much awaited, and only came about after many IVF procedures, Kumiko was understandably quite protective of her health during the H1NI crisis; however, although she would not meet with me in person, she did agree to respond in writing to a list of interview questions. I sent her the list and she answered them on the document and emailed it back to me.

I wrote fieldnotes after each of the in-person interviews, listened to each recording and transcribed three of them. The remaining four interview recordings were transcribed by a professional transcriber.

3.4.3   Group discussions

The second phase of the data collection involved a series of six group discussions I convened at roughly one-month intervals, with a break over the Australian summer holiday, between August 2008 and April 2009. In my original recruitment for the project, I suggested that the discussion group might be a chance for women to meet with other women and get some English speaking practice in the presence of an English teacher. When I initially met with the first women who joined the project, I said that if they wanted me to correct their use of English, in either spoken or written exchanges, they were welcome to request this. I encouraged them to use my skills as an English teacher if there

was anything they needed help with in their studies, and reminded them about all the ways that they were helping me by agreeing to participate in the project. I was hoping to find ways that we could help each other, rather than their participation in the project being a one-way street, and I reminded them on a number of occasions during the project to use me as a resource. Only two of the women asked me for assistance and feedback on written English, in spite of the fact that all but one of them expressed a lack of confidence in their written English, and specifically in their knowledge and use of English grammar.

Prior to Discussion One, I planned a series of topics that I wanted to cover, then typed an information sheet (see Appendix D) that explained my goal in initiating the discussion group and listed the proposed topics. I sent this list to the participants ahead of the first session, so that they had an idea in advance of what I had in mind. A couple of days before our arranged meeting, one of the participants sent me a document in which she had responded in writing to the proposed discussion topics. I was surprised by this and wondered if she may have misunderstood my intention in sending a list of topics. However, I decided it was great to have her thoughts in written form, so merely thanked her for sending them. When we met for the first discussion, which consisted of three participants and me, another participant also gave me her (hand-written) responses to my proposed discussion topics. I kept these two written responses, and although at the time I did not ask the remaining women to complete a written response, by the end of the discussion group sessions, I was aware that one of the limitations of group work was that the group dynamics often precluded quieter women from being heard. With this in mind, and to account for the fact that one or two women had not been able to attend all sessions, in May 2009 I made a further bid at eliciting written data by asking the remaining women to respond in writing to the discussion topics. This resulted in two more actual responses and the continued promise of a third. From the remaining three women, no writing was

promised or submitted. This meant that, by the end of the data collection period, I had a total of four written responses to the discussion topics, along with a set of five recordings from our lively and enjoyable meetings.

3.4.4   Writing task

One of the aspects of identity I was interested in exploring was its expression in the ways we aspire, or imagine our future. In undertaking transglobal, transcultural migration, I felt that the participants must have had aspirations for how their life would unfold in a new language and society. Inspired, myself, by the methods in Norton's (Norton-Peirce, 1993) study of women migrants to Canada, I wanted to set an essay task about aspirations, and to do this at both the beginning and end of the data collection period, in order to see if the participant's aspirations might have changed after the intervening period of language learning and socialisation.

At the initial meeting I had with the first six participants, I gave them the essay task (see Appendix E) along with the personal information questionnaire, and asked them to complete the essay task and bring it to their first interview. With the four additional participants who joined the project later, I gave them the essay task at their first interview and asked them to hand it in to me as soon as they had completed it. When I interviewed each woman for the final time, approximately fifteen months later, I gave her another copy of the essay task and asked her to write a response for me. I included a stamped, addressed envelope and asked each woman to mail her response to me.

In total, I received five initial essays and four final essays, including one surprise contribution from the woman who had previously avoided writing. I can only reiterate that most of the women seemed a bit reluctant to respond to structured writing tasks, in spite of,

or perhaps because of, the fact that they were all, at the time of commencing the project, completing a Certificate III English course in the AMEP, which included instruction and assessment in a range of formal and informal writing genres.

3.4.5   Email journal

When the discussion group sessions began, in August 2008, I asked the women to undertake an email journal during academic Term 4 (a ten-week term running from October to December 2008). I had typed up an information handout about the email journal (see Appendix F) and gave one to each woman, along with a verbal explanation of what I had in mind. Each woman agreed to participate, and I reminded them again when Term 4 began. As the term unfolded, I noted that I was receiving very few journal entries, so I gave another friendly reminder. The women all were apologetic, and promised to write soon. I know they had busy study and testing schedules in their English program at Central, so I did not want to harass them about the journal. However, by the end of that term, with only a small number of journal entries received, and all of these from only three participants, I began to realise that I needed to rethink this stage of the data collection, as it clearly was not working according to my original plan.

After much thought, I decided that a way around the problem would be simply to interview each woman and ask her to address in spoken encounter, the experiences I had asked her to report on in writing. Although I realised that a single interview encounter would not produce the same set of data as a series of journal entries made over time, I felt that there might still be a chance of capturing some of the thoughts and feelings I had wanted each woman to reflect on.

3.4.6   Electronic communications

Throughout the project period I engaged in email communication with almost all of the participants. With the exception of one woman, they were quite happy to communicate with me in casual emails, and the woman who seemed to avoid writing almost entirely would every so often call me to tell me some exciting news or to ask how I was. In this way, I was able to maintain an ongoing informal relationship with each woman, which involved communication beyond the parameters of the immediate project. For each participant, I created an email folder, where I placed all of our communications. I later pasted the contents to word documents, organised by month, and kept these in a folder associated with my project. In addition to email communication, I also engaged in texting exchanges with six of the women. We texted each other to arrange meeting for interviews, discussion groups, coffee or lunch, as well as to greet each other at significant moments.

Early in the project, at the separate urging of two group members, I set up a Facebook account, and engaged in communication with not only those two women, but also with two more who had Facebook accounts. As a result of this, I was able to share photographs, news and information with all four of these women. In addition to having Facebook accounts, two of the women had blog spaces, and they invited me to check these out. One of them had a single, English blog and the other had two blogs, one in English and the other in Japanese. I accessed the English blogs of both of these women and asked the Japanese woman to explain why she had two blogs, and what she communicated on her Japanese blog. She explained this to me in both spoken and written exchanges.

3.5   Data analysis

My handling of the entire data set took the form of a modified inductive analysis, by which I mean that, rather than following the analytical procedures of, for example, grounded

theory (Glazer and Strauss, 1967), in which a large number of open codings are noted and then afterwards collapsed into more general categories, I began my analysis by sorting into conceptual groupings at an intermediate level, and then further analysing these groupings in detail to identify themes. It made sense to do this for two reasons. Firstly, I had not conducted an open investigation of the migrant experience, but began with a set of research questions that not only established the parameters of my inquiry but also influenced the shape of my discovery. Secondly, I was working with a large body of narrative data, collected over an eighteen-month period, so organising it initially under intermediate level headings, based on my research questions, facilitated my first-stage data analysis.

This first stage consisted of isolating segments of interaction and arranging each one under the research question it responded to, creating a separate document for each participant. When this analysis was complete for each participant, I then conducted a second stage of analysis, which was an inductive treatment of the data segments in the Stage One analysis. After grouping relevant sections of the Stage One analysis under the broader headings, Australia, English, and Pre-migration society, for each participant, I then summarised the issues that came out of each data set. This enabled me to identify thematic groupings across participants.

The Stage One and Stage Two analyses, outlined above, resulted in the decision to treat post-migration identity in terms of three domains for articulations of the self – the self in key family relationships, the self in social interactions, and the self in work. These three domains, where identities are constructed and performed, provide the titles for the resulting analysis chapters, and further analysis led to the establishment of chapter sub-headings to reflect thematic groupings that emerged from the findings in each domain. Broadly speaking, these are Language, Race, and Gender, with some more domain-specific sub-

headings emerging from each. At times, it was apparent that a finding did not relate to one category alone, but was intersectional across two or even three thematic categories. For example, the question of language insufficiency in the Australian labour market intersected with race for a number of participants (see 7.2), and both gender and language intersected in the impact of transnational migration on primary gender roles (see 5.3.1). In an organisational sense, I dealt with such findings by including the issue under one thematic category, but analysing it as intersectional.

The writing of each chapter took me back, repeatedly, to the Stage One analysis to draw the data segments that exemplified particular themes. My aim in all of this was to attempt to provide as detailed a picture as possible of the participants' post-migration settlement trajectories, and to forefront their reporting of it. In each of the three resulting analysis chapters, which follow, I first take a theme-based approach, dealing with issues relating to language, race, and gender by elaborating the theme and drawing on one or two specific women as examples. Some of the issues cut across all participants, others differentially; however, taken as a whole they are revealing of the kinds of transformations of the self that can accompany transnational migration involving language change. Following this, I explore post-migration language, race and gender issues as they relate to a single participant, who I identify as a focal case of this aspect of settlement. By doing so, I aim to use the depth of my general, study-wide treatment of specific issues to generate a thick description of an individual case.

3.6   Summary and limitations

In this chapter I have located my qualitative research within the poststructuralist feminist tradition of narrative inquiry, defending the relevance of this methodology with reference to the need for women migrants to discursively construct themselves, rather than be

constructed. I have also discussed the relevance of multiple data collection modes and settings to the study of identity, along with the need for flexibility in adjusting the design to suit the participants. In addition, I have outlined the role of the participant-as-agent in the creation of data, as well as the stance of the qualitative researcher, who, rather than striving to attain an impossible objectivity, must instead detail her subjectivity, and its influence on the co-construction of meaning between researcher and participants.

This kind of research endeavour is complicated when the researcher is trying to achieve an image of a woman's sense of self as it is impacted by moving into new language settings, the narrative communication of which requires an ability not only to act, but also to reflexively enact the self, in a language that may not yet be the voice of the self. I feel that I asked a lot of the women who participated in the project, because I asked them many questions about their lives and how they felt about moving to Australia, and into English, and I asked them all of this in a language they had not yet fully claimed as their own - English. Sometimes I asked them questions they did not understand well enough, or could not answer in a way that satisfied their sense of who they could be in the language of their mature adult self. I also asked them to write, in English, about what they were experiencing and how they felt about this. I cannot be certain that the ways the women were able to articulate their experiences in English were what they would themselves consider to be representational. However, they constitute and communicate the data collecting events and in that sense, they represent an intersectionality of gender, language, place and time.

CHAPTER FOUR – PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

4.1   Introduction

In this chapter I will introduce the nine women who participated in my project. When I interviewed each woman for the first time, I asked her to tell me about her life now, and what was important to her, as a woman. This meant that the information revealed was dependent on how each woman interpreted the notion of 'importance' in relation to her life as a woman. I also asked her in a similar way to comment on her pre-migration life and to describe herself to me, giving a sense of the person she felt herself to be. The resulting dialogues varied considerably in their topic focus, from woman to woman, and this is reflected in the variable content of each short biography.

In order to protect their identities, I have used pseudonyms when writing about each woman. Early in the project, I asked each woman to choose a pseudonym for me to use, but most women did not respond to this until prompted by me towards the end of data collection. Where they did respond, I have used their name choice, and in the case of women who did not choose a name, I have created one for them. I actually found this difficult to do, because to impose a pseudonym felt like making each woman seem like a notion rather than a person, as though I were creating her on the page. I also found it hard to imagine the woman, hear her voice in my head, when the name I should call her was not the one I knew her by.

In the following pages, I will introduce the women in alphabetical order, providing a snapshot of each woman's background, including her family and formative experiences, and the circumstances surrounding her move to Australia. For consistency, each biography is organised under the sub-headings Background, Life as a woman, and Migration. I have

included direct quotes from each woman's narrative, in order for the reader to get a better feeling for the person in the words - to hear her voice.

4.2   Anna

4.2.1   Background

Anna was born in Serbia in 1973. Her family was originally from Slovakia, her grandparents having ended World War I in what came to be part of Yugoslavia, after the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. By the time Anna and her sister and brother were growing up, they were living in a predominantly Slovakian community in what is now Serbia. She spoke Slovakian at home and was educated in Slovakian during her primary years of schooling and Serbo-Croatian in her secondary years.

Anna described her upbringing as 'normal', in spite of being from a Slovakian family. Sometimes, in Serbia, she explained, there is animosity towards Slovakians, and this was particularly true during the 1990s war, but she did not experience that.

> I have normal life, you know, my mother, grandmother… my grandmother stayed at home, you know, cook for us because my mother must go to work, you know, but …er… somebody stay with you and it was good, you know. My going to school, you know, primary school, I finished 8 years primary school and 4 years secondary school and I go to university and I finished, but I finished just college, but it's enough for me… (Anna, Interview One, June 2008:6)

After graduating from high school, Anna went to college to study electrical engineering, motivated not by a strong desire to work in this field, but because her best friend was going to study there.

4.2.2   Life as a woman

Anna described herself as an active person, but one who is quiet, by nature.

> I don't wanna speak a lot, just if I must do, I will. I prefer to listen people, you know, and I am…I am not very… hmm, how can I say it… not a very big person, you know. I'm just a normal person… (Anna, Interview One, June 2008:3)

On finishing her college diploma and entering the workforce, Anna discovered that

there were some barriers she had not considered to gaining employment in a male-

dominated field.

> Anna: It's very difficult in my country because, er, hmm, difficult for a
>   woman, because er, do some things that man must do, like, er, it's, er,
>   people they are, er, how can I say, suspicious, you know…
> Donna: ...suspicious?
> Anna: Suspicious, yes. And, er, just to look on you, you are a woman, you can
>   do man's job, you know…
> Donna: ...you 'can't' do it… that's what they say?
> Anna: Yeah, you can't do it. And it's, er, very, er, difficult for woman to find
>   job, er, because it's, er, everything they are not settled down you know,
>   there and they must put everythings in order, you know…
> (Anna, Interview One, June 2008:5)

> You must do manual works and all works, and you must bring your tools and drive
> the car and everything and when they, er …er, look on me… 'hmm, you are a
> woman,' you know, 'where are your muscles?', you know (LAUGHS).
> (Anna, Interview One, June 2008:7)

While working in this kind of environment, Anna began to reflect on what it meant to be a

woman, and she came to realise that, for her, it included being a wife and a mother.

> […] because when I was younger, er, people just told me you are woman, but you
> know, we are same, you know, mans and woman we are equal, you know, but I'm
> realise, er… and I study electrical science; it's man's job, you know, and in my
> country people was so surprised, you know, woman in man's job. Hmm
> (LAUGHS). That's strange, you know, for them, but I act like man, you know,
> because I was in man's company, you know, and I always do some man's things
> and I must make go with my tools, you know and fix something and people just
> look at me 'are you woman or man?' you know.…
>
> […] and I realised later that, er, that I am woman, you know, and I would like to do
> some things that woman do, you know, not, er, not man's job and man's things and
> I start to wear skirts, you know (LAUGHS) and my friends, they are very surprised,
> you know (LAUGHS). "Skirts? What happened with you", you know? (LAUGHS)
> And I start to teach children, you know, and I… I learn cook something, you know,
> and er… er … in that time I thinking about maybe I should married, you know, er, I
> was about 25 maybe…
> (Anna, Interview One, June 2008:3-4)

Prior to this, Anna had not given any thought to the idea of being somebody's wife or

being a mother ("I think I'm enough for myself"), but now she did.

…and I realise that I can find myself in some things, you know, that woman can do, you know, can be a good mother, or be a good wife, you know, to my husband and we can find peace, you know, when he, er, do some works for me, I can do something for him, you know. I realised that I wanted to marry, you know (LAUGHS).
(Anna, Interview One, June 2008:6)

4.2.3   Migration

Anna moved to Perth in November 2007, at the age of 34, after marrying an Australian man from a Croatian family. Her husband, who was born and raised in Australia and speaks Serbo-Croatian and English, was on holiday in Serbia when he met Anna at the house of a mutual friend. What began as a friendship grew into romance over the course of his next holiday in Serbia a year later, and on a third trip back, he asked Anna to marry him.   Anna said that, prior to meeting her husband, she had never thought about moving to Australia, and she described the change in her life course that meeting him brought about as like 'thunder'.

For the first two months of being in Australia, Anna said she stayed home because she felt too nervous to go out into a world where everyone would expect her to use English. She had studied English for two years at university, the first year as a beginner and the second to support her science course.

…it was good experience because I have a good teacher and they have a patient [patience] in class, and I like it, but it's not enough. You know, you have a two classes during the week, you know, and it's mean, I don't know, you have a hundred classes in the year and it's not enough for you to learn English and nobody…usually nobody can speak English, you know, with you. I mean conversation, you know. And we learn some grammar, you know, reading, writing, but conversation was bad, you know, and when I must …when I come here and must speak English, you know, it was hard for me because I can write something and read something but when I must, er, er …connect the words in the sentence, you know, it's difficult for me (LAUGHS).
(Anna, Interview One, June 2008:8)

Initially, Anna's husband and his family spoke Serbo-Croatian to her, so that made life easier at home – in fact, her mother-in-law communicates solely in Serbo-Croatian within

the family, and her kids reply to her in English. However, ultimately, Anna knew she

would need to speak more than Serbo-Croatian.

> […] in the beginning, when I come here, we just talk my language, you know, and
> after while, I just realised, wait a minute, if I just talk my language, I'm very
> limited, you know. I'm confused when I have to answer form; I'm confused when I
> have to go to the shop, you know, and it's something basic, you know.
> (Anna, Interview Two, February 2009:2)

So Anna decided to enrol in the AMEP, and began attending English classes, which she

found very rewarding, because it helped make her feel a sense of belonging.

> […] because if you don't have a … that basic confident, you know, you will just…
> you will feel isolated, but when you start to meet people, you know, and talk with
> them and having new friends, you know, it's different, you know, and especially
> here [at AMEP], you can find, er, so many people similar like you are, you know,
> but they are just from another country, you know. And you just feel like: 'oh, there
> is people like me!' you know. They don't know English so well, you know, and
> they can live here, you know and … (Anna, Interview Two, February 2009:17)

By the time we met for her final interview, Anna had completed her settlement entitlement

in the AMEP and was heavily pregnant with her first child. Her immediate plan was to

concentrate her energy on being a full-time wife and mother, with a view to pursuing a

career in school teaching at a later date, when her kid/s were older.

4.3   Julie

4.3.1   Background

Julie was born in Singapore in 1956. She is a Chinese-Singaporean, is married to a fellow

Singaporean, and has three school-age children. In Singapore, Julie had grown up in what

she describes as a village, along with several older siblings. Although her older sisters

attended Chinese elementary school, Julie's mother had signed her up to attend an English-

medium school which had recently opened in their neighbourhood. Julie explained that the

schools would send representatives to households to persuade parents to send their kids to

a particular school, and the English school had managed to persuade her mum to send Julie

there. As a result, Julie had some 12 years of English-medium education, while her sisters had had Chinese-medium schooling. Comparing Chinese schooling to her experience in the English-medium school, Julie said she was "lucky" her mother sent her there:

> So, just lucky, but we don't… we don't get… because teacher is a very frightening person, you know. For us, I don't know, but because we are Chinese, you know, we are to respect the teacher [in the Chinese school]. We are not to speak before her unless spoken to and this kind of thing, you know? But English school are more easy… not so strict, so I enjoy my school very much.
> (Julie, Interview One, June 2008:21)

4.3.2   Life as a woman

Julie's memories of growing up a girl in a small Singaporean village where everyone knew everyone else, include playing with other girls and boys, being referred to as her father's daughter, as other children were, and of an unusually (for a girl) carefree life, with few gender-based restrictions.

> So, life for women… usually ladies they stay at home. The small, small kid, they don't go running about with boys, but I am a little bit different, you know, because when we were young, my mother have this hawker business, so I have been doing … helping a lot, hawkering… hawkering, so naturally I mix around with all the boys and all the girls, you know, then so I don't… I don't understand those girl in skirts (LAUGHS).
> (Julie, Interview One, June 2008:15)

After Julie got married, she worked part-time managing her husband's store; however, when they began a family, Julie stopped working outside the home and became a full-time mother and homemaker for the next thirteen years, until they moved to Australia. Although she had a maid, Julie preferred to be involved in the raising of her children, rather than going out to work and leaving them in the care of the maid. She and her husband believed that it was better for young children to be with their mother than to have a maid act as surrogate mother.

In response to a request to describe herself, Julie said that she is a "very jovious person". I asked her if she meant 'jovial', and she replied:

Jovious… like, I'm very happy, and then when I laugh, I laugh out loud, you know? Um… I can say I'm rather bright, um… I like meeting people.
(Julie, Interview One, June 2008:9)

I asked her how she knew she was bright, and Julie replied as follows:

Ok, if somebody says that "Oh, you Singaporean"… you know, that kind of thing, then I would think, not only Singaporean. Singaporean is ok, what's wrong with being Singaporean? We think all the good thing about being a Singaporean, you know. We live in a small country with all kind of culture there, so we get to know more than you… […] so I think that way.… So, I think that is the way I think I'm bright. When there is a problem, I just feel that there must be a way out, but I don't know where… you know. So, I first look around… see which way I can get out.
(Julie, Interview One, June 2008:9)

When I asked her if she thought of herself as a positive person, Julie replied:

I was been told that I am a very happy person. Many people has told me: "Whenever you're there I can feel laughter". (Julie, Interview One, June 2008:9)

When I pressed her to say how she thought of herself, Julie said:

Actually, basically, I like messing around. I think I like to read books. I like reading. I like find talks about people, to really go out, to mix around. I'm rather lazy. Maybe I mix around a lot in my past life… you know, I always am among people, so when times that I am alone, I like to stay alone. I can stay alone and I will never feel lonely, you know, that kind of thing. That's what I am. When it's time to be with people, I enjoy everybody's company, but when… when I am alone, I want to be alone. I'm happy being alone. (Julie, Interview One, June 2008:9)

4.3.3 Migration

After coming on holiday to Australia, Julie's husband decided they should emigrate,

because he was attracted by what he perceived to be the relaxed Australian lifestyle.

Initially I agreed with my husband's idea of this migration is because I like the weather here. Another attraction is the slow and peaceful lifestyle, a house with a backyard where I can built my small vegetable or flower garden. While my kids are in school, I can spend my time drinking my coffee and reading my books, at the same time planning the menu of our meals. When, kids are big enough, then we can retire comfortably in a home to enjoy our retirement. (Julie, first essay task, June 2008)

Julie and her family migrated to Australia in 2008, arriving at the end of January. They had

been accepted as business migrants by DIAC, which meant that their permanent resident

status was conditional upon buying or setting up a business in Australia within a fixed

period after entry. When they arrived in Australia, Julie was surprised to discover that the

80

Australian government expected her and her husband to attend English classes, as part of their settlement process.

> So when I was asked to have English lesson with AMEP, I was surprised and was reluctant to attend. I had 12 years of English studies in my country, what is there more for me to learn at this age. Who bother with a women at this age. My obligation to this country is to be running a business to qualify us for the Permanent Residence, that is all. Why bother with English lesson. (Julie, first essay task, June 2008)

However, when she came to register at the AMEP, Julie was touched that her name was in the system and she was expected.

> Firstly, when we called at the Central TAFE to report for class, we were surprised that we are in the system. We were told that we were expected since the day we were given the visa. It gave us a feeling that we are belonged to some programmes. (Julie, first essay task, June 2008)

During the short time she was at the AMEP, Julie began to perceive a bigger relationship of engagement and commitment between herself and the society she had entered, claiming, of her initial response: "I realised I was wrong".

> You asked me what's my plan and dreams for my future life in Australia. I cannot tell you now because what I had planned a easy and lazy lifestyle do not seem fair to me any more. I know there should be a way for me to contribute to this community though I may not know precisely how and what but believe me, what I had learned in this programme is not going to be in vain. (Julie, first essay task, June 2008)

Soon after joining my research project, and after attending the AMEP for just under two terms, Julie stopped attending English classes, because her husband had bought into a Thai food stall in a large retail shopping mall and she needed to help him get the business established. Since her English was already close to what is considered 'functional' in DIAC terms (she was enrolled in Certificate III), Julie and her husband decided that she should stop attending classes altogether and work full-time in the food stall, while he would continue to attend his lower level AMEP class, as well as work the business. Even though she did not attend the discussion group sessions or any subsequent interviews, Julie did email on a number of occasions to report on her life, and I went to visit her at the

shopping mall. We continued to have sporadic email communication over the course of the project.

4.4 Kumiko

4.4.1 Background

Kumiko was born in Japan in 1975. She grew up in a small city just outside of Tokyo, and has one sister. Kumiko did not talk much about her family, but when she spoke of her schooling experience, she expressed quite negative emotions about the Japanese social system.

> I wouldn't send my kid in…to Japan, because I had such a bad time when I was kid. Whole school…up to high school. […] I really hated it.
>
> I never talked ..ah…to other kids. I hated it, but I was pretend to be good student. I was always best student...but actually I hate teachers ('HATE' IS SAID QUITE VEHEMENTLY)… but teacher always pick me for …you know, difficult work. (Kumiko, Discussion One, August 2008:26-27)

After high school, Kumiko studied ancient history at university, because she was interested in that subject.

> […]after I finished university, I have started to work at a travel company doing data entry and three years later I stopped because I started wondering what is my life going to be. So maybe I should take a little adventure[↗]. Then quit job and came here for working holiday. (Kumiko, Interview One, June 2008:9)

Kumiko stayed in Australia for ten months, during which time she met and began a relationship with the man who is now her husband. An Australian by birth, Michael had been teaching English in Japan, but was back in Australia recovering from a snowboarding injury. When they met, Kumiko and Michael were both working in Perth for Nichigo, an education agent, but when her visa was about to expire, they decided to move back to Japan together, where they spent the next six years. Michael worked as an English teacher in the Japanese school system and Kumiko worked in IT. She is a self-taught certified Microsoft systems engineer, which she says is a "very big" qualification in the IT industry.

4.4.2 Life as a woman

Kumiko described herself as a shy person who takes a bit of time to get to know new

people, especially in Japanese.

> Well, when I get to know, um, them well, I start…I'm not shy any more, but for
> first week, or first month I still think 'shall I speak in formal way, or casual way?'
> Can't decide. […] That makes me really shy I think.
> (Kumiko, Interview One, June 2008:3)

Kumiko said that when she was young she never thought about one day getting married

and having children:

> Ah well, most girls …um …um… say they want to be a… like bride, like a house
> person. […] so, I never thought that kind of thing. (Kumiko, Interview One, June
> 2008:10)

Instead, Kumiko dreamed of being an archaeologist, like Indiana Jones, or a writer of

suspense novels, or an astronomer.

> I always wanted to be, like, hard-core job.
> (Kumiko, Interview One, June 2008:10)

Her ideas about motherhood changed after she met her husband and by the time I met her

Kumiko was trying to become pregnant, via IVF treatment. At this point, the two goals of

work and motherhood were a bit in conflict, as Kumiko expressed when I asked her in our

first interview what being a woman meant to her. She found this a hard question to answer.

> Um… um, I don't know, being woman is… I think it's too hard because, like, I'm
> trying to build a career here, but you have to think about your family. Like, I want
> to build a career, but I also want to have a baby.
> (Kumiko, Interview One, June 2008:14)

Kumiko could not decide whether to focus on IVF, or on getting a job, because there was

no telling whether the IVF would work, in which case she would need to continue with

looking for a job. However, if the IVF were successful, she would be focusing on

motherhood, at least in the immediate future. Her expressed long-term goal was to work as

an IT systems engineer in Australia and, through paid work, contribute to the family income.

4.4.3 Migration

When we first met, in May 2008, Kumiko had recently migrated from Japan and was studying in the AMEP and looking for work in IT. After she completed her AMEP entitlement she took another English course, then a short IT course at Central, so that she could have a local qualification. Even though she was happy to be living in Australia and spoke of wanting to raise her children here, Kumiko also spoke at this time about moving back to Japan, where it might be easier to get work. After successful IVF treatment Kumiko became pregnant towards the end of 2008, but she still spoke about moving to Japan for work, in spite of the fact that the move to Australia in 2008 had been at Kumiko's suggestion and, as the following quote reveals, job prospects for women were not necessarily good in Japan either.

> Michael worked for a good private girls' high school in a prefecture in the northern part of Japan. It was a great experience for him, even if he was stressed out. But I couldn't have a good job there. I was just being a housewife. For women, having a decent job is hard especially if you are over 30 and living in countryside. So I wanted to build my career in Australia and Michael agreed it.
> (Kumiko, first essay task, May 2008)

By the end of 2008, Kumiko's husband had decided to enrol in a one-year Graduate Diploma in teaching, with a major in teaching Japanese, so they remained in Australia, keeping costs down by living with his parents in Perth. Everything went well during Kumiko's pregnancy, and she gave birth to a baby girl in September 2009. By the end of that year, Michael had completed his training and was soon offered a position as Japanese teacher in a high school in Mount Newman, a mining town in the far north west of Western Australia.

When I went to visit them in early December 2009, to meet their baby girl, Michael

expressed a little uncertainty about how things would go living in a small mining town.

Although he was familiar with that type of environment, having lived in a similar town as a

small child, when his dad worked in the mines, he was unsure how Kumiko would cope

with the isolation and the heat. However, Kumiko seemed happy for them to be moving

out of his parents' house and setting up their own home, now that they had a baby. She felt

the need to be independent from his parents, much as she had always enjoyed a good

relationship with them.

4.5 Lena

4.5.1 Background

Lena was born in Russia in 1964 and grew up in the communist era. She married her

childhood sweetheart at 18 and had her son at 20, while completing a university degree in

Telecommunications Engineering. Although she had also enjoyed languages in high

school, Lena decided that, apart from teaching, which she did not want to do, there was not

much scope for employment in that field.

At first, Lena worked as an engineer, moving with her husband, also an engineer, to the

Baltic Sea area while he did his two-year military service. Commenting on what life was

like during that time, Lena said:

> […] actually, it wasn't bad time, communist time. You were very secure, very
> safety with your future. I knew if I go to any university I will get a job. Yes, and I
> never worry because it was very good at school, so I even did not have any
> preference. So, just I was good in Mathematics, so I went to some… how call …
> some university … electrical… engineering and telephonering…[…] yes, it was
> Telecommunications Engineering, and yes, and then they sent me to work some
> institute, or to made projects for … for, ah telephoning stations…
> telecommunications station. So I work there a little bit…
> (Lena, Interview One, October 2008:3)

Then, after 1989, when business opportunities started to open up in Russia, things changed

for them both.

> […] before [military service] he worked as engineer for some very big factory, and
> he was good there, and they wanted him come back, but his friend invite him to
> business and when they came in, they came to our home and invite him from this
> factory, invite him for work, and he say: "No, if you pay me this sort of money" …
> but it was maybe like ten times, and when we came… and you don't know what to
> do with this money. When I say to my mother… once, I remember in taxi we
> was… we were three of us, my ex-husband, my mother and me on back seat, and
> she ask me: "Did he get his salary?" I said: "Yes" and he say … he [she] ask me:
> "How much?" And I show her five and she say: "Five hundred roubles?" and I say:
> "No, five thousand." But five hundred was big salary, but I say five **thousand** [per
> month]. (LAUGHS)
> (Lena, Interview One, October 2008:6)

At that time they were living in Novosibirsk, and Lena quit her job to stay home and focus

on being a mother, helping her husband now and then with administration duties in his

company. However, she was soon bored with this, so went back to university to study Law,

which she abandoned after a while because she did not find it interesting enough.

> I found it a little bit boring… to study Law you don't should be clever […] you just
> have to have good arse (LAUGHS). Just sit and sit and spend time in library, and
> read all these documents. (Lena, Interview One, October 2008:7)

After she abandoned Law, Lena completed a degree in Psychology and then:

> […] I just tried work with my ex-husband but it was not really interesting. It was
> trade company, and they trade, um, alcohol, so I didn't find it's interesting for me
> (LAUGHS). And, um, this time, my son… I brought him to tennis, and, um, it was
> very interesting. I start to play it myself, and all these changes came to tennis
> because before tennis was not really popular in Russia.
>
> […] and, um ah, it … it passed maybe some years. I played, and I took part in some
> tournaments, and knew a lot of people and then once director of… it was some
> tournament and I was member of tennis club and director of this tennis club say me:
> "Ah, you see all these politics [politicians], all these money bags? Why don't we try
> organise them to…" Actually, it was a tennis club, but don't use them to develop
> tennis and everything. I say: "Oh yes, it could be interesting." And so it was we
> started tennis federation in my city, so I worked as coordinator.
> (Lena, Interview One, October 2008:10)

Lena worked for the tennis club in Novosibirsk for some years, eventually becoming

Financial Director.

4.5.2 Life as a woman

Lena's experience of life as a woman in Russia can perhaps be divided into pre- and post-communist periods. According to Lena, communist Russia did not expect too much from women; they needed to have a good job, to contribute to the economy, but it didn't have to be a career. However, that changed with the end of the communist era. The rise in incomes in the immediate post-communist period brought enormous changes to the lives of men like Lena's husband, but it also brought change to women.

> […] very short time after this, everything was change for women. If your husband earns this money, why you go and spend all day for, I don't know, 130 roubles [per month]? Ah, that's what my salary was. (Lena, Interview One, October 2008:6)

For Lena, this meant an end to engaging in low-paid work that she did not really feel a strong commitment to and the beginning of a period of focusing on being a wife and mother and also continuing with post-secondary study. Giving her opinion of the objectification of Russian women in the post-communist era, Lena said:

> Now, expectation has changed so much. Actually, I think it's high standard in Russia, because women should be, ah… have be beautiful (LAUGHS), slim, very, um, beaut… take care of…[…] Physically perfect… perfect! (LAUGHS) And clever, and it's nice if she has good career, but not all the time, but it's… it make you more, um, more interesting person, maybe. […] Everybody: "Oh, she not only beautiful, she… she's clever!" (Lena, Interview One, October 2008:4)

When I asked Lena what being clever meant to her, she said a sharp and flexible mind. So I asked her how she would describe her personality.

Flexible and sharp! (LAUGHS LOUDLY). (Lena, Interview One, October 2008:8)

She says she could learn and remember things really easily and she had discovered this experientially.

4.5.3   Migration

During the years she was working for the tennis club, Lena's first marriage ended and she

met her second husband, an Australian property developer who was in Moscow on

business.

> I met my husband in Moscow. He travelling there … travel there and I went to, I
> think it was Kremlin Cup tennis tournament… international tennis tournament…
> and we just met and talk and then start email to each other and call and so on
> (SMALL LAUGH). So, I never dreamed about Australia… if I would like move, I
> would like move somewhere to Europe, because yes, I think for Russians it's very
> important …culture and history[↗]. (Lena, Interview One, October 2008:1)

After they met, in 2004, Lena and her husband kept in touch by email and visited each

other when they could. Eventually they married, having decided they wanted to be

together, and in 2008, Lena came to join her husband in Australia. The first year was really

interesting for her, because there were so many new things to see and do, people to meet.

Her husband owns race-horses, as a hobby, and Lena accompanied him to horse-racing

events around the country, which she enjoyed socially, but viewed with some amusement,

as she saw the whole endeavour to be a bad financial investment. She also continued her

interest in tennis, joining a local club and playing in social competitions. She made friends

with people she met in her husband's racing circle, and at the tennis club.

By the time I met and interviewed Lena for the first time, in October 2008, the excitement

of discovering a new place was beginning to wear off.

> I looked everything around me and it become boring (LAUGHS). I … suddenly I
> realised this is so quiet place, and in my city I have so active life because my
> girlfriend she is in fashion business and she always invite me to all parties.
> (Lena, Interview One, October 2008:14)

By this time, Lena had made some connections, through her husband, with people who

gave her ideas for possible business ventures. One idea she had was to establish herself as

an event organiser, which was what she had done in Russia, for the tennis club. She had a

lot of experience organising lavish gala events, and could see a possible market for her

skills in Australia. Lena did not feel she had to work for financial gain, but in order to add meaning and purpose to her life. However, she still felt too insecure about her English skills to be able to engage in a work capacity at a level that would satisfy her. So, instead, she completed her AMEP entitlement, after which she went on to do further academic English study at Central throughout 2009, while continuing to look around her for inspiration for future business ventures.

During the course of her involvement in this research project, Lena's satisfaction with her life in Australia improved, especially after a visit back to Novosibirsk in 2009, where she was able to compare aspects of the physical and social lifestyle available in each place. By the time we met for our final interview, in December 2009, Lena was more upbeat about the choice she had made in moving to Australia. She was planning a visit to Russia for the birth of her first grandchild in early 2010, and although she had still not settled on a means of future employment, she was going to continue with part-time English classes, while enjoying her time with her husband, who is semi-retired.

4.6 Maria

4.6.1 Background

Maria was born in Brazil in 1971. The oldest of ten children of Chinese migrants, her first language was Chinese, which her parents then spoke exclusively, and she learned Portuguese when she went to school. Maria's mother was born and raised in Indonesia, while her father, who she talked about more, was born in San Ton, a small village in China near the North Korean border. When he was about ten years old, his missionary parents were taken by the Kuomintang to die in Siberia because of their Christian beliefs. Their now orphaned son was sent to the Kuomintang army, where he served for thirty years,

from the Kuomintang period to the early years of the Communist Party leadership in China.

> After 30 years the[y] released my father and their friends with almost 100 dollars. (It was a lot money!!). They bought a ship fare to go to Brazil. They left China and they want forget all the bad things they had to bear.
> (Maria, email communication, August 2009)

Maria's father moved to Brazil in 1958, and her mother, who came from Medan, migrated there in 1970. Maria labeled herself, growing up, as BBC, or "Brazilian born Chinese".

> […] since I was a child, my mom said to me I am not Brazilian but Chinese. I remember when I went to school I was told I am not Chinese but Brazilian, however I was a child and I believe in my mom words. I am Chinese.
> (Maria, email communication, August 2009)

Within her first year of being at school, Maria learned to communicate in Portuguese, and she soon stopped speaking Chinese, even with her parents. Her parents, however, did not speak Portuguese, so this made generational communication difficult for Maria's family, with the ten children all making the shift to Portuguese, once they had started formal schooling. Maria said that, even after decades living in Brazil, her parents still didn't speak Portuguese.

> Oh, it's so difficult because… um, sometimes my parents very frustrated, and me too, because…er… don't have a good relations and don't have … how to say… you can't speak… (Maria, Interview One, June 2008:7)

Maria did develop her use of Chinese again, as an adult, when she began importing and retailing goods made in China. This really pleased her parents, in particular her father, because she was then the only one of his children who could communicate with him in his language.

> […] my father say I am a good daughter because I can speak Chinese very well…
> (Maria, Interview One, June 2008:21)

However, when she later sold her businesses in Brazil and moved to Japan to join her husband, Maria said that her parents and siblings, who she had always supported financially, were angry with her.

90

I… finally I realised my family is not worry about me, but about my money and I give money… "Ok, you want? I give it". And I bought a big farm to them…
(Maria, Discussion Three, October 2008:19)

[…] I don't have any responsibilities and any ties with my family… and I left Brazil. (Maria, Discussion Three, October 2008:17)

This was how things stood until 2009, when Maria's father was dying of throat cancer and her family made contact with her again, primarily to ask her to formally renounce any claim she may have had on his estate. Maria obliged, but did not travel back to Brazil for her father's funeral, because:

[…] everybody say I not come back… "You're not so welcome."
(Maria, Discussion Three, October 2008:17)

4.6.2   Life as a woman

In written communication, Maria said she was a courageous person, and she spoke of this in relation to her ability to cope with migration and social exclusion. When I asked her in interview to describe herself, she said:

I am happy with me (LAUGHS). Yeah, um, I happy because I have a good married. I have a good daughter and, um, I thank God because I can come in here and settle down very well. (Maria, Interview One, June 2008:18)

Maria also spoke of the difficulties growing up in a migrant family in Brazil, and said her childhood was "work and work", since they were a large family with limited income.

My family didn't have enough money for food. My mom and dad want a big family but they didn't think the consequences for having a lot childrens. I am oldest and I have 6 sisters and 3 brothers. So, I had to grow up very fast. I had to help my mom and my siblings, changed, washed the nappies it was my routine. I was 9 years old when I got my first job… Chinese called 'dirty job' I had to wash the dirty dishes and serve customer …oooh I was waitress in a Chinese restaurant. It was good because I brought leftovers to my home.
(Maria, email communication, August 2009)

Maria worked at a range of different jobs while she was going through her teenage years and as a young adult she completed a college course in Interior Design and later a course in Legal Studies. In the logic of the way Maria described her own cultural heritage, she is married to a Brazilian born Japanese (BBJ) man, who she met while working for Motorola

in Brazil. When she was twenty-five years old Maria opened her first business, a retail surfware shop. From then, until she left Brazil at the age of thirty-two, Maria owned and managed a series of successful import-export companies, continuing to be heavily involved in running them even after the birth of her daughter in 1999.

In an essay she wrote early in the project, Maria compared her experience of being a woman in three different societies as follows.

> The women in my society, they are so independent, so confident. We can work, we have respect. I think Brazilian women and Australian women were very similar. But, these is not the same in Japan. Women and men receive different treatment. (Maria, written response to discussion topic, August 2008)

During our first interview, I asked Maria about gender equality in Brazil.

Maria:	Yeah, very equality…
Donna:	Equal opportunity.
Maria:	…very equality man's, very equality and woman's have a rights…the woman's very strong in Brazil and if …the woman's not afraid anything…if have a someone against, the woman will beat him…I don't know, because …I don't know why…I think Brazilian people… the heart is very impulsive[↗].
Donna:	Impulsive, yeah.
Maria:	Impulsive people, and if he doesn't likes…if she doesn't like something, she will talk: "I doesn't like this, this, this, this!"

(Maria, Interview One, June 2008:24)

4.6.3 Migration

In 1999, the company her husband was working for closed their Brazilian operation and transferred Maria's husband to the company headquarters in Japan. At first Maria and their young daughter did not accompany him to Japan, because of Maria's commitment to her own businesses in Brazil. However, after two years of living separately from her husband, during which time she had cause to reflect on what was most important in her life, Maria closed her businesses to move with her daughter to Japan, so that the family could be together. One of the things that helped make Maria decide to leave Brazil was the level of violence she saw in her native Sao Paolo. Twice, Maria experienced being held up and

92

robbed by armed assailants. The other deciding factor stemmed from the realisation that she was lonely and her relationships with people in Brazil were all based on commerce, rather than caring.

> […] because my husband wanna open my eyes. He said I'm blind, this time, because I always see money and sometimes, if a…the people comes with me, it's not my… because want to invite me to a restaurant or shop or something… want to ask me about business……Chinese people is very competitive person. Ah… want to know which factory, or which company you bought your things… how many money you get, how many this… you always talk about money, you always talk about business, you always talk about how… the cost your car. Never you talk about your friendship. You never talk about anything… never talk about you. How about woman… your feelings. Never. And these two years when me and my husband not stay together, we feel… I feel very lonely, because why I have money? Why I have career? And my daughter … ah, my daughter never know the father, because always pick up the phone, she always… "Oh, where is your father?" [Maria asked her this] She's point the phone.
> (Maria, Discussion Three, October 2008:20-21)

After they had been living in Japan for five years, Maria and her husband decided to emigrate again, this time to Australia, because her husband was very unhappy in his job, and Maria was also unhappy with life as both an outsider and a woman in Japan. As a result, her husband applied for skilled migration to Australia. He was accepted, and found a job soon after their arrival in March 2008, while Maria set about establishing a home in Perth for her family and settling their daughter in Japanese school.

Maria studied in the AMEP throughout 2008, during which time she considered a number of ideas for further study, professional employment, or business ventures. She became very involved in her daughter's school, as well as the local Baptist Church and the Community Centre, all of which helped her to create opportunities for social networking and community involvement.

4.7 Michiko

4.7.1 Background

Michiko was born in Japan in 1975. She described her upbringing, with one sibling - a younger sister - as "normal":

> I think I had normal life. I had…I went to school and private high school which is Catholic, which gave me different idea cos I'm not Catholic, I'm Buddhist.
> (Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:12)

After completing high school, Michiko attended college, where she studied Japanese art and culture. This choice was motivated by personal interest in the subject matter, rather than with a view to its employment potential; however, after completing the program:

> I thought like, oh, I had to find a job to… it's normal … adult people, yeah.
> (Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:12)

Before looking for work, Michiko went to visit a friend from high school, who was by then studying at university in the United States of America.

> […] while I was staying with her she was always speak English but sounds like… I don't know, sounds like really native. Yeah, she could communicate with almost other… with everyone, and I knew her from high school, but looks like she changed… like, I changed, same, but she changed a lot, so… oh, I don't know English affected her or not, but it's good to speak or good to… you know, have ability to speak English, to communicate with other people…
> (Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:13)

This experience of foreign travel and the beginnings of a desire for English (Piller and Takahashi 2006) were very important to Michiko, as they shaped her subsequent life choices, after her return to Japan:

> I thought… still thinking like, you know, abroad is good, abroad… er… overseas there is different world, different culture might I wanna look…
> (Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:13)

Acting on this desire to learn more about the world, Michiko made the decision to work part-time and travel abroad on her savings, rather than commit to a full-time job. She explained that, in Japan, it looks bad if you quit a full-time job after less than three years, because you should show long-term commitment to employment. By living at home and

94

only working part-time, Michiko was able to save money and travel overseas, without compromising her future employment prospects.

Over the next few years this was her pattern – she worked at part-time jobs in Japan, saved money, then went travelling. She travelled to a number of European countries, including England, and later, when she was back in Japan and thinking it was time to learn another language, she made the pragmatic decision to learn English.

> I felt like English is maybe easiest for me to learn, cos sounds like other languages [are] not familiar. But English I studied from junior high school and for six years. I'm not good at it, but still I remember some words, like 'how are you?' or something like that… so, yeah, might be English.
> (Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:14)

In 1998, Michiko returned to England and began studying English in Salisbury in a low beginner level class. She stayed there for a year and by the time she left Michiko was able to communicate with some confidence in English.

4.7.2   Life as a woman

Michiko described herself, with self-deprecating humour, as a "bossy" person, who sought leadership roles when she was growing up, for example, in her school:

> I think I wanted to control people. From when I was a kid, I wanted do, like, leadership[↗]. I was a kid, you know, like, we have to choose class leader, to make, you know, and I … usually I did. (Michiko, Interview one, June 2008:16)

An example she gave of this was her role in successfully advocating for changes in the school uniforms at her all-girl secondary school. Michiko also said that she is a good listener who, although she is opinionated, can be persuaded to change her opinion.

> Cos, um, new things come up, so… 'oh, might be good', so I change my opinion, but… yeah, um, quite flexible, I think, and interested in everythings, almost everythings. Um, and I … yeah, but I'm very short temper, too.
> (Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:5-6)

Michiko provided an example of her short temper in our first interview, when she was

explaining how she tried to make her husband-to-be understand why it was important to

her to retain her Japanese family name. She wanted him not just to accept her position, but

really understand how she felt, and at times it was difficult to find the words in English for

feelings she had in Japanese.

> Yeah, usually I don't think in Japanese… I don't translate in my mind when I speak English, but if I do, like, very serious situation and then if something I really wanna tell exactly, I have to think what word is best for… to tell… like for situation… but I can't find because, um, I studied English, but not that well… like feeling or something… Yeah, yeah, so I just throw slippers… I got frustrated in my mind … I can't tell… I go Waaaaaaaaaa!!! (Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:10)

Michiko said that, until she met her husband and came to live in Australia, she had not

considered having children, because she did not like the way that raising children in Japan

was so competitive.

> I didn't like children before but now, um, it's getting changed, um, from his [her husband's] opinion and the life… to live in here, cos in Japan we have to, um, push the children to study, study, study, but here it's different. You know, parents let them do what they want or they like, so… (Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:3)

When I asked her about her experiences as a woman growing up in Japan, Michiko spoke

about the pressure on women to marry, cease paid work and have children; however, she

distanced herself from this by referring to how she had left the country, and spoke instead

of her friend, who is the same age.

> Michiko: […] my friend …because I already left Japan but my friend working at a bank and when she start at the bank, I think she was 20 years old, she was front counter, but when she's getting old, very…her place was behind, behind, behind…
>
> […]
> Donna: How old is she now?
> Michiko: Same… 33. And she had to move a branch a lot, from her house, because …and I said to her, like "Why it's happen? Why you have to move all the time?" Like, every 3 years, or every 2 years, it's happen. And she say because the company doesn't want to…like her stay there longer, they wanna have fresh one, like new one…
> Donna: Just for women, or is it the same…?
> Michiko: Just for women. And she said…and, usually women get married and then stop, you know, quit the job and…

(Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:14-15)

Although in her early thirties when she joined the project, and married, Michiko was still very close to her family in Japan, even a little financially dependent on her parents, who had provided a large sum of money to help establish Michiko and her husband in a home in Perth and had bought a car for Michiko. In addition, on extended trips back to Japan, Michiko relied on her parents' financial support.

4.7.3 Migration

While she was studying in England in 1998, Michiko was told that Australia was a good country to visit, so after returning to Japan and working to save the money, Michiko came to Australia in 2002 on holiday. She began travelling by herself, but then met her current partner (they married in July 2008), who is an Australian by birth, and they travelled together for about ten months, after which she returned to Japan. Between this time and 2006, when Michiko returned to live in Australia, her boyfriend spent some time with her in Japan, where they both lived with her parents and worked.

In 2006, Michiko returned with her partner to live in Australia as a permanent resident, and since her English was quite fluent by this time (they communicate only in English), Michiko enrolled in a one-year childcare course at Central. After completing this, and deciding that she was not strong enough to work in childcare – she wrote about finding it difficult to lift the babies and change them on the change tables – and also that her English was not good enough for such work, Michiko decided to enrol in the AMEP:

> I realised I think I need grammar to find a job or communicate with native people
> and more writing. Actually, writing is my weak point, so I decide to come AMEP to
> study English… (Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:1)

When she still lived in Japan, one of the jobs Michiko had done was to work as a children's librarian, and when I first interviewed her, she indicated that she might like to

97

continue with this kind of work in Australia. However, during the project period, Michiko did not participate in paid employment in Perth, and she spoke often about the reasons why she could not actively seek work. These were related to her confidence with using English, her uncertainty about what kind of business or career to pursue, and her desire to make regular extended visits to her family in Japan. She was also, at times, ambivalent about the viability of her relationship and her commitment to remaining in Australia; although, by the end of the project, she was feeling optimistic about both.

4.8 Roxanna

4.8.1 Background

Roxanna was born in Iran in 1966. She is the youngest of three girls, whose father was a senior member of the armed forces under the Shah of Iran and whose mother is a homemaker. Her father died in 2005, and Roxanna spoke very warmly of their close relationship. Roxanna is also very close to her sisters and her mother. The oldest sister remains in Iran, living next door to their mother, while the middle sister emigrated to the United States of America 27 years ago.

When Roxanna was growing up, perhaps the most significant event that occurred was the Islamic Revolution, which happened when she was 12 years old, changing her family's way of life considerably. Since her father had worked for the Shah's regime, he did not find favour with the new Islamic theocracy, and when Roxanna became involved with the Communist Party youth movement, at the age of 13, her father pleaded with her to be careful and not make even more trouble for the family. The ruling Islamic government suppressed the communist movement, arresting the student leaders from her school, and closing the school. The leaders were jailed and then executed, and Roxanna and her family

had to move house, to a suburb far from where they had lived, in order to escape the association with this series of events.

4.8.2   Life as a woman

Roxanna said that their parents had encouraged her and her sisters to get a good education and have a profession. She studied Accounting at university, and it was while she was studying that she met her husband, who was a university teacher at the time, and a number of years older than Roxanna. She said he was, and still is, much admired and revered in his field, and he is currently managing director of a successful financial advising and investment banking company in Teheran.

In spite of her mother's advice not to quit her job after she had her first child, because she felt it was important for a woman to have a career outside the home, Roxanna did stop working as an accountant, after some five years, in favour of staying home to be a wife and mother.

> I work as an accountant and then I …um, in my pregnancy, and then my first son was very naughty and hyperactive and I couldn't continue my work, because I had to be with him. (Roxanna, Interview One, October 2008:4)

This decision was encouraged by her husband, who preferred his wife not to work outside the home, and Roxanna said she didn't really enjoy being an accountant anyway. She had wanted to study Psychology, but her parents had advised her to take Accounting instead, when she gained university entrance.

Roxanna was pregnant with their first child during the Iran-Iraq war, and she believes that the physical and emotional stress of living through that time, while pregnant, had an impact not only on her but also on her unborn child, who was challenging to parent when young and who was diagnosed in his teenage years as suffering from Attention Deficit

Disorder (ADD). Roxanna's second child, another son, is 8 years younger than the first, and Roxanna described him as easygoing and calm.

Roxanna spoke in negative terms about her experiences living in post-revolution Iran. In our first interview, she spoke about how women in Iran have no rights, and how often people are arrested in the street by the Islamic police and taken to prison. Roxanna experienced being arrested twice by Islamic police, once while shopping and the other while driving with a friend in her car. Roxanna said there were things she didn't mind doing for her country, such as wearing a headscarf, but:

> […] when I see my people, how much they suffer, so many things, and they can't say anything. The newspaper is for government, and government doesn't let the educated people to say about their opinion, it makes me very…gives me very bad feeling. (Roxanna, Interview One, October 2008:7)

Later in the same conversation, she said:

> I love Iran but I don't love government, **at all** (EMPHATICALLY STRESSED). Iran is very beautiful country, we have snow, we have ski resort near …it's very good. The people are very kind…everything…but the government is awful…
> (Roxanna, Interview One, October 2008:9)

During our first interview conversation, Roxanna described herself as a very sensitive person who can get angry easily, and also emotional.

> […] oh, everythings can make me cry! Um… […] and you … you don't know, when I see some cartoons and they are very sensitive about relationships, about they… when they lose their mother, their mother… oh, I [cry] and my son look at me: "What kind of person are you?" (LAUGHS), but ah… I think that I never felt that I'm 42. I always think that I'm 20, because I enjoy listening to music, pop music, rock music and trance…whatever. But my son laugh … laughs me: "Oh mum, you are …"

> […] and …em, I do… I like doing sports, every sport can satisfy me, and I want to go ahead. Nothing can stops me to reach it. Yes.
> (Roxanna, Interview One, October 2008:12-13)

When Roxanna said this, I asked her if she was ambitious, and she spoke about her desire to achieve something more than being "just housewife woman… does cooking" (Roxanna, Interview One, October 2008:13).

4.8.3   Migration

When Roxanna's first son was ready to go to university, the family decided that he would travel to live in Perth, to attend university there, and they were helped in this by the generosity of a childhood friend of Roxanna's husband, who had long ago come to live in Perth. Roxanna's older son initially lived with this family and began his university course. Roxanna visited her son in Perth on a number of occasions during his first couple of years of study, and in 2008 was persuaded by her husband that she should emigrate with their younger son to live there.

> We thought about it before…my husband insisted me, and try to convince me to stay here longer because of my children. I have two sons, and one of my sons came here when he was nearly to 17 and then … I have 12 years son…another, 12 years son…and my husband told me, he always told me: "You had an experience about my older one. We send him here because we didn't want him go to military, and you have to um get experi…repeat this experience again in the future because you have a 12 years son and you have to send him in four years time and it's better…it's the best time for him [now], because he can adapt himself for this situation". (Roxanna, Interview One, October 2008:2)

The move to Australia was seen by Roxanna as a move to a safer place for her sons. She said she is fearful about her sons doing military service in a country that is likely again to experience war, and she does not want them to continue living under such an oppressive government. Given the family's financial resources, Roxanna's husband applied for a Business visa to live in Australia, nominating himself as the primary and Roxanna as the secondary visa holder. This meant that her husband would have to spend a minimum of one year in Australia, over a four-year period, in order to become a Permanent Resident. In addition, he had to purchase or establish a business that employed at least one Australian permanent resident or citizen, and which he operated for at least two years.

Roxanna was required to pay for English classes, as part of her visa application, so she decided to take up the AMEP entitlement after she arrived as a migrant in 2008. Her previous experience with learning English had been through having lessons with a private instructor in Iran, and visiting her older son in Australia seven times prior to arriving as a Business class visa holder. Over the course of these previous Australian visits, Roxanna had become good friends with at least two English-speaking Australian women, who she said were always very welcoming to her. One was the wife of Roxanna's husband's childhood friend, and the other was a woman she met through her, in the same neighbourhood.

When we first met, Roxanna was full of hope about her future in Australia, and she spoke about her dream of further study, in Psychology, and work. However, by the time we met for our final interview, in December 2009, Roxanna was not feeling quite so positive about her dream, as she felt dispirited about her progress with English and how hard this might make studying at university. In addition, she found that supporting her sons and establishing their lives in Australia, essentially on her own, since her husband was still working in Iran, to be a full-time job that left no time for her to focus on her own needs.

4.9   Tina

4.9.1   Background

Tina was born in China in 1980, and grew up in an urban family, under the one-child policy. Her parents, both working people, were members of the Communist Party. Describing her relationship with them, Tina said:

> My parents, um, very friendly to me. They give me more freedom to me when I was young… yes… and which is very good for me. Yes, so, um, one… and I enjoy my school days, because I am always a good student in my teachers' and my classmates' eyes, so I enjoy that (LAUGHS).

Tina agreed she was lucky to have such positive experiences growing up:

> Yes, I am lucky with good parents. You know, in some of families in China, the parents are too strict to their children, and sometimes they will have a miserable childhood…yeah. But I am lucky. (Tina, Interview One, September 2008:14)

During her high school years, Tina decided she wanted to become a lawyer.

> You know, at that time, I watched a lot of series, like detective series… drama or the criminal drama… and in that dramas, I … I saw to be a lawyer is a very good career and I love that, so when I en…enro… enrolled in university, I choose law as my major, yes. (Tina, Interview One, October 2008:6)

After graduating with both Bachelors and Masters degrees in International Law, Tina

initially worked as a legal assistant in a foreign joint venture company.

> However, after worked for a while, I found such work couldn't make myself satisfied and I still wanted to be a lawyer, which is my dream since I was in high school. So I decided to attend the national exam for licensed lawyer. After half year's hard studying and working at the same time, I managed to pass the exam and was entitled to apply for working as a lawyer.
> (Tina, first essay task, September 2008)

As a licensed lawyer, Tina took a job in the corporate section of a large law firm, and

remained there until moving to Australia in May 2008.

4.9.2   Life as a woman

When we first spoke, I asked Tina to describe herself, the kind of person she felt she was.

> Um, I think I'm a hard… hardworking person, er…who ah…who…I have positive attitude…. always look at the good side of things and, um…ah… just I said just now, I love challenge. (Tina, Interview One, September 2008:6)

Tina had been in Australia for just four months by then, having emigrated to join her

husband, who had taken a job with a Perth-based company. Although she had suspended a

successful career as a corporate lawyer in China in order to come to Australia, she had

done so with a positive and adventurous spirit, believing that her time in Australia would

be invaluable for developing her use of English and gaining new experiences.

> […] my choice to come here, maybe some of my friends will think it is regret I give
> up my career to come here, but I used to look the positive side, which is I can get a
> new experience, I can learn some culture from different culture background people,
> and I can improve my English as well… so that's the positive.
> (Tina, Interview One, September 2008:6)

Tina said that she came here primarily because her husband wanted to live and work in

Australia, but she was able to see her decision to emigrate as a choice she had made, which

would provide useful payoffs for her career.

> Um, um… I think er… er, after I live here for a period of time, I can improve my
> English, which is very useful for my career. You know, back in China, I was a
> lawyer and I focus on civil law and I give the legal service for my clients and most
> of them are international company, so if I can give them the legal service in
> English, which is better for me and for my clients... so, that is why I came here to
> study and I want to improve my English to a high level.
> (Tina, Interview One, September 2008:2)

Although she acknowledged that women in law had often to work harder than men to

prove themselves in China, Tina felt she had good career prospects there, and she also

expressed confidence in being able to successfully combine parenting with a full-time

career in law, because her mother and parents-in-law would help her. Comparing what she

understood about the position of women in Australia and China, Tina suggested that

Australian women had greater choice.

> Mhm, and you know in Australia, women have more choices than in China. Like,
> ah, you can choose to be a part-time worker or a casual worker, but in China,
> sometimes you can't. (Tina, Interview One, September 2008:21)

4.9.3   Migration

Tina migrated to Australia with her husband in 2008, and although her husband was

optimistic about the move, Tina expressed early in the project the likelihood that she

would not stay in Australia. "… I know my future is still in China" (Tina, first essay

task, September 2008). This assessment was due to the obstacles to practising law in

Australia – she would have to complete another law degree, in English, and might then still face prejudice as an outsider. It was a decision that positioned career goals ahead of lifestyle or family goals, both of which she considered to be enhanced by remaining in Australia. In some of our discussions, Tina spoke of the more attractive physical environment in Australia, and her husband's love of the Australian lifestyle. She also felt that there was better government service infrastructure in Australia, specifically in relation to child-rearing and support for the aged, and she considered the benefits of her children receiving an education in English, during their high school years. However, in spite of all this, Tina still maintained that she would not remain in Australia if she could not regain the kind of career satisfaction she had enjoyed in China. Tina's decision about whether to apply for citizenship in Australia was also connected to her career. She said that, although her husband planned to apply for Australian citizenship, she would not do so.

> You know in Chinese law, if you become another citizenship, you have to give up your Chinese citizenship, so that's why I won't give up my Chinese citizenship.

What were the implications for her career of giving up Chinese citizenship?

> You know, if you are a foreigner, you can't be a lawyer in China.
> (Tina, Interview One, September 2008:23)

Tina felt that, even though they worked long hours, she and her husband had enjoyed a good life in China, as middle-class professionals. By comparison, she found that the move to Australia, where everything was so much more expensive, relative to their earnings, meant that they had to spend their savings to establish themselves in a modest home in Perth.

At first, they lived off her husband's income, while Tina focused on studying at Central, completing her AMEP entitlement and then enrolling in a higher level academic English course, as well as completing a short course in paralegal studies.

She did so well at her studies that Tina was named the Central 2009 Access and Equity Student of the Year. She still felt that her English was not strong enough to study Law, but she wanted to work in her field, so began to look around for some kind of paralegal work, which would provide more opportunity to develop her use of English in a legal environment. Tina had previously volunteered at an immigration law office, but now she was looking for paid work.

I offered to email a person I knew who worked in a large international law firm and ask who Tina might contact there about employment openings. This single email set off a fairly rapid chain of events that culminated in Tina securing casual employment as a paralegal. It was a question of serendipity, as my email came at a time when the firm was initiating a plan to hire a bilingual employee with legal and business knowledge of China, to facilitate a stronger client base in China for the company. Tina brought the company just the qualifications they sought; in fact, she was undoubtedly better qualified than most people they might have considered, as she also had extensive experience practising as a corporate lawyer in China. As luck would have it, she was also newly pregnant. Although her new employer initially hired Tina for one day per week, this was soon increased to three days, and by the time she went on maternity leave five months later, Tina was offered permanency, with a plan to return three days per week when her baby was four months old.

When we met for lunch, just before the birth of her baby, Tina was feeling very optimistic about the immediate future in Australia. She really enjoyed her work at the law firm, and the chance it gave her to develop her confidence in using English and her understanding of the Australian legal system and practice. Where previously she had doubted her ability to complete an Australian Law degree, in order to practise

law again, she now believed that she could, and was planning to enrol part-time in 2011.

4.10   Vesna

4.10.1 Background

Vesna was born in Bulgaria in 1952. She grew up during the communist period and she said that, even though she has since heard that many people were arrested during this time, for disagreeing with the government, life was really very good for her.

> […] I have a really good childhood, just, I…we lives peaceful, we don't have
> …nobody have a special door, or special lock, or alarm system.
> (Vesna, Interview One, October 2008:11)

When I suggested life was safe, Vesna responded:

> It's safe. It's free health care and free education. We have all the summer organised,
> from the school, our summer vacation on our… um, mountain resort or in our
> seaside resorts, and this is a good thing… or we go to… if [when] we go in the
> high school, we go summer time for, like, summer work, in agriculture, or in some
> factory for pickles. But there is a fun, because we working a few hours, but after we
> have some dancing, some organised things…
> (Vesna, Interview One, October 2008:11)

They lived a very modest life, one that did not include foreign travel, but Vesna believes her parents were happy. The family home, which she and her sister still own, is in a small village in central Bulgaria.

After high school, Vesna completed a four-year diploma in midwifery, and then moved to Varna, a city on the Black Sea coast, where she worked as a hospital midwife while raising her two daughters.

4.10.2 Life as a woman

During our first interview, I asked Vesna about the position of women in Bulgarian society and whether there was gender equality.

Yeah. Yeah. Just, I found if [when] I meet, like, western man, I think they more ready to help his wife in the kitchen, in shopping… they more, like…if [when] I meet Paul [her husband], and we started to go to the party, and his friends… and sometime woman just sit and drink and smoke and the man asking: "What you going to drink, what you going to eat?" And I'm really surprised, because Bulgarian men, in some ways, like… I think…I think, maybe it's not right to say like that, but I think they get this… we been 500 years under the Turkish empire and this is in somewhere affect our…in somewhere affect our culture. They are bit just like a … they are like a boss. In the house, yeah. (Vesna, Interview One, October 2008:13)

When the political and economic system in Bulgaria changed in 1989, life became financially more difficult, especially after her first marriage ended in divorce in 1992. So, when her daughters had both finished high school, Vesna decided to join a friend in taking a job in Abu Dhabi working as a midwife in an English-run hospital.

[…] my English is…ah, really poor (LAUGHING TONE), but my daughter she finish her English high school and she say… write for me all the medical terminology and some sentence and this way I start to learn English. (Vesna, Interview One, October 2008:2)

Although she did not understand much English, Vesna understood and spoke some Arabic, having previously spent four years working in a Libyan hospital, as part of a Bulgarian medical team under contract to the Libyan government.

[…] I'm been little bit not worried too much because at this time I speak a little bit Arabic. With my ex-husband, we been before in Abu… in Libya [↗]. And the Arabic is not exactly the same but is similar, and I think, well I can start with this Arabic where I know, and I will learn slowly English, and… and after few months, we just prepare all our papers, they send for us our visa and I …in this way, I went to Abu Dhabi. (Vesna, Interview One, October 2008:3)

Vesna moved to Abu Dhabi in 1996, and her older daughter followed her for a while, working in administration for a French oil company. Through this job, her daughter met and fell in love with a French oil engineer, moving back to France with him at the end of his contract. They are now married and have two small children. Vesna's younger daughter also now lives in France and is completing a university education there.

108

Vesna remained in Abu Dhabi until 2004, working as a hospital midwife and general

nurse.

> In Abu Dhabi, I work in maternity hospital, as a midwife, with English
> administration hospital[↗]. It's been a good time for me, because I meet there a
> nice people, like have a few Bulgarian colleague and Indian, English mix. Filipino
> … and we have a really good doctor… I'm enjoy there with my job. I'm really
> enjoying because we have also shift work[↗]. We have a lot of time, after our duty,
> to go to the gym, to go to the beach, and which is our real pleasure, because is big
> beaches, with no shark (SMALL LAUGH), and very warm water… it's really
> pleasure. (Vesna, Interview One, October 2008:6)

She also met and married her current husband in Abu Dhabi. He is English by birth, but a

citizen and long-time resident of Australia who had come to work in Abu Dhabi.

> He's training, in the oil company. Training the local boys in special school to learn
> how to work in gas and oil industry. He training electrician and electronics, and we
> meet …like, generally I am a home person. I'm not like very much a night life… I
> like, but with couple of friends, or sometime, not regularly. And once, just my
> friend say: "Let's go to this restaurant" and we meet a group of people there were
> just arrived from Australia, like two days. (SMALL LAUGH) […] He start to call
> me every single day, and like that. (Vesna, Interview One, October 2008:1)

After he fell out with the wealthy family of one of his students, over remarks he made to

their son about his poor attitude to study, Vesna's husband was strongly advised to seek

work elsewhere before being thrown out of the country. He took a similar job in

Azerbaijan, and he and Vesna, now married, moved there. Vesna enjoyed her time in

Azerbaijan, but she did not work there because there was little work available and the

salaries were very low.

4.10.3 Migration

When her husband's contract in Azerbaijan ended, he decided it was time to move back to

Australia, and they arrived in early 2008. Vesna was happy to make the move, and looked

forward to continuing in midwifery. However, as I explain in Chapter Seven, in spite of

her qualifications and extensive employment experience, Vesna was not permitted to work

as a midwife in Australia (see 7.4.1). Instead, she was advised to seek work in childcare services.

> They give… they give me from Nursing … no, from Oversea Qualification (OQU), they give me a paper… it's still piece of paper, because they are write they think I can work in childcare with a very small kids… with, like six or seven months[↗]. (Vesna, Interview One, October 2008:25)

After visiting a couple of childcare centres, Vesna decided that she did not want to work in this field, so after she completed her AMEP entitlement, she continued for a while in English classes at Central. In 2009, after thinking about how she could transfer her training and experience into a job she could find rewarding, Vesna did a pharmacy assistant's course and applied for a position on a short Phlebotomy course. Her first application was unsuccessful, and she worried this was because of her age and her use of English. However, she was eventually accepted into a course in October 2009, completing it by the beginning of 2010. By the time we met for our final interview in March 2010, Vesna had begun work as a Phlebotomist at a private hospital. She was very pleased about this, because she had not enjoyed staying at home and she loved working in a hospital environment, which felt familiar, after all her years as a hospital midwife.

CHAPTER FIVE - THE SELF IN FAMILY

5.1   Introduction

This is the first of three analysis chapters, and it focuses on the participants' post-migration construction of the self in key family relationships. In the following pages, I will first separately explore themes related to language and gender that impacted on the participants' negotiation of key family relationships with partners and with children. These include issues related to language choice and language investment in family communications, imagined identity, and both language- and gender-based power dynamics. Then, I will explore the themes of language, race, and gender in relation to Michiko, who I identify as a focal case of constructing the self in family relationships.

5.2   Language

The data reveal a number of issues connecting language use to identity construction and language learning in key family relationships, including the way participants negotiated their interpersonal language use, the way language choice was connected to power in family relationships, and the significance of languages used in parent/child relationships. One participant also detailed an imagined relationship identity, performed in English, which grew out of her immediate post-migration experiences in Australia. In addition, participants discussed the advantages and disadvantages to language learning of communicating with an English monolingual partner.

5.2.1   Hybrid communication

Six of the participants reported using a mix of languages, including English, with their husbands. Of these women, Julie said she and her husband primarily used Mandarin, but that it included a hybrid mix of Cantonese, Singapore English, Japanese, and Hokkien, both before and after migration; Maria had used Portuguese with her husband prior to

migration, but they now also used some English, limited to simple written communications, such as sms texts and shopping lists. Both Anna and Tina primarily used a pre-migration language with their husbands, but made deliberate efforts sometimes to have conversations in English, for speaking practice. I deal more closely with their relationships in 5.2.2.2 below. In this section, drawing on the experiences of Kumiko, I would like to focus on the way language use in relationships is tied to identity construction and the expression of intimacy.

Kumiko's husband had spent some time in Japan before they met, and they subsequently lived there together for six years. Kumiko described him as a fluent speaker of Japanese, and this was the language of their relationship in Japan. When they migrated to Australia, her husband began using English as well as Japanese when he spoke with Kumiko, but even as her English developed, Kumiko continued to speak Japanese to him. This meant that he might speak to her in English and she would respond in Japanese. In her first essay, written at the beginning of the study, she explained their couple talk as follows.

> Most time we speak in Japanese. Everyone says we should speak in English especially here in Australia. But speaking in English to him feels strange to me because we've speaking in Japanese for almost seven years. He speaks in English to me and I answer back to him in Japanese. This is our way of communication and I don't want to change it. (Kumiko, first essay task, May 2008)

The final sentence above seems to express a desire to preserve something special in the way their idiosyncratic language use defined who they were, as a couple (Piller, 2002:138). Kumiko explained her feelings about hybrid language use in multilingual relationships further in an email she sent early in the study, citing issues of fairness and anxiety being addressed by adopting a hybrid L1 form of communication.

> When we speak in our own languages, it's absolutely fair. Imagine that you speak with someone from different countries. She/he speaks English but the level is only beginner. You have to be patient and she/he has to try very hard to communicate with you in English. Do you think it is fair? But both of us understand English and Japanese, and we speak in our own languages, so we feel less stress when we have conversation. I know some Japanese girls whose partner don't speak ANY Japanese

so they speak in English only. Oh I can't imagine this situation! I will be crazy! I am trying to speak English but ONLY English is still too much for me.
(Kumiko, email communication, June 2008)

Kumiko also spoke about how using either English or Japanese constructed her and her husband differently, saying that she felt English made them strangers.

…Um…I still feel more like myself when I speak in Japanese to my husband. Yeah, I started to speak in English, especially we are with other people, um…parent-in-law, but I ... I …I feel strange, yeah, someone else is probably speaking …
(Kumiko, Interview Two, April 2009:23)

Kumiko: […] He speaks to me in English, sometimes, but I speak Japanese.
Donna: So, how does it feel? When you speak to him in English, what does it feel like?
Kumiko: Oh, I feel like I'm talking to someone strange, someone I don't know.
[…]
Donna: […] does he become a different person when he speaks English?
Kumiko: Yes. Everyone says, when he speaks Japanese, everyone says he sounds like a teenager boy…
Donna: Really?
Kumiko: …but when he speaks English, of course he is adult. He sounds just like adult now.
(Kumiko, Interview One, June 2008:6)

As the excerpts from Kumiko show, language choice in relationships helps to define not only the way each person is constructed in that relationship, but also the expression of their intimacy. When they used English together, Kumiko experienced this as two strangers speaking to each other, rather than the close couple that they were. In order to preserve a prior sense of herself in that relationship, and also the intimacy on which it was historically based, Kumiko chose to maintain her use of Japanese after transnational migration to an English language environment. By choosing not to use English, even when her husband spoke English to her, Kumiko was also resisting the construction of an English-mediated identity in that domain.

5.2.2   Language and power

Language choice in key family relationships not only has implications for identity construction and the preservation of intimacy, as Kumiko's experience suggests, but also

the way power dynamics are negotiated in that relationship (Takahashi, 2006:286). There are two aspects of the interplay of language and power in key family relationships arising from the data that I wish to deal with here. They are use of the participant's L1 in the presence of an English-monolingual partner, and strategic use of specific languages within a mutually bilingual relationship. A third related issue, language dependency, I will deal with from the perspective of gender dynamics in section 5.3.2.

5.2.2.1 Negotiating language use with an English-monolingual partner

Of the five participants who were in cross-cultural relationships, three were with English-monolingual Australian partners. As a result, for these three women the language of their partner communications had always been English. In a societal context where English was the dominant language, this conferred greater linguistic capital, and therefore symbolic power within the relationship, on their monolingual partners. Yet, while none of the women spoke of themselves as being at a disadvantage, all three spoke about their partner expressing feelings of exclusion when the woman spoke her L1 with family or friends in his presence. For example, during a group discussion session, Vesna reported how her husband had become angry and withdrawn during a visit to Australia by her two daughters because the three women often spoke Bulgarian together and he felt rejected, and Michiko said that her husband sometimes got annoyed and began doing attention-seeking things, like speaking English very quickly so that nobody could follow him, when they were in company with Japanese friends and everyone else was speaking Japanese. Lena reported that her husband would ask her to translate Russian conversations all the time, which she found tiring, or if they were with English/Russian bilinguals, complain that he felt left out and ask them to speak English. While both Michiko and Vesna found their husbands' behaviour problematic, Lena empathised more, saying that she had been in a similar

situation herself before, so she could understand their frustration at feeling left out of a conversation that could have been carried out in a language they understood.

The examples I refer to above, which all came from a single group discussion session, reveal the ways that language use is implicated in both group dynamics and important family relationships, where control of the language of communication can be seen as a way of maintaining the individual's importance to the interaction, and to the speakers. Most of the participants said they were more confident using their L1 (see 6.2.1), and Kumiko revealed how she felt she was a stranger to her husband when she used English (see 5.2.1). In addition, three of the five women whose partners were English-speaking bilinguals described their partner as seeming like a different person in each language. In light of which, it is possible to surmise that the English-monolinguals not only felt excluded by, but also uncomfortable with, their partner performing an L1 identity, and their attempts to keep conversations in English can thus be seen as a, perhaps unconscious, way of influencing the women's language-mediated identity performance towards a more familiar construction in English. In the case of Vesna, whose partner felt rejected by her use of Bulgarian with her daughters while in his presence, this led to Vesna feeling torn between conflicting desires – the performance of a close relationship with her daughters, in Bulgarian, and the importance of maintaining a good relationship with her husband, in English. What is common to all three participant experiences is the desire of an English-monolingual partner to exercise control over the means of communication, and the identity construction of key communicators in that domain, by coercing the speakers to use English.

5.2.2.2 Negotiating language use with a mutually bilingual partner

Two of the participants, Anna and Tina, who were in relationships with English-bilingual partners, said they made conscious efforts to get English speaking practice at home by encouraging their partners to engage in English conversation with them. For both women, this was a contrived communication, since they primarily performed their relationships in either L1 (Tina) or L2 (Anna). Anna indicated that her and her husband's efforts with English usually did not last long before they slipped back into Serbo-Croatian, but this kind of practice was something she thought was necessary if she was going to make more progress with English.

Tina, on the other hand, also explained how she used language switching to negotiate power in her relationship with her husband. When they migrated to Australia, Tina's husband already spoke English and had gained employment before his arrival, whereas Tina had limited English and no paid employment. As a result, she focused in the immediate post-migration period on English language learning. Since she was conscious of having limited opportunity to practise English conversation outside of the language program environment, Tina was keen to engage her husband in English at home. She described her husband as having good English competency, saying that he sounded like an Australian when he spoke English.

> Mm, most of the time my husband is very patient when I speak English with him, but you know, sometimes I…maybe he think my English is too bad (LAUGHS), so he will lose patience. Whenever he lose the patience, I just stopped and … er you know, when we communicate in English and, ah, you know I can't clearly express my idea and I can't argue with him, you know, it's a terrible thing…although sometimes I know what he said is wrong or he misunderstand me, but I can't tell him what I am feel…what I am feeling…so I just change to Chinese, to argue with him (LAUGHING VOICE). Yes, we can't concentrate on English for a long time. You know, it's very easy to speak in Chinese, yes, especially when we have a quarrel (LAUGHS). (Tina, Interview One, September 2008:10)

> You know, I'm very…I can say I'm very good in Chinese, you know. That is ability to be a lawyer, so I can organise my words, my phrase, my sentence, very well. So,

> when we talk in Chinese, I can convince him to do something, and I can tell him
> what I really feel, but in English I can't. (Tina, Interview One, September 2008:11)

Tina spoke in a tone of light-hearted humour when she described such heated exchanges with her husband, and in her descriptions of their relationship, I always discerned a close bond, based on mutual respect and consideration. However, because she felt a sense of language inferiority to her husband, with respect to using English, she set the terms of their linguistic interactions as a means of negotiating power in the dynamic (see Chiang and Yang, 2008:253 for similar evidence in parent/child interactions). As the examples above show, when Tina disagreed with her husband and wanted to gain the upper hand in an argument that developed during an English conversation, she made sure to switch their exchange to Chinese, where she felt a sense of language strength, even superiority over her husband.

Both issues I have described, in relation to language and power, show in common how language use was manipulated, either by the participant or her partner, in order to exert control over the interactional space by influencing the choice of language and thus the identity constructions of the interlocutors. Of particular interest to me is the way that, in the case of the participants with English-monolingual partners, the woman's language identity was being coerced, and in the case of the participants with mutually bilingual partners, one woman showed how it was possible to express agency in negotiating the terms of interaction and language-mediated identity constructions.

5.2.3   Language use and parenting

Three of the participants became pregnant and had their first child during the study period and a fourth began plans to have a child as the data collection period was ending. These participants, along with two others who had young children, expressed opinions about the

languages they used or planned to use when parenting in Australia. Their decisions were influenced by a desire for the children to develop close links with their mother's language and culture, and a recognition that English would be an important language to develop in an English-dominated society. In this section, I would like to focus on two specific examples that deal with language use and identity constructions in parent/child relationships. The first involves Maria, whose two-step experience of transnational migration provided evidence of the ways that emotional investment in language use can have an important impact on parent/child relationships and identity constructions in new language settings. The second involves Julie, whose language use in parenting was influenced by her imagined identity as an English-speaking mother.

5.2.3.1 Language investment

The influence of personal investment in language learning, as a process of identity construction, is identified by Norton (2000), who states "investment… conceives of the language learner as having a complex social history and multiple desires." (2000:10). Intergenerational relationships are mediated by specific language use, which can be impacted by transnational migration involving language change, and the possibility of divergent investment in new language learning in the post-migration society. To explore the impact of language investment on identity construction in parent/child communications, I would like to look at Maria's family communications in Australia, and their historical underpinnings.

Although her husband is a fluent speaker of both Portuguese and Japanese, having grown up deeply immersed in the Japanese community in Brazil, Portuguese was not only their family language, but also their daughter's first language. This situation prevailed for the first two years after they migrated to Japan; however, soon after she began to attend

118

kindergarten, at the age of four, Maria's daughter stopped using Portuguese and began

using Japanese. According to Maria, her daughter developed communicative competency

in Japanese quite rapidly, and within six months, she was communicating exclusively in

Japanese, even with Maria, whose Japanese remained limited. Maria said her daughter was

attracted to Japanese culture by all the wonderful toys and material goods, saying of her

"She totally mind Japanese!" (Interview One, June 2008:19). The following excerpt,

describing communication in Maria's family, is from an interview conducted after they had

been in Australia for four months.

Donna:	[…] So, how …how do you feel about your relationship with your daughter?
Maria:	Awful… Um, my relationship with my daughter is very creative (LAUGHS)
Donna:	Creative? Ok. Can you explain that?(LAUGHING)
Maria:	And my …I need …if she have a big, big problem, she will still waiting for my husband come back to my house and we have a little reunion. All the…every night have a… like um …our…the three…
Donna:	A meeting…you sit together?
Maria:	We sit together…don't have TV…don't have anyone.
Donna:	Oh, that's good.
Maria:	And only meal and we talk together… "How about your day? How about your day?" And we start to talking, and my daughter speak more Japanese and my husband translate for me. "Oh, she's made this, this, this".
Donna:	Oh, so he translates into Portuguese for you?
Maria:	Yes. But some phrase I can understand but some phrase I couldn't understand and she's very frustrated…she say, "Oh, I need waiting Papa. I need waiting my (LAUGHING)…the dad", and after…
Donna:	How do you…does that …how do you feel when she…
Maria:	I feel like my mom in past! (LAUGHS) I feel like my mother …she's frustrate, but I think I tried my best because sometimes I pick a Japanese book…I try read it with her and she is laughing a lot and we have this communication…like laugh and …creative.

(Maria, Interview One, June 2008:7-8)

In an historical repetition of her own language communications with her Chinese-born

mother, Maria and her daughter developed divergent language competencies during their

time in Japan, and this significantly impacted their communication, and subsequently also

their initial investment in learning English. For Maria, her sense of alienation from

Japanese society meant that she was not motivated to learn the language and commit

herself to a life in Japan. She spoke quite extensively in negative terms about her time in Japan, about how miserable she had been and about the oppressive expectations of women, particularly in relation to being a wife and mother. Although she spent five years in Japan, Maria maintains that her Japanese did not progress to fluency, and since she also described herself as good at learning languages, it is possible to assume that Maria's sense of alienation from Japanese society, which was heavily indexed to her experience of gendered subjectivity, had a negative influence on her motivation to learn Japanese.

In contrast, Maria described her daughter's rapid progress with learning Japanese in terms of a language desire (Takahashi, 2006) tied to her strong identification with Japanese children's culture. According to Maria, from the age of four, when her daughter switched to speaking only Japanese, communication between them became more difficult, and, as the excerpt above suggests, often required Maria's husband to interpret. Yet, this was at a time when Maria was her daughter's main caregiver and her father, with whom she could communicate effortlessly in Japanese, was away at work most of the time.

Maria expressed positive feelings about her desire to embrace Australia and she made rapid progress with developing her use of English in the immediate post-migration settlement period. Where her lack of investment in life in Japan had meant only limited Japanese language learning in five years, her emotional investment in Australia led to a desire to construct an English-language identity, and she achieved communicative fluency within the first four months. Maria's daughter, on the other hand, used language to contest her parents' decision to remain in Australia, refusing to speak or learn English and asserting her identity as a Japanese person.

> Maria: Yes, I want she…because Sunday, have a library in Scarborough, have a
>   lot of childrens in there, and I push her to go to library, and she
>   can't…she couldn't work to mix up with Australian…she won't mix. If
>   Asians, but Japanese, she will move [into] this group, but she doesn't

	want…I don't know if she's feel like a discrimination. I asking her, "Ah, this is discrimination?", because she doesn't… "No, because I doesn't speak English, I don't want to learn. I don't want to mix up".
Donna:	Oh, so she doesn't want to learn English?
Maria:	No.
Donna:	So, she still thinks this is just temporary…. we'll go home…
Maria:	Yes, yes, yes. But I told her: "I will bought…I will buy a house"…(LAUGHS)
Donna:	We're staying here!
Maria:	Yes, we're staying here…but: "No, I will come back, I will study hard and come back to Japan by myself!" (LAUGHS)

(Maria, Discussion One, August 2008:32)

Maria placed her daughter in Japanese school for the first two years in Australia, moving her across to the Australian curriculum when her daughter finally expressed a desire to embrace English and life in Australia. Interestingly, although she was keen for her daughter to learn English, Maria did not use this as their language of communication at home, because she worried that her English use was not a good enough model for her daughter, and she believed that if a child learned English from her parents, she would then speak in the same manner as the parents did. This was not just a question of accent, but also identity, as Maria's comments about her husband show.

Maria:	But her English is like a Japanese speaker's.
Donna:	Mm. Yeah, that's normal, 'cos Japanese is her first ... well, it's her second language but ...
Maria:	Yeah first language.
Donna:	... it's now ...
Maria:	Yeah and I don't want to mix her with my accent and to got more confused...
Donna:	Oh, okay.
Maria:	... because my husband has accent too but I think my husband, his ...
Donna:	Everyone does.
Maria:	... English is like he speak not properly, like, for out ... for out ...
Donna:	Mm. He doesn't speak out.
Maria:	... but more inside. He, like, speak… because he is shy and I learn in music when you want to speak, you has to speak out, like, you has to ...

(Maria, Interview Two/part 3, April 2009:6)

Maria's concerns about the importance of accent are supported by findings from an extensive national longitudinal ethnography of migrants in the AMEP, which I was involved in collecting data for during 2008 and 2009 (Yates, 2010). The project found that intelligibility in English was a significant barrier to social and economic inclusion for new

migrants to Australia, and led to the writing of a teachers' professional development kit and teaching materials to address the issue of intelligibility in AMEP courses.

The data detailing communications between Maria and her daughter, analysed above, show how the complexities of language investment, which Norton (2000) links to 'social history and multiple desires', have important ramifications for post-migration language learning and identity construction. The motivation to learn new language is affected by emotional investment, not only in the language and the society in which it dominates, but also in formative identity constructions and the ways they are impacted by the history of family interpersonal dynamics.

5.2.3.2 Imagined identity and parenting

A number of the participants were aware of performing new language identities in English, and in some cases these identities were framed reflexively, as awareness-in-action of an emerging self. I deal with two examples of this manifestation, focusing on constructions of the self in social interactions, in Chapter Six (6.2.2). In other cases, the identities were imagined, and grew out of the woman's expectations of cultural and linguistic affordances in the post-migration society and their own aspirations for self-fulfilment. Roxanna, for example, imagined a future identity in Australia that included post-secondary studies in psychology and the possibility of a career in a related field. These were not visions she had been able to entertain in Iran, due to a perceived lack of access to post-secondary education as a mature student, and a feeling of being restricted to the subjectivities of wife and mother. The move into English also presented opportunities for at least one participant to imagine an identity that could be consciously performed to achieve specific interpersonal ends. I would like now to focus on Julie, whose desire to perform a new, English-mediated

identity as a mother was tied to language ideology and an imagined "Ideal L2 Self" (Dornyei, 2009).

During her first term of attending English classes, Julie was reminded that the English she knew so well from growing up in Singapore was not the only English, and she began not only to experience language desire (Piller and Takahashi, 2006 and Takahashi, 2006), but also to create an imagined identity (Kanno and Norton, 2003) as a mother who spoke standard Australian English, which she perceived as being linked to the expression of emotions and caring about others. Julie was quite judgmental, in interview, about the relative merits of Singapore English and Australian English, suggesting that the former was not as polite a language as the latter.

Julie:	So, usually we speak more imperatively…how should I say… "Close the door!".
Donna:	Oh! Ok, imperatively. Ok, so you…yes, it's not so…
Julie:	Not so diplomatic…
Donna:	Not so diplomatic. Ok.
Julie:	…as your people have been doing and this is what I'm learning here…I'm so happy.
Donna:	Oh, ok.
Julie:	You know, there is many way to get to what we want, but in my country is… you go to the point …um, go straight to the point and get it done!
Donna:	Oh, ok.
Julie:	That kind of thing, you know. There's no room for people's opinion; there's no rooms for how people are feeling, you know, you just tell them to do something and there…there's no room for the recipient(?) …to consider whether they …are they happy doing that or do they have an opinion or do they have a way out…

(Julie, Interview One, June 2008:3)

Later in the same interview, Julie reiterated her assessment of Singapore English, when she talked about her changing awareness from using different Englishes.

Julie:	I guess my kid can see the changes in me, because… um, the way I speak has change.
Donna:	Oh, ok.
Julie:	Since I came here, I… I start to be… to be more aware of asking them question properly.
Donna:	Oh!

123

Julie:	Before… "How's day, uh?" You know. They don't want to talk to me that way, right.
Donna:	Oh. Why, because they feel embarrassed someone's talking Singapore English to them, or…
Julie:	No, no, because Singapore English is…the tone is no good.

(Julie, Interview One, June 2008:21-22)

Julie spoke of this language awareness as arising from her experience in the AMEP class, observing the way the teacher spoke, what she told them about interactional pragmatics, and also from reading a text in class that was written by an Australian writer, Sally Morgan (1987). However, Julie's opinions of the relative worth of Singapore English and Australian English must also be viewed in the broader context of linguistic imperialism (Pennycook, 1994, 2001, Edge 2003), and the privileging of certain forms of English in societies where many languages are spoken. It is possible that such circumstances formed the background to Julie's socialization in post-colonial Singapore, part of which occurred in an English-medium school, where she said they used "English standard… supposed to be Cambridge standard" (Interview One, June 2008:20). Phillipson (1992:29) says that "effectively English appears to have been established as the language of power" in Singapore, but while he does not specify the dialect of English used, the fact that Julie says "supposed to be Cambridge standard" to refer to the medium of education she received implies an awareness of different Englishes.

Julie believed that if she spoke Australian English with her children, she would be able to construct an identity as a more caring and emotionally expressive mother, which would enhance her relationship with her children.

Julie:	…so, when Susan [AMEP teacher] talk… the way she talk to her daughter and then there is this narrative they give to us about this… Sally Morgan[↗].
Donna:	Sally Morgan, yeah. An Aboriginal woman.
Julie:	Yeah, the first day she… she went to school, you know, and then the way the small little kid that is Sally Morgan talk to her mother… "Are you gonna leave me here?", that kind of thing. So, I was wondering: My daughter don't talk to me like that! You know?
Donna:	Yeah.

124

Julie:	You know, they were taught… they were taught, you know, if I bring them to school, I dump them there, they are supposed to be there, whether they like it or not…
Donna:	Oh, so they don't question it… feelings don't matter.
Julie:	They don't talk like that [like the characters in the Sally Morgan book]. I don't know whether this only happens in storybooks or…
Donna:	No.
Julie:	…do you people really talk like that?
[…]	
Julie:	[…] to talk really about the mum's feeling and really… the kids' feeling… you know, not so much in words. In my language it's more action.
Donna:	Yeah, more action than words.
Julie:	You know, show faces and tone, you know.
Donna:	Yeah.
Julie:	That is our language, which I don't really like, you know.
Donna:	Oh.
Julie:	So when I'm here [at the AMEP] I start to learn how to… "Would you like…?"… you know (LAUGHS).
[…]	
Julie:	Ok, usually I say "Ok, there be only spaghetti today-uh. I don't want to cook!" You know. Then say…then now I will say "Would you like…um…?" and get their attention, you know (LAUGHS).
[…]	
Julie:	Yes, yes. Then you can see their face brighten up. Now before, you know, when I say something they continue playing their game.
Donna:	They ignore you.
Julie:	Because 'Nothing good come from her! (LAUGHS LOUDLY)… only anger!' (MORE LAUGHTER)
Donna:	Really?!
Julie:	Is the tone…is not angry.
Donna:	You didn't feel angry, it's just the language…Singapore English sounds more abrupt, does it? Short?
Julie:	Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

(Julie, Interview One, June 2008:22-23)

Julie noted that when she asked her children "Would you like?", which she identified as being Australian, rather than Singapore English, her children answered her in ways she enjoyed.

Julie:	Yes, yes, then they will answer.
Donna:	They answer you now.
Julie:	"Oh, mummy! I would like…"(LAUGHS LOUDLY)
Donna:	Oh! So, do you feel that's changing your relationship with them?
Julie:	Of course! So much better, you know.
Donna:	That's really interesting!
Julie:	So much better, but I still have to work harder, because it's still not what I have been reading…you know, still not what I have been reading. You know, when I read that passage, I tell myself 'How I wish my kid talk to me like that!' (VOICE BREAKING WITH EMOTION)

Donna:	That's so interesting! So you're learning other ways of using English?
Julie:	Yes, how I wish my kid really tell me their thinking! You know, "Mum, I don't want to be here", or…you know? They have the right to tell me. (EMOTIONAL TONE)
[…]	
Julie:	You read *My First Day in School*, you know, and then when the mother fell and then she said "I don't sympathise her". Then she wrote about she saw the mother's tears. That is so beautiful! How I wish…you know, is my kid, when I cry now they thinking about my tears…you know? But none, you know. So far…you know, because they are as frustrated because my tone is no good to them, right? You know, so now when I speak like this to them [in Aust. English], they brighten up.
Donna:	Yeah. So you can see that it's a good thing.
Julie:	But, I need to make more effort, because my target is for them to able to tell me every single piece of feeling they have.

(Julie, Interview One, June 2008:25-26)

Although she articulated this as a vision of mothering, Julie's imagined identity as a person who communicated with more caring and sensitivity was not restricted to her relationship with her children. Soon after our first interview, Julie stopped attending AMEP classes in order to work alongside her husband in the food services business they had bought into. Julie worked in customer sales, and she began to see a role for her imagined English language identity in successfully managing client communications.

That Julie recognised the need to use different codes in different social settings is not surprising; we all do this to varying degrees in order to articulate a sense of belonging in a range of linguistic communities of practice. However, the fact that Julie imagined being able to achieve a more satisfactory identity as a mother by making a conscious effort to communicate in a different English to the one she had always used with her children seems quite a remarkable desire for language-mediated transformation of the self in an important interpersonal relationship.

5.2.4   Summary

In this section I have examined a number of issues related to language use as manifestations of the negotiation of gender dynamics and identity construction in key

family relationships. These include hybrid language use, and the way that language choice, in both monolingual and bilingual communication, intersects with symbolic power in the relationship. I have also examined the way language change can influence the performance of motherhood in the context of transnational migration, focusing on language investment and imagined identity.

5.3   Gender

The data reveal some important ways that gender and gender roles are defined in relation to, and as a consequence of, transnational migration involving language change. In Chapter Seven I discuss this in relation to work, and the conflicting locations for gender roles; in the present section, I wish to look at the ways that some participants articulated their investment in the post-migration society as a function of their construction as either a wife or mother, and how language learning was implicated in this.

5.3.1   Gender roles and migration

As is the case with many women who migrate to Australia – for example, between 2000 and 2008 the number of female secondary applicant migrants was consistently higher than the number of male secondary applicants (ABS, 2009) - all of the women in the study came as secondary visa applicants or on spouse visas, so the very process of migration initially defined them by their relationship to a man, rather than as an individual who had initiated the migration process. Such a relational subjectivity is not all that remarkable, given the history, across almost all modern societies, of defining women primarily as daughters, mothers, and/or wives, so the participants' decision to migrate is easily explained in the context of their family relationships; however, of interest to the present study is the specific ways that transnational migration involving language change can impact a woman's post-migration gender subjectivities and constructions of the self.

While all of the participants' migrations defined them as wives, seven out of nine women

had, prior to migrating, also had identities in paid employment (see 7.5.2). Nevertheless, a

number of women articulated their ongoing commitment to the migration primarily in

terms of how it enhanced their role in key family relationships. For example, although

Lena talked during the first and second interviews about all that she had given up in

migrating to Australia, and how she would prefer to spend part of every year in Russia, she

ultimately articulated her post-migration subjectivity in terms of her role in her husband's

life, indexing her decision to remain in Australia to her husband's need for her company.

> Donna: I wonder if you could have a business going in Russia, and you just
> come and go.
> Lena: Oohh, I don't think it's possible him.
> Donna: No, for **you**… to have a business.
> Lena: Ah, for me! Oh, maybe he would …
> Donna: Just because it would give you something to go there and have …
> Lena: Ah, if I will go there, he will miss me so much, so …
> Donna: Yeah.
> Lena: … like now, I went for little bit more than one month and he called me
> every day… "How are you?"
> (Lena, Interview Two, February 2009:35-36)

In a similar manner, although she spoke often and in detail about why her migration to

Japan had not been good for her, Maria was able also to cast this migration in terms of how

it had enhanced her construction as a mother, even going so far as to suggest that she

would not have remained there if her daughter had not been happy. This, and her migration

to Australia as motivated by the need to improve her husband's life, is captured in the

following excerpt.

> Maria: I ... I will stay because my daughter.
> Donna: Oh.
> Maria: If my daughter she doesn't like Japan, she want to come back to Brazil, I
> will come back. Because of our childrens, we do some sillies choice.
> Donna: […] Okay. So ... but you weren't happy in Japan?
> Maria: I not happy in Japan because I ...
> Donna: But it didn't matter. You were prepared to stay there ...
> Maria: No.
> Donna: ... if that's what she wanted?
> Maria: No, no, no. If she want, I will stay.

Donna: Oh. 'Cos I ... when I ... I was curious ... I wanted to ask you that
            question, 'cos when I look at, you know, the story and your impressions
            of Japan, I think I must ask you whose idea it was to come here, 'cos I
            forget if I asked you that before and I was thinking it must have been
            your idea because ...
Maria: No, not my idea. My husband idea.
Donna: Oh, it was your husband's, and why was he wanting to do that?
Maria: Because he's struggling at the company.
(Maria, Interview Two/part 1, April 2009:20-21)

For a third participant, Roxanna, language learning was instrumental in her ultimate

framing of her transnational migration as a function of its importance to her construction as

a mother. In our first interview, staged when she had been resident in Australia for four

months, Roxanna expressed aspirations for further study and a new career in Australia,

speaking in optimistic terms about the affordances of her new home and her desire to

achieve something more in her life than being a wife and mother.

> Yes, yes, because I think I have dream. I have two sons, yes, I love them very much
> and because of them I came here, and yes, I love them, but I think for myself,
> because really, I seek… I get at… that I can be better in my life. Not just housewife
> woman, does cooking. (Roxanna, Interview One, October 2008:13)

In our final interview, conducted 14 months after the first, Roxanna expressed her sense of

failure at language learning, along with an inability to imagine herself.

Roxanna: […] Um…My… when I came here, my goals were different to now.
            Um…I was going to do so many things here, as you know. I'm…
            continuing my study, or …so many things. But, er, now, it's very
            different, my go… my goals.
Donna: Really?
Roxanna: Yes. I…I …I can't see anything for **my**self, and for my future.
Donna: Really?
Roxanna: Yes, I think I … ah…I feel …mm …lost, do you know, because now, at
            this time, I can't concentrate about **my**self, as a woman, and about what
            I'm going to do, for **my**self, in the future, because of my busy life…
            busy life, and I don't know why my life is so busy, because I don't… I
            don't have to work here. I can stay home and do my homeworks, my
            home jobs. I don't study in university, just comes to class twice a week,
            and it's really fun for me, to come to class.
(Roxanna, Interview Three, December 2009:1)

As a result, Roxanna no longer had any vision of her future as an individual, and could only see her migration and continued settlement in Australia in terms of the ways it positioned her as a good mother by providing a better future for her two sons.

> Roxanna: So, I think for me, I have no choice to go back to Iran any more, because my destiny is relates to my younger son…
> Donna: Your children.
> Roxanna: … and my older son also, and especially my younger son, because he doesn't want to go back, and so I have to stay here. I can't say "I have to", because I like, you know. I am with my children, it's a very peaceful country, and day by day I get used to everything. But, for me, I feel like loser…
> (Roxanna, Interview Three, December 2009:2)

As the data excerpts show, the participants ultimately articulated their reason for migrating, and the basis of their post-migration identity constructions, in terms of the archetypal subjectivities of wife and mother. In doing so, they prioritised a construction of the self as 'object' (de Beauvoir, 1952) and framed their migration in terms of the positive ways it could construct them as serving their families. This was a theme that cut across a number of participants and speaks perhaps to the way that women are socialised to articulate their existence in devotional terms and supporting roles, and also to the ways that transnational migration is gendered, insofar as the impact on subjectivity is different for men and women. Not only is such migration gendered, but as the data from Roxanna shows, the difficulties associated with negotiating identities in a new language can influence the way a woman ultimately articulates her primary subjectivity as a migrant. Where the construction of new post-migration subjectivities is dependent on English language development, the success of language learning is pivotal to how the individual is able to imagine herself, as a woman. Perhaps, in the case of Roxanna, her sense of failure at learning English well enough to consider the possibility of a new career made it necessary to construct the basis of her original migration and imagine a future for herself that forefronted her identity as a mother.

5.3.1.1 Gender and power

Three of the participants revealed evidence of the way that transnational migration and language change can disrupt the gendered power dynamics within heterosexual relationships. These three women had undertaken transnational migration as a result of decisions made primarily by their husbands and, for two of them, Tina and Maria, this had meant the complete cessation of their pre-migration careers, and the financial independence that had characterised their former lives. For the third, Roxanna, the migration caused an increase in the importance of her role in the family and, in the Australian context, the displacement of her husband as the person with superior knowledge.

5.3.1.1.1   Tina

In our final interview, Tina described how, while they were still living in China, her husband expressed concern that she would inevitably do better, career-wise, than he, and that, as a result, he would have to increase his own efforts at career advancement.

> Tina: You know… I … I think in China, back in China, he always said… not always, but he sometimes said: "Ah, you are lawyer, and ah, um, you will earn more, more money than me in the following years, when you become a very successful lawyer, cos I earn the fixed money. Cos I worked" … cos he worked in a … a foreign company…
> Donna: Yep.
> Tina: …so, he can get the fixed money. But, as a lawyer, I can get the flexible money…
> Donna: Yeah!
> Tina: … which will may very high.
> Donna: Yeah.
> Tina: So, ah, he said, um: "I will have the pressure".
> (Tina, Interview Three, September 2009:29)

The move to Australia was initiated by Tina's husband, primarily because of lifestyle considerations but, as I explain in detail in Chapter Seven, this move resulted in a significant setback for Tina's law career, as a result of barriers she encountered in relation to language, race, and qualifications. Her husband spoke English well and had secured

meaningful work in his field, so their initial settlement period prompted a more traditional division of gender roles, with her husband assuming the role of sole breadwinner, while Tina began the work of learning English, and devoted more time to being a homemaker. Tina expressed some concern about being financially dependent on her husband in this period, but she said he did not seem to mind.

> Tina: Ah, you know, I mean in China, we are pretty much the same, but… […] But now, I … although he doesn't say anything about the … the … just a little money or no money from me, but **I** feel pressure.
> Donna: Mm. Is that difficult, as a woman, to be dependent financially, on someone else?
> Tina: Yeah, the … for me, it's true (LAUGHS).
> (Tina, Interview Three, September 2009:28)

Her husband was very supportive of Tina's language learning, encouraging her not to take a menial job, but to focus instead on her studies, and he also urged her to establish new life choices that prioritised family roles over career (see 7.6.3.1). When Tina did achieve success, first in language learning, and then in securing a paralegal position with a large international law firm, her husband once again expressed career competition anxiety, as Tina revealed in our final interview.

> Tina: (LAUGHING VOICE) And you know, when I've got this … this job in [company name omitted][↗]…
> Donna: Yeah.
> Tina: … he said, too… he said, um, ah… "Maybe in the following couple of years, you will become a lawyer too, and you will earn more money, and I feel the pressure. I have to work more harder!!" (LAUGHING, EXCITED VOICE)
> Donna: So it **is** important to him.
> Tina: And, you know, um, he …he even said that to his parents. His parents said: "Ah, see [Tina]" … my… my Chinese name… ah, "[Tina] has got a job, and he [she] will …maybe will earn more money than you, so you should start to work hard." And he said: "I'm already head-started", and you know, he's… even after the whole … whole day work, he will… after dinner he will, ah, go to the internet and do some research, and do some reading to try to improve her… his, um, work ability.
> (Tina, Interview Three, September 2009:29)

As the tone of the excerpt reveals, Tina was not unduly concerned by her husband's anxieties, and she stressed elsewhere both her sense of equality in the relationship and her husband's support for her career. Notwithstanding, as Tina's experience reveals,

transnational migration involving language change can significantly influence gendered power dynamics, as a result of unequal levels of cultural and linguistic capital in the post-migration society, and consequent shifts in the relative economic contribution of each person to the family unit. For a woman who values independence and self-determination, as Tina does, this may have a negative impact on her sense of self and her feeling of relationship equality.

5.3.1.1.2   Maria

Maria's arrival in Australia was the result of a two-step migration from Brazil, and the first step, from Brazil to Japan, was initiated by her husband, who accepted a promotional transfer there. As I explain elsewhere (see 7.5.2) Maria did not initially accompany him to Japan, because of her own business career. However, eventually, her husband presented something of an ultimatum: you must choose either the career or your marriage. She chose the marriage, and followed him to Japan, to become his financially dependent wife and devoted parent to their daughter. Maria recognised this move as being good for her relationship and said that in Japan she learned how to be a homemaker, a job skill she had not previously embraced. Echoing Tina's claims about her husband expressing career competitiveness, Maria spoke in a group discussion of her husband feeling that she was more successful, career-wise, than he.

> […] I'm very, very easy to make money than my husband. I can say to you, for everybody, I made $1million in one year.
> (Maria, Discussion Three, October 2008:3)

> Yeah, because my husband said I am very successful woman and he is not.
> (Maria, Discussion Three, October 2008:17)

Later, after their second migration, from Japan to Australia, her husband expressed fear, when Maria began to seek paid work, that she would once again return to her pre-Japan construction as a woman who, in his eyes, placed business and money ahead of family.

Maria: […] So when my husband saw it, I say: "I will help you", because my ... because we agree we will buy a house the second semester. So my husband say: "Okay, Maria will help". But I feel he's more …sad. After I ... he say ... and he ... he start to cry ... when we start to sleep I saw he's… (MAKES CRYING/SNIFFING SOUNDS).

Donna: Is he worried that you'll become Maria the businesswoman again?

Maria: Yeah.

Donna: And you won't be the wife and mother?

Maria: Yeah.

[…]

Maria: Yeah. I told my husband I could start a business, so my husband say: "No, no".

Donna: No, he's frightened of that?

Maria: He's very afraid, very afraid ... really afraid.

Donna: It'll be just like Brazil again? Is that what he's thinking?

Maria: Yeah. Yeah because in Brazil I'm very arrogance person ... I not so ...

[…]

Maria: I not so humble.

(Maria, Interview Two/part 3, April 2009:29-30)

In ways that echo Tina's experience, Maria's transnational migration can be seen as a means of coercing important shifts in gender subjectivities that privileged a more traditional division of labour and, arguably, affected power dynamics within the relationship.

5.3.1.1.3 Roxanna

In Iran, Roxanna's husband had always assumed a societally-legitimised role as the head of family and holder of superior knowledge concerning all matters beyond the immediate domestic sphere.

Yes, yes, and because I was very dependent in my country to my husband. After so… after many years work, I didn't work… I was at home… and my husband decided about **ev**erything, because he was out, every day, and whenever I wanted to say something, he said: "No, you don't know about the outside. I know better, and I'm 12 years older than do… than you. You…you don't know".

(Roxanna, Interview One, October 2008:18)

After she agreed to migrate to Australia, essentially because of their sons, the power dynamic between her and her husband shifted, as a result of his decision to remain most of the time in Iran, while she took up residence in Australia. In his absence, Roxanna became proxy house-head, with responsibility for running and maintaining the family home,

134

overseeing the building of a new home, and helping to establish the small business they

bought, as part of their Business visa. For example, she took the interview test for the

company's Lotto license application and was instrumental in early business meetings.

> But here, it's very different. He comes, I can say: "Oh, you don't know anything,
> because I was here 4 months more than you" (SMILING VOICE).
> (Roxanna, Interview One, October 2008:18)

On his visits, her husband seemed uncomfortable accepting Roxanna's leadership in

negotiating life in Australia and, based on their former power dynamic, he continually

challenged her assertions.

> Roxanna: Yes. He's very competitive, about everything.
> Donna: Against his own children, as well as you?
> Roxanna: Ah…with me. For example, he wants to get his driving license and he's not good in driving here, because the different side.
> Donna: And so, do you… do you drive?
> Roxanna: Yes. And… and now sh…he got a car for himself to practise, because sh…he asked me to learn him how to drive, and the first session, when I started to tell him about the rules here…
> […]
> Roxanna: … he said, "Ok, shall we bet you're not right? I know it's not that." I said: "Ok, there's no… there's no [unclear] to, because I know. I had the teacher, and he told me". He said: "No, it's not true", and about everything that I tried to teach him he said: "Shall we bet it's not right?" And then I told him: "It's better for you to try automatic car… mm… automatic license".
> Donna: Yeah, it's easier.
> Roxanna: "It's easier and you can take a test". He said: "No, you have manual, and I want to have manual". Do you know, he's very compet…competitive about **ev**erything. When I see something in the… when we are sitting and we are talking about something, I say my idea about something and he say: "No, it's not true. Roxanna is not right. It's not true". Whatever I say, he says it's not true, because he is competitive.
> (Roxanna, Interview Three, December 2009:3)

However, Roxanna no longer supported his assumptions of superiority, and she contested

the power differential that had historically characterised their relationship.

> Roxanna: […] but I told him, this morning… mm: "I was younger that time, and …" do you know… "But now I am older and I can't be patient. I answer you". In the last… I don't know because of my age, because I thought that I needed him very much, and now… to be honest, I need him because he has to support us.
> Donna: You need him financially, but in no other way.
> Roxanna: Financially now, and then…um…… so, I am …and sometimes, maybe I didn't understand what does…what did he mean, but now I understand.

I said: "Ok, please stop. You are the best! Really, you are…" I … I told
him this morning: "You **are** the best (HUMOUR IN VOICE). Believe
me. Ok, stop!"
(Roxanna, Interview Three, December 2009:3)

The basis of Roxanna's post-migration negotiation of their power dynamic was her English language development and her experiential understanding of a widening range of English-mediated and context-specific societal mechanisms, including the education and health care systems, small business and motor vehicle licensing, property transactions, and the hiring of tradespeople. The following excerpt comes from an email reporting the approaching visit of her husband, who was escorting Roxanna's mother to Australia.

Living here has made me stronger more than that i was before. So i can say my
opinion and i can show my mood. (Roxanna, email communication, March 2009)

Roxanna's experience of living in Australia without her husband had necessitated her assuming a primary leadership role in the family, which provided her with the means to contest her husband's assumptions of superiority; whereas, in Iran, her inferior position was reinforced by wider assumptions about gender subjectivities in Iranian society, and by her sense of herself as "just a user" in the role of financially dependent wife (Roxanna, Interview Two, February 2009:7).

While each woman's experience of gendered relationship power dynamics was unique, transnational migration had an impact on the way that dynamic was performed, in all three cases by significantly altering the role of the woman in the relationship. In the case of both Tina and Maria, transnational migration was seen to advance the financial status and symbolic capital of the husband during the immediate post-migration period, and in the case of Roxanna, the circumstances of her post-migration settlement, which included English language acquisition, were seen to afford her greater cultural capital and the means of contesting the pre-migration power differential that existed between her and her

husband (for a discussion of similar shifts in gender dynamics within specific migrant communities in US America, see Donnelly, 1994, and Gordon, 2009).

5.3.2   Dependence

One of the key manifestations of relationship power dynamics and gender equality is forms of dependence, and six of the nine participants spoke either about feelings of dependence during the post-migration period, and/or aspirations or memories of independence.

> I want to be independent person, not just a housewife. Hopefully I can make enough money to support my husband and my future children.
> (Kumiko, writing task, May 2008)

> […] and in this way I feel really like a parasite, because I'm not working, not helping him in, like, things where we should do together, and I'm still… I think in this age I still can work and help him in some way…
> (Vesna, Interview Two, February 2009:3)

> Donna: What do you imagine your life in Australia will be like in ten years' time?
> […]
> Roxanna: I think my English would be very perfect in ten…next time, because I try hard (SMILING VOICE), I read and I listen to news and I try very hard to improve my English, because if I want to stay here, I have to do it. And, I think I can go to study some… my favourite courses.
> Donna: At university?
> Roxanna: At university, and then I think …um, I can manage my life **my**self, without any help.
> (Roxanna, Interview One, October 2008:25)

A number of women identified linguistic and/or financial dependence on their partner as something they were uncomfortable with or aspired to change. For these women, both kinds of dependencies were causally related to transnational migration and language change, and they were engaged in efforts to alleviate the dependence, through learning English and gaining meaningful employment. However, one participant, Anna, who reported feeling isolated by her lack of English and was keen to alleviate her initial language dependence on her husband, was at the same time able to find something deeply meaningful to her sense of being a woman in being so dependent on a man.

> For me it was interesting to move to Australia because I was married to an
> Australian and suddenly my whole life was effected. It was hard in the beginning
> because everything was new for me: the environment, the people, the food and the
> language. It was not hard for me because of different culture but it was hard
> because of the language. It was easy to learn English on the paper but now my
> whole everyday life was effected and I became more dependent (in my case on my
> husband) and because my communication was sometimes limited I start to feel
> a little bit isolated. But in some way I liked to be dependent because I start to feel
> like a real woman because while I wasn't married I had to work and go through life
> by myself and sometimes you have to be like man strong in everyday life but now I
> start to feel more like a woman because you need help every day and I think that
> change helps me to become real me: to be a woman, a wife, a mother.
> (Anna, written response to discussion topic, June 2009)

Anna's evocations of gendered subjectivity, for both women and men, reveal a fairly

traditional division into man = independent/strong, and woman = dependent (on a man).

This underscores her sense of attaining real womanhood via a new state of dependence on

a man, which followed not specifically from marrying, but from the transnational

migration that her marriage necessitated. Migration, not only to a new culture but,

significantly, to a new language, provided her construction as a "real woman", through

becoming a wife and later a mother, and also through the ways that language made her

dependent on her husband during the immediate post-migration period. While she

elsewhere described this state as akin to being in a cage (see p139), the excerpt above

shows that Anna was also able to perceive something enjoyable about being, if only for

this brief period, a woman linguistically dependent on a man. With the development of her

English, Anna described herself as a "more complete person" than she had been prior to

migrating, and this was linked to her status as a married woman and speaker of English.

> [...] I think that I'm more, hmm ...how can I say... more complete person, you
> know[↗]. I am married now, and it's different for me and I, er, I learn this English,
> you know[↗]. It's good for me and I feel, er, confidence, you know, er, about
> everything and... (Anna, Interview One, June 2008:11)

When I asked if her relationship with her husband changed as she became better at using

English, Anna spoke about the return to a greater feeling of independence and sense of

equality with him.

Yes, I think it is, because you feel more confident in relationship with your husband, you know, I think, before, it was just like … how can I say… like, in the cage, you know? (LAUGHS) It was very hard, you know, and he was the man, you know, and he decided usually, all the things, because for you it was very hard, you know, to do anything. But now, it's little bit different, you know, you start to do some things by yourself. Don't ask him, you know? But, I think it's alright, you know, because it's just become normal relationship, you know?
(Anna, Discussion Five, February 2009:3-4)

What the data from Anna show is that relative language competence confers inequalities of power and dependence in a relationship, with implications for identity constructions and gender relations in the post-migration settlement period. However, the data also show the possibility that, at least in the short term, this may not only be experienced as negative, but also as a kind of gender-affirmation that turns on the individual pre-migration experience of traditional gendered subjectivity.

5.3.3   Summary

In this section, I have attempted to isolate from a consideration of the impact of historical constructions of gender in key family relationships the specific influence of transnational migration involving language change on how a woman negotiates power, subjectivity, and dependence in heterosexual relationships. I have shown how transnational migration is gendered, in the way it can be seen to advance traditional subjectivities for women, and also in the way it can disrupt pre-migration power dynamics.

5.4   Case Study: Michiko

I would like now to extend my analysis of the self in key family relationships by focusing on Michiko, exploring issues related to language, race, and gender that arise from an analysis of her post-migration settlement trajectory. Some of these issues are best analysed as intersectional across two or more categories and, where this is the case, rather than attempt a discreet categorisation of a multidimensional reality, I shall present it under one of the major theme headings, but treat it as intersectional.

Michiko's settlement trajectory was closely tied to her being in a relationship with an English-speaking Australian man, and early in the study she claimed that she had not chosen to live in Australia so much as settled there by accident, due to her relationship. While she was not the only participant who could claim a key family relationship as the primary cause of migration – indeed all of the women migrated because of family, with a total of five on spouse visas – Michiko's relationship was pivotal to many of the settlement experiences she reported, and her commitment to settlement varied according to the state of her relationship. In addition, through her many spoken and written reflections, across a range of interactional spaces, she shared a detailed longitudinal view of both her relationship and her settlement trajectory.

5.4.1   Language

The most significant language feature of Michiko's relationship with her husband is that it is conducted entirely in English, due to his monolingualism. During the course of the study, Michiko revealed some of the difficulties with this, and also the way her English development impacted on communication between them. I address some of these issues, as intersectional with race, in section 5.4.2, and here I will focus on the language of their interactions and the way Michiko used blogging as a tool for venting about her cross-cultural relationship.

5.4.1.1 Monolingual interaction

In our first interview, Michiko talked about communications between her and her husband, describing some of the important aspects of monolingual interaction in a cross-cultural marriage. The impact of both language and culture, which cannot be considered in isolation, on the ideology of the emotional space was enormous. By this, I mean that the

assumptions about what being in a relationship entailed, and how this should be negotiated, were mediated not just by the language used, but the different languacultures of the speakers. The language they used always had to be English, since Michiko's partner had not learned to speak Japanese, and this put the burden of communication and understanding on Michiko, who had to make a considerable effort in order to reach a place where she could communicate her feelings on a range of issues in a way that she felt satisfied with. In her negotiations with her husband over important elements of their relationship status, such as whether to marry and which family name to choose, Michiko was at pains to ensure that her husband not only accepted her position but also understood it, as an expression of her personal ideology and its relation to her culture.

> Michiko: Um…Sometimes I struggle to tell how I feel … something… but I …
>   fortunately, like, he can guess my feelings.
> Donna: Oh, ok.
> Michiko: Yeah, so… but it's very difficult to… not hundred percent… but I want
>   him to understand hundred percent.
> (Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:6-7)

I asked Michiko whether she felt she understood her partner, given that he only spoke English.

> Michiko: Actually he doesn't speak… he doesn't talk much… he is very quiet…
>   so one time we had a big argue and I think this is not nationality or
>   anything… just personal thing… yeah personality… and I said but… for
>   example… if I was in Japan I don't say to him… or I don't say to
>   Japanese person…but I say to him, like: "Oh, this country, if you have
>   opinion, you can say.   No-one care about you, what you say or
>   something… maybe some people care but…"
> Donna: In Australia, or in Japan?
> Michiko: In Australia, yeah.
> Donna: People don't care what you think?
> Michiko: Yeah… think or, you know, people knows different opinion …everyone
>   got different things… they care, but it … that's ok… your opinion is
>   your opinion. "And if you have something you feel something inside of
>   you and you need to tell me, 'cos otherwise I don't understand, you
>   know, the culture, Australian culture. I understand some of them but I
>   haven't seen whole and I don't see your life, I don't see your
>   background, so you need to tell me if it's like disagreement or
>   something like that, otherwise I am from other planet."
> (Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:9)

The excerpt above reveals Michiko's sense of different communicative norms for English and for Japanese regarding the expression of opinions, and the way this constructed her differently in interpersonal communications, including the language-specific expectations she had regarding the need for openness. Her comments connect with another point she raised, later in the same interview, when she talked about becoming "lazy", via English-mediated social interactions. I discuss the latter point further in Chapter Six (see 6.2.2.2), but both examples reveal how Michiko negotiated her identity construction in response to language-specific communicative expectations of Japanese and English. This changed over time, because while early on, Michiko was still able to construct each language-specific persona, by the end of the study, when she was reporting English as the main language of her thoughts, she revealed how her English self was beginning to colonise her Japanese identity, demonstrating the internalisation of cultural norms and expectations alongside language development (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). It is also interesting to note, in the excerpt above, how Michiko encouraged her husband to construct himself according to what she saw as an English norm for interpersonal communication, pointing out the importance of communicating openly to a cultural 'alien' ("otherwise I am from other planet").

In Interview Two, I asked Michiko whether developing English had made her relationship with her husband easier. Her reply began as follows.

> Ohhhhh… may…be…maybe… (SHE IS SAYING THIS SLOWLY AS SHE PONDERS MY QUESTION) …maybe, yeah, little bit different, but…hmmm… I don't know, cos beginning, um… maybe not English, but… English as well, but mostly …ah, cos I understood his culture now.
> (Michiko, Interview Two, February 2009:33)

Importantly, Michiko reveals her understanding that it is not so much language development that is key to improved communication, but developing understanding of the culture that underlies the language. I will return to this point in Chapter Eight (see 8.6.2),

when I discuss the implications for settlement language programs. The same point is also implied in the following excerpt from the text Michiko wrote about her relationship.

> I can speak and understand English more than before. So my husband and I can communicate easier than before. It doesn't mean only good way, also negative too. Because I can express my feeling and it will become big arguing sometimes. But I think it is much better than zip our feeling.
> (Michiko, written response to discussion topic, August 2008)

Earlier in the text, she spoke about the different expectations regarding communicative openness in Japanese and English, in light of which, her reference here to being able to express her feelings more might be interpreted as communicating a mixture of both cultural and linguistic ability.

In our final interview, I asked Michiko if she thought it would be good if her husband spoke Japanese, but she said he was not a good language learner, so she was not keen on having him speak Japanese to her.

> Michiko: Yeah, he ... he's not good at learning another language, he ... some people are very good but some people are not, that's …yeah.
> […]
> Michiko: But I don't know ... but he started to say little words in Japanese ...
> Donna: Oh really?
> Michiko: ... because my friend's husband learning Japanese and yeah, not competing but he…you know.
> Donna: It's made him think about it maybe, yeah. Does ... and does ... do you like that, that he says the odd word in Japanese?
> Michiko: I don't like ... I don't like. It sounds strange so I don't like.
> Donna: Does it?
> Michiko: But he ... if he wants to, just: "You can do it".
> Donna: […] 'Cos you think of him, your relationship is about English between you?
> Michiko: Yeah, yeah.
> Donna: Is that why it might seem strange when he uses a Japanese word?
> Michiko: Oh no, his Japanese is awful, so … (LAUGHS).
> Donna: So, it's like ….
> Michiko: Yeah: "I can't hear you, I can't listen!"
> (Michiko, Interview Three, November 2009:66-67)

The excerpt suggests an unwillingness on Michiko's part to experience her husband as an inexpert speaker of Japanese, which could be interpreted as displeasure at hearing her first

language so abused, or also displeasure at her husband being constructed in an expression of intellectual and authoritative weakness.

5.4.1.2 Blogging

Like many of her contemporaries, Michiko is a blogger, and she used two different blog spaces – one English, the other Japanese - to express her ideas and feelings during the course of the study. The English blog was set up in June 2008, during an AMEP computing class in which the teacher encouraged each student to start a blog in order to practise English by creating an online presence. The blog consisted of comments about what Michiko had been learning in class and class events, as well as news postings about animals, many of them zoo animals and featuring a mother-child relationship. There were also photographs, taken from the web, of mother-child pairs from the animal world, all expressing a sentimental view of mother-love. The only image that did not express mother-love showed a small fluffy yellow chick determinedly trying to keep up with a larger group of dark-coloured ducks who were turned away from the chick, apparently ignoring it. Michiko typed in large letters underneath this photo the words: 'I hate discrimination!' There was also an entry, for October 27th 2008, that detailed Michiko's experiences selling goods at a flea market. She described how some of the stall-holders, who were European migrants, discriminated against Chinese, African and Arabic buyers, which she described as upsetting and confusing. The last entry for Michiko's English blog was posted in November 2008.

Her Japanese blog, which began in August 2007, was arguably more important to Michiko, in terms of its content. Until March 2010 she used it as a kind of public diary space, sometimes as a cathartic way of venting the frustrations of being in a cross-cultural relationship. Michiko said she wrote, in a humorous manner, about problematic

interactions with her husband, and about the emotional and cultural divide that sometimes opened up between their world views.

Although Michiko said elsewhere that she found it easier to be more open when speaking English than Japanese, she could still write more easily in Japanese and this was one of the reasons she gave for expressing her feelings more openly on the Japanese blog than the English blog. Another reason was that some of her current friends knew the address of her English blog, and she did not want to reveal deeply personal information to them. She preferred to write about personal topics in Japanese to a largely anonymous Japanese-speaking web audience (very few of her Japanese friends knew about this blog). For example, Michiko said she wrote about the interactions she had with her husband regarding the 7th of July celebration that occurs in Japan, where people write wishes on a bamboo stick. Michiko's husband refused to get involved, because he seemed to find it silly, since the wishes would not come true by writing them on a bamboo stick. His approach was realistic, scientific, where Michiko was enacting a whimsical childhood tradition that was more about magic than probability. When this kind of clash of cultures occurred between them, Michiko said she felt angry, so she wrote the blog as a catharsis. She found this helped her cope and was better than complaining to others about her relationship.

Donna: Does it… in terms of the stuff… the cross-cultural communication stuff with your husband, does writing the blog sometimes help to… like, if you're feeling upset about something that's happened, does it… what does it…

Michiko: Mm… oh yeah, very much… it helps, yeah. It… because mostly I'm angry from that things, because he don't understand and then I really got angry but I can't … say to my friends… sometimes… I… usually I say to my friend, but my friend say to husband… husband is Australian, and he said everything to… you know, it's too complicated and then the next time he [her husband] said to me, like: "Michiko, you complain too much… blah, blah, blah… so, um… I try to not say, cos if I … even if my friends say complain, like, each class, you know, I don't like it, so if

I say, like, complain, always complain, complain to my friend, it's not

good for her either…

Donna: Yeah … sure.

Michiko: … you know, not good communicate. So, I decide to write in a blog,

so…

Donna: Blog.

Michiko: Yeah.

Donna: So, you get all the feelings out …

Michiko: Yeah, yeah…

Donna: … but it's anonymous.

Michiko: … and when I writing, I wanna make funny, so it's … like, angry…

um…change to, like…makes laugh and more funny, and…

(Michiko, Interview Two, February 2009:31)

In a sense, the Japanese blog was an anonymous public journal. This meant that Michiko

could write things she would not feel comfortable saying to a friend in Japanese, perhaps

expressing an English-mediated openness in a Japanese languaculture domain.

5.4.2   Race

As the preceding information about blogging reveals, Michiko and her husband at times

experienced problems that grew out of being in an English-mediated cross-cultural

relationship. These included their differing approaches to the question of marriage, the

considerations involved in choosing a family name after marriage, and the level of

communicative openness they should aspire to, as a couple. In addition, Michiko

experienced being positioned by her husband as an outsider in Australia, with reduced

symbolic capital. The issue of communicative openness concerns the languaculture of

English, and is thus better described as the intersection of language and race. Nevertheless,

I will include consideration of it in the present section, in line with my opening remarks

(see 5.4).

5.4.2.1 Communicative openness

In August 2008, Michiko wrote a lengthy response to the discussion topic 'Relationship',

and in it she explores in detail some of the major issues that had arisen in negotiating the

terms of her cross-cultural marriage, beginning with what she saw as culturally based assumptions about openness.

> I don't know what to write about relationship between us. When we first met which is 6 years ago, he didn't understand any Japanese. So I had to speak English all the time and also I cared he understood or not more than now. I was frustrated that I couldn't express all my feelings in English. I suppose he was same as me, maybe even now. Because I can understand what he says most of time. But of course we have different background which is Japanese people doesn't say everything what they feel. This is the most polite way and showing how the person who speaks is mature. I guess virtue is the word in English. And his culture is opposite of us. But unfortunately he doesn't say what he thinks and feels. So sometimes we both just zip our mouths even if we had to talk about serious problem. Now I looked back our relationship since we met, I think this behave was wrong. Because last 2years, we found a lot of problems (maybe it's not really problems, kind of difference or miss understand) between us.
> (Michiko, written response to discussion topic, August 2008)

The "last two years" refers to the time they had been living together in Australia, during which time Michiko had completed a childcare course at Central and studied English in the AMEP. As a result of her increased understanding of cultural norms for communicating in English, Michiko now judged her previous behaviour, which she frames positively for Japanese ("this is the most polite way and showing how the person who speaks is mature"), as an incorrect style of interpersonal communication. She also judges her husband a poor communicator, according to her standards for English, which suggests that she does not define norms for English and for Australia based on her husband alone, but in terms of a cultural stereotype, that he is also then judged in relation to.

5.4.2.2 Relationship status

Another aspect of cultural discord between Michiko and her husband occurred over whether or not they needed to get married, after living for some time as a de facto couple in Australia. Michiko outlined in writing her reasons for wanting to marry, locating them in her relationship with her parents and with Japanese culture. As she explains below, this came into conflict with her husband's position on marrying, the logic of which Michiko struggled to comprehend.

For example, we did de facto last year, which means to me is still boyfriend and girlfriend. But for him it is same as marriage. I did understood how we understood differently but it wasn't problem until I started consider my parents and culture. When I started thinking about my parents and culture, I wanted my parents be a happy. I didn't think about other people. They are always worried about my life and looked after me. I know they love me very much. So I wanted get married for my parents. I thought it was not too difficult and doesn't bother him, because "de facto" is same meaning as marriage for him. But he said to me that it is same meaning so we don't have to get married and get married is just write on a peace of paper. It doesn't make change at all. If he says so why he can't sign? If it doesn't affect our relationship why he doesn't want to do this? This was my big question and made me sick for long time. While he stayed Japan before, he lived with me and my parents, so he should know our culture but why he can't care of my parents. I think mainly between men's brain and women's brain is works differently and it doesn't matter any culture background they have. But I wanted him to understand how I feel and think about my life include family. So I explained a lot of times why I want to get married rather than de facto. It took nearly year until officially get married. (Michiko, written response to discussion topic, August 2008)

As Michiko explains, although she could understand that she and her partner had different approaches to marriage, located in culture, she also had to consider her parents' feelings, in line with what she had elsewhere revealed about the lifelong involvement of Asian parents in the lives of their children (see 5.4.3.2). Although she identifies their different positions as being culturally based, it is interesting that Michiko also suggests, towards the end of the excerpt above, that this goes beyond culture, in the sense of being a gender-based difference ("between men's brain and women's brain is works differently"). The excerpt reveals the way Michiko is able to draw together aspects of languaculture and gender in a layered understanding of what is at play in interactions between her and her partner, isolating gender as a separate, possibly overarching, issue in her analysis of their relationship discord.

5.4.2.3 Family name

The success of Michiko's long campaign for her and her partner to marry represented a satisfactory solution to a cross-cultural relationship problem; however, it also opened up another problem – what to do about choosing a family name. Michiko expressed deep

emotional ties to her culture, her language and her family, and these were all

interconnected, and sometimes conflicted, expressions of the self. Thus, while she could

decry the anxiety she felt about speaking Japanese well enough for the appropriate respect

for others to be articulated, in contrast to the social ease she felt when speaking English

(see 6.2.2.2), Michiko also had a clear and proud sense of her Japanese cultural identity.

She said the following when speaking about the issue of choosing a family name for her

identity as a wife:

> […]   … and if I say Michiko F_____ [husband's last name] it sounds like I am in
> the middle… but I am not in the middle.. I could be on the middle, but… mostly I
> am Japanese…I still like my culture and I am taking my culture from Japan to here
> and I am not gonna forget everything and I want use my Japanese too.
> (Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:7)

In a longer, written piece, Michiko explained further the implications of her choice of

family name.

> Usually when Japanese people get married girls change their family name to
> husband's family name, except if the girl's family has only daughters. In this case
> there are three choices which are a husband changes his family name to wife's one,
> girl's family give up to keep their family name or break up the relationship. Luckily
> I don't get married with a Japanese person, I'll get married with a Australian in here.
> So I don't have to change my family name and I can add his family name if I want.
> When I told this idea to him, he asked me that why I don't take only his family
> name. He said it is normal in Australia. I was very shocked by this. I thought he
> doesn't like traditional way to get married and prefer to do de facto, but he asked me
> to change my family name because of traditional. It made me mad and confused.
> I've never thought those word comes out from his mouth.
> […]
> So I started explain to him why I don't want to change my family name. The
> reasons are easy and clear. Because my sister was already married and she changed
> her family name, so I'm an only child who has this family name. And why I have to
> change, not him? I have been with this name for 33years, same as him. Why only I
> have to choose? I asked him about changing his family name to mine once, but he
> didn't want to change so I've never asked since then.
> (Michiko, written response to discussion topic, August 2008)

The excerpt demonstrates not only how Michiko had developed an English-mediated sense

of dominant cultural norms regarding marriage in Australia, but once again how she was

able to position her husband in relation to those, analysing him as more or less conforming,

and highlighting the inconsistencies in his approach. After much discussion to ensure that

Michiko's husband understood her position regarding the significance of the family name, they agreed that she would adopt a hyphenated last name, derived from both her own and her husband's family names. Michiko was pleased about this outcome, as it made her parents happy and satisfied her own desire to acknowledge not only her husband, but also the cultural importance of retaining and expressing her Japanese identity through the family name.

> Yeah, I really care of my family too… so and actually I phone to my parents and I said I will keep my family name, cos in this country I can keep and they said "Thank you! I'm glad you…" (LAUGHS). Yeah, "I am proud you", that's what she says, so I am really happy cos I can't stay with them cos I live in here and I can't see them lots… you know, often… so it's… I don't…I want to make them happy too. (Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:8)

5.4.2.4 Symbolic capital denied

In our final interview, Michiko referred to the way that her status as a transnational migrant positioned her as having reduced legitimacy and symbolic capital in both the pre- and post-migration societies.

> Um…Like, last time I think it wasn't recording, we weren't recording (referring to a previous exchange with Donna), but my mum said, "Cos you ..."… this time, when I went back to Japan… "Cos you're not living here, you don't understand Japanese culture" … and I can't remember, someone came or I really can't remember, but I wanted to say opinion, but she said, "Cos you're not living, you know, you don't know what's going on here", and those things. But in here, like, my husband said, "Because you're not growing up in here, so you don't know Australian culture". So I thought…I go: 'Where am I belong to?' You know, I'm Japanese but I not belong to in Japan, because my mum said, and here my husband said: "You don't understand Australian culture", so what can I do?
> (Michiko, Interview Three, November 2009:47)

As the excerpt reveals, her mother felt that, since Michiko had stopped living in Japan, she could no longer assume the right to speak authoritatively on matters concerning Japanese society. She went on to explain that her mother had assumed that since Michiko was now married to an Australian, she was an Australian citizen. This meant that, in some way, she was no longer Japanese, as though the two identities were mutually exclusive. However, at the same time as her mother considered her as having reduced Japanese status, Michiko's

husband considered that, because she had not grown up in Australia, she had reduced Australian symbolic capital, with implications for the authority of her opinions about cultural norms. As Michiko indicates in the final sentence of the excerpt above, this made her feel stuck in a liminal space of belonging and legitimacy – no longer Japanese, but not yet Australian.

5.4.3   Gender

Although Michiko was clear about the reasons why she did not enjoy living in Japan, and could articulate the benefits to her sense of gender equality and independence of settling in Australia (see 6.4.2), she nevertheless indexed her decision to be there to her relationship with an Australian man.

Michiko:	Um, before…before I came here…actually I came here 6 years ago…
Donna:	Mm.
Michiko:	…and I traveled all around Australia and I found that this country is very good to live because a lot of natures…
Donna:	Mhm.
Michiko:	…and I like, but that time I didn't think I will live anywhere, but now I think I'm … and before I didn't think I gonna have, like, my family…
Donna:	Mhm.
Michiko:	…because I can live myself, you know, I can get my job, but now I found…I met my boyfriend in here and…
[…]	
Michiko:	[…] and we talked about, like, future… oh things like…you know, everything, and I didn't like children before but now… um …it's getting changed… um… from his opinion and the life… to live in here.
(Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:2-3)	

Donna:	So, do you feel like you chose this country, for certain reasons, or do you just feel like you're here accidentally?
Michiko:	Accidentally.
(Michiko, Discussion One, August 2008:22)	

These two quotes from early in the study reveal some of the ways that Michiko saw her chance involvement with an Australian man as changing the course of her life in some important ways. Half-way through the study, when she was experiencing doubts about her relationship, Michiko also expressed doubts about whether she would remain in Australia at all, saying that she would be better off moving back to Japan. This appeared to link her

migration trajectory, in spite of what she had articulated as the personal benefits of living in Australia, directly to being with her husband. That is, she would only stay in Australia while the relationship lasted, and could not articulate a post-migration identity centred on her life as an individual, but only on her construction as a married woman.

> Yeah, those are my choice, but only the reason I'm living here is him, but because I got married, accidentally, or I met with him, so … he can't live in Japan, so I don't mind to live anywhere… I decide to live in here.
> (Michiko, personal conversation, June 30, 2009:14)

The excerpt above shows that Michiko has a consciousness of her choice in migrating to Australia and in remaining there, and throughout the course of the research project, she negotiated the terms of this choice and her own aspirations, as she weighed up her decision about whether to commit to a long term relationship with both a man and the country he lived in.

5.4.3.1 Gender and language

In interview and group discussion Michiko spoke about the ways that she felt more emotionally comfortable in Australia, which included feeling more relaxed negotiating new interactions and friendships in English (see 6.2.2.2) than she did in Japanese. Nevertheless, during the course of the study, Michiko did not get to a place where she expressed enough confidence in her use of English to enter the employment market. I analyse this in Chapter Seven as a conflation of barriers connected to language and race (see 7.2). However, it is also possible that her gender socialisation was a factor that influenced an apparent conflict between, on the one hand, Michiko's various study and work goals, never progressed, and on the other a desire to be provided for financially by her husband while taking care of the house and home. To establish this point, I would offer the following data findings.

During the study period, Michiko's husband at times encouraged her to enter the workforce and contribute to the family income, and as the following excerpt shows, he constructed her as a competent enough speaker of English to gain employment in the public service.

> Because my husband working with government, there is Japanese lady working, but she is using dictionary all the time. So she… my husband told me, like: "You can work, your English better than her" (LAUGHS).
> (Michiko, Discussion Two, September 2008:8)

In Interview Two, Michiko spoke about how her friends in Japan thought she was lucky to have married an Australian man and did not have to do paid work, and Michiko spoke of how she resisted her husband's encouragement to get a job.

> […] if I say, like: "I'm not working at the moment", […] people say: "You're lucky, you're lucky, you're lucky" …you know… "You don't have"… you know, he's pushing me, just I'm refusing, that's all (LAUGHS).
> (Michiko, Interview Two, February 2009:45)

The fact that Michiko described herself as "refusing" to look for work, and could not seem fully to commit to any of the occupations she considered for study, led me to wonder if a significant goal in marrying was, for Michiko, not that dissimilar to that of her former work colleagues and other female friends in Japan – to stop paid employment in order to become a full-time wife and eventually a mother, in line with widely held subjectivities for women in Japan that she had grown up with.

> I think…yeah…women in Japan…still people think women has to have children when they get maybe 25…they should marry with 25, or something. That's still very strongly… (Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:14)

During Interview Three, Michiko said that her husband wanted to have children, but he would like her to work for at least one year first, so that she would be entitled to maternity leave and then a job to return to later. He encouraged Michiko to apply for a job in the public sector.

> Michiko: […] that's his plan, but he asked me to get a job with government, so…
> and work one year and maternity leave… it's his plan for me, and
> then… was…
> Donna: It's a good idea.
> Michiko: Yeah, he's … some… cos, I don't know other company, but he used to
> work with government for nine years, and now he's working with
> government again, so he knows about government… how they work,
> and now he's in Human Resources, so he knows a lot of things.
> (Michiko, Interview Three, November 2009:49)

Michiko resisted her husband's suggestions, which she describes here as "his plan for me", and did not apply for any public service jobs, saying that she did not really want to do that kind of work. Her expressed goal was to complete a Library Studies course and then work as a librarian with a focus on children. By the end of the data collection period, although Michiko still gave this as a goal, along with possibly studying to be a dental assistant, she spoke of study as being in the future, "but not soon" (Interview Three, November 2009:41). In Interview Three, I asked Michiko about her English competence, and whether she felt it was adequate to her needs.

> Donna: […] are there still things you can't do in English but you'd like to do?
> Michiko: Umm………English?
> Donna: Mm.
> Michiko: Um… cos it's not much pressure for English or …now I kind of ... I'm
> in the freedom at the moment and I don't have pressure …
> […]
> Donna: Mm. Mm. So, you can do everything you need to do now?
> Michiko: Yeah, and if I... and nothing I **need** now, at the moment so…
> (Michiko, Interview Three, November 2009:39)

In assessing her current position, Michiko uses "in the freedom at the moment"- to describe a state of not studying or looking for work, and being almost entirely supported by her wage-earning husband. She was engaged with setting up a web site where she could write café reviews for Japanese tourists, and she expressed pleasure in being at home, working on her own project. That she could describe this state in such positive terms made me wonder if Michiko was happier doing this than she would have been seeking paid employment, and whether she experienced the need to pursue paid employment and an independent income as a burden, rather than a liberation. In articulating goals that centred

154

on study and career, as she had throughout the data collection period, was Michiko simply presenting an English-mediated subjectivity, albeit one that she was not convinced about constructing for herself? If this was the case, it is possible that her expressed doubts about the work-readiness of her English might also have included doubts about her commitment to gendered subjectivity in the post-migration society, which included participation in paid work. In making this point, I do not wish to diminish the importance of barriers to post-migration employment constructed around language and race; however, I wish also to include the possibility of gender-related issues, specifically with regard to the cross-cultural construction of an identity as a wife, that impacted on Michiko's post-migration settlement aspirations.

5.4.3.2 Dependence

One of the issues that Michiko spoke of, in a slightly embarrassed way, during a group discussion session was her level of continuing financial dependence on her parents – for example, they still gave her money when she needed large extra sums, and paid for her trips back to Japan. She also revealed her husband's disapproval of this, and explained their divergent positions in terms of cultural relativity, suggesting that Asian parents expect to support their kids for life, if necessary. I remember at the time hastening to make Michiko feel more comfortable about this by revealing how my own parents had recently bought me a car, and I was considerably older than her.

During our second interview, a few months later, I asked Michiko how she felt about her level of financial dependence on her parents. I was interested to pursue this topic with her and discover how it played out in her relationship, because of her self-conscious tone when she had raised it previously, as though she were aware it was not a good thing, in the Australian context, still to be financially supported by your parents at the age of 34.

Michiko: Yeah I know the problem, because I **am**, and my sister as well…
Donna: The same, yeah.
Michiko: … and now I knew it's not good. Used to, I thought not bad, cos the parents has to responsible for kids, forever…
Donna: Ohhh!
Michiko: … but my husband said: "But parents is not exist… you know… doesn't exist forever", you know. They are older than me, so they die: "So, what you gonna do?" But, my sister and I both said: "I die, too" …you know, but (LAUGHS) … but for him: "You craazy!!" You know…
Donna: […] So you really thought that would be your solution? 'Well, we'll just die, too'. What if you didn't die? You'd kill yourself?
Michiko: See, that's… that's what … that's my husband say: "Ok… but… but… you know, you have family… your own family… you have to live with your family now", and my sister: "She has to live with her family, too"… you know… **her** family too…
Donna: Yeah.
Michiko: … and my parents is, of course family, but they have their life…
Donna: Yeah, separate from your life.
Michiko: Yeah.
Donna: Yeah.
Michiko: That, for maybe Asian people… like, Tina has told that too… **al**ways family, not independent, really.
(Michiko, Interview Two, February 2009:35-36)

Living in Australia with her husband had encouraged Michiko now to regard her financial dependence on her parents as a "problem", but she was still conflicted about this, and explained the expectations of this aspect of parent/child dynamics in terms of culture. Michiko believed that Asian families expect the parents to continue looking after their children well into adulthood, whereas she had learned from her husband that the expectation in Australia was that once the child had reached adulthood, she would have learned to take over responsibility for her life choices and material needs. She elsewhere spoke with admiration about how her husband had taken financial responsibility for his life as a teenager, and that he was very good at managing their lives.

> […] but, you know, I'm really happy to with him, because he knows how to earn money, or how to do everything for life. Must we need to pay rent, electric and water and everything's really […]… never enough, and if you wanna have two children, then have to pay money for children, not only for parents, so it's really, really good… he's working really hard……not hard, really, cos public servant. Not hard job, like mining or anything, but…
> (Michiko, Discussion Five, February 2009:22)

The question of financial dependence, this time in relation to her husband, came up again when Michiko was having doubts about her relationship, during 2009, as revealed in the following excerpt from a conversation we had on the eve of her departure for a three-month visit to Japan.

Michiko: … like, you know, I really… **I was always positive to get a job in here**…
Donna: Yeah.
Michiko: …and I want to make, like, bank account to put money in so I can see how much I, you know, built up every month, every two… every fourth month, but my husband said, you know: "You don't have to it, you only have to do…"… so that's basically…(SMALL IRONIC LAUGH)
Donna: And do you feel, instinctively, that his decision is more important, that he's the man, so therefore you should… you should…
Michiko: He's asking… he's… he's spoken to me, like: "If you wanna make bank account, I'm not gonna help you anything".
Donna: Oh, so you would have to pay half of the rent…
Michiko: Yeah.
Donna: … and half of the food and everything.
Michiko: Yes, everythings. That's he say. But, for me, is …um… after [unclear…I feel?], like, different (HER VOICE SOUNDS A BIT EMOTIONAL). You know, what's the different if… with why I get job or not? What's the difference? Nothing difference, because I wanna help the… you know, of course I want… I will pay for rent or everything but if you say, like: "I'm not gonna **help** you any more", that's like… is he control… wanna control **me**, my **life** or, you know…? Then, like, I've started [thinking] like: 'Ahhh, maybe I …if I live my…by my… myself, or, you know, alone, could be my life more easier to do something (LAUGHS, IN A SLIGHTLY HYSTERICAL WAY). He makes me complicate [↗].
(Michiko, personal conversation, June 30, 2009:15-16)

Here, Michiko expresses frustration and disappointment with the cost, to her sense of independence and self-determinacy, of the terms of her husband's continued financial support. She also articulates her right to her own money, regardless of whether she is engaged in paid work, implying an equal legitimacy for both paid and unpaid work identities ("what's the different if… with why I get job or not?").   This understanding conflicts with her husband's sense that he is supporting Michiko only in the absence of paid work ("If you wanna make bank account, I'm not gonna help you anything"), and that if she is not earning money, she is therefore dependent on him. Michiko's final words, ("he makes me complicate") speak to the difficulties she experienced in their conflicting

expectations about gendered subjectivity in relationships, the relative value of paid and unpaid work, and the way dependence is both defined and performed in relation to this.

5.5   Summary

In this chapter I have discussed some of the important ways that developing a voice in English impacted on the participants' sense of self in key family relationships. In both the cross-case analysis and the focal case dealing with Michiko, I have examined the dynamics of language choice in mono- and multilingual interpersonal relations, and its significance to the expression of intimacy, identity construction, and the negotiation of power. I have also explored language choice in the construction of parent/child relationships in the context of transnational migration, touching on the impact of divergent language investments and imagined identity during the post-migration settlement period. In addition, I have discussed the ways that cultural difference is articulated in a monolingual domain, focusing on how Michiko negotiated the terms of her relationship with an English-monolingual Australian man. This included blogging as the cathartic expression of self in a bi-cultural mode, using Japanese language to express an English-mediated openness. Finally, I have discussed a number of issues related to the negotiation of gender in the context of transnational migration involving language change, highlighting the important ways that such migration is a gendered process. These include the articulation of gendered subjectivity in framing post-migration identities, the role of transnational migration in disrupting power dynamics in key personal relationships, and the perception and significance of dependence in the post-migration settlement period.

CHAPTER SIX - THE SELF IN SOCIETY

6.1   Introduction

In this chapter I will examine the factors that impacted on the participants' sense of self in social interactions and how this shaped their negotiation of an English-mediated social space in Australia. I explore issues concerning language, race, and gender that arose during the early settlement period, and the way these influenced the participants' post-migration identity constructions. After thematically analysing the group of participants as a whole, I will focus my analysis on Maria, who embodies a significant number of the issues identified regarding constructing a post-migration social identity in an English-dominant community.

6.2   Language

A number of language-related issues emerged from the settlement experiences of the research participants that impacted on their negotiation of a social identity in English, and for some, also in their primary language. These issues included questions of English competence and confidence, the kinds of identities participants were able to construct in English, and the impact of learning English on their primary language interactions and identities.

6.2.1   Language competence and confidence

Throughout the study period, all of the women made multiple references to their level of English competence. A perceived inability to express themselves easily or sufficiently was a major focus of anxiety around being able to function in social interactions, both face-to-face and on the telephone, with people who spoke English. One participant, Tina, also spoke of struggling to understand the content of work-related lectures, or the flow of conversation during group interactions at work, and a number of participants spoke of their

inability to engage successfully in transactional encounters, including those involving the

negotiation of complaints in English. This was particularly true during the first half of the

study, from whence the following data excerpts are drawn.

Maria: Because I think I'm struggling some…and I can't er…how to
          say…express?
Donna: Express yourself.
Maria: Express myself and sometime the people understand difference way I
          said.
(Maria, Interview One, June 2008:42)

Yeah, yeah, I stayed home…er, maybe two months, something like that because it
was very hard, you know. I have a fear to go somewhere, you know. I must speak
with people, you know, and …er, what should I say to them, you know.
(Anna, Interview One, June 2008:1)

Tina: To tell the truth, when I come here, I lose my confidence.
Donna: Did you?
Tina: Yes, you know, in Australia, I can't express my idea very clearly and
          effectively, so when I communicate with others, almost always I can't
          send out a correct words or correct sentences to express my idea…it's
          very depressed…you know[↗]
(Tina, Interview One, September 2008:9)

In these and other examples, the women used words such as 'struggling', 'hard', 'fear',

'worry', 'nervous', 'upset' and 'depressed' to express the negative emotions associated

with having to communicate in English, and these feelings inhibited their ability to engage

socially in the language. There were also a number of references to confidence, and most

of the women spoke initially of feeling like a less confident person when they

communicated in English, which was at odds with the self they were in their other

language/s. For example, Tina spoke of losing self-confidence and being constructed as a

quiet person in social interactions, as a result of not being able to express herself well in

English.

 You know, when I speak English, I don't feel confident, especially with all the
Australian around…especially in the Legal Studies class. You know, all the
classmates are minors and when they speak with each other, they speak very
quickly, and I can't participate in their conversation, and …you know, because I
can't understand what they're talking about so fast (LAUGHS), and usually they
use some slang, and strange idioms to me, and I can't understand, so I just be quiet,
so …when I use English, they must think: 'oh, that's a very quiet girl.'……

actually, if I'm with my friend, my Chinese friend, I'm a very talkative, so I think they will… um… relationship with others must be different when I use English and Chinese.
(Tina, Discussion Five, February 2009:4)

Similarly, Maria spoke in Interview One about how in Portuguese she was a leader, but she could not be in English, due to an inability to be convincing with her current level of language competency.

Maria:	In Portuguese? Um, I'm talkative, I'm very… um I'm very… how to say …I can leader...groups.
Donna:	Ok, you're a leader, yeah.
Maria:	I'm a leader group…ah, I can development a big work if have some…how to say…some business, I can do.
Donna:	Yeah, you can do it all…a big job.
Maria:	A big job. I can spend my all time only work and it's cover the points …the …seek(?) points the people can see, and ah, I can sell and I convince …I am always…I am so good convincing people.
Donna:	So you're a good saleswoman.
Maria:	Yeah, I am convincing people… like: "Ay, this is products very good!" I can do…here I can't do this because my English not so fluent.

(Maria, Interview One, June 2008:42-43)

For women like Tina and Maria, their feelings of confidence in social interaction increased as their level of English competence developed over the project period, and they experienced something of a return of the confidence they felt in their prior-language self. This meant they felt able to participate in key English language interactions, such as social and transactional telephone exchanges, the subject of the following excerpt from Tina.

Tina:	I remember last time, I …I said you know, if we need to call somebody, I will let my husband do that.
Donna:	Yeah.
Tina:	But now, I think I'm confident to do that by myself.
Donna:	Yeah.
Tina:	Yeah.
Donna:	Yeah, and are there any other things that you notice now that you're able to do?
Tina:	Mmm… like, booking the tickets, or booking the hotel.
Donna:	All that kind of…
Tina:	I can just call them, or …ah, you know, my friend want to buy some health insurance [↗]…
Donna:	Yeah.
Tina:	…and I will just take them to the ah… HBF and ask the information for them.
Donna:	Mhm. Mhm.

Tina: I feel quite comfortable with that now. Yeah.
(Tina, Interview Three, September 2009:17)

Similarly, Maria experienced a sense of progress in relation to the performance of

leadership. Less than a year after reporting that she could not construct herself as a leader

in English, Maria noted a significant breakthrough in her language development when she

felt able once again to lead people, using English.

Donna: Okay. So how do you feel ... when you speak English do you feel like
         you're a different person than when you speak […], has anything
         changed?
Maria: The first time I feel I not the same person as me because I has to think
         about what I say and I can't express all the things but now I leading the
         [AMEP] class, I can be myself.
Donna: And do you feel like it's the same Maria as the Portuguese ...
Maria: In Brazil?
Donna: ... as in Brazil?
Maria: Yes.
Donna: Really?
Maria: Yes. Because I confident what I doing.
(Maria, Interview Two/part 3, April 2009:2)

The linking of feelings of confidence to those of English language competence was not

consistent across participants, and Kumiko and Michiko each spoke during the first

interview of feeling like a more confident, socially at ease person when they spoke English

than they were in their first language, Japanese (see 6.2.2). Since all of the women were

studying English at the same level of instruction – Certificate III – when they joined the

project, and were deemed to be roughly Intermediate competency across the macro

language skills, this initial self-reporting of language 'confidence' was not a simple

function of measured language 'competence'. Indeed, Kumiko reported first realising that

she felt like a more confident person in English at a time when her level of English was

lower than Intermediate (see 6.2.2.1) while Tina, who was considered by all the women to

have very good English, and who displayed relatively high levels of structural accuracy

and lexical sophistication during our interactions, nevertheless did not feel confident about

the way she expressed herself in English. The transition to new language had been, for

Tina, accompanied by a period of re-examining her previous Chinese-mediated social identity, in light of the struggle to communicate herself adequately in English. She identified from this areas for ongoing self-development.

Tina: Ahhh… yeah… I saw something… some part of myself which I'm not familiar with. I… I think I saw myself more clearly than before (LAUGHS).

Donna: Really?

Tina: Yeah, ah… you know… before, um, I think I am so brave… I don't… I'm not afraid of… of any people who are… um… superior than me. […] and… you know, um… you know, because we have to … you know, in China we do a lot of legal documents for our client… our customer… our clients, and … you know, we have to get information from their executives of the company, and even though they… they are senior, they are higher position… they are used to … to order from others, but when I speak to them I just be myself. I don't care who… who you are, I just …er… think we are equal, and we… although we provide service for you, but that doesn't mean that I'm lower than you, so you should cooperate with me (LAUGHS). So, something like that, I think I don't… I'm not afraid of anything, but…um… now (LAUGHS SUDDENLY), I thought I have many limitations I should improve on.

Donna: Really?

Tina: Yeah.

Donna: Like, just English, or…

Tina: Um… yeah… some of them is …um… the… the skill to communicate with others. This is the biggest of struggle for me.

Donna: Because it's in English?

Tina: Yeah.

(Tina, Interview Two, February 2009:7)

Tina's primary interactional milieux in English were study, in the AMEP and then a mainstream Central course, and work, first as a volunteer in an aged care facility and in an immigration lawyer's office, and later as a paid law clerk in a large law firm. Even at the end of the project, when she had successfully completed an English-medium post-secondary Legal Studies course, topping the class with her final grade, Tina still expressed doubts about her English.

Tina: Mm… I still feel not that confident when I'm speaking in English.

Donna: Uhuh.

Tina: Yeah, cos I always said that I still believe that I need the improvement. That's why sometimes, you know, sometimes when I speak …ah, with people…er…especially the Australian people, I just can't find the… just can't express my ideas very clearly.

Donna: Yeah, yeah.

Tina:	Yeah.
Donna:	In the way that you could in Chinese …
Tina:	Yeah.
Donna:	…the person you **know** you are in Chinese. So, you can't translate that person yet, fully, into English?
Tina:	No.
Donna:	Do you still feel shy with people? Like, a year ago…no, in February, you said, I think… or in one of the discussion groups, maybe… you talked about that.
Tina:	Um, not that shy.
Donna:	No.
Tina:	Yeah. I think I'm… I'm getting there.
Donna:	Yeah.
Tina:	Yeah.
Donna:	So… and that's more the person you were… cos you said in the February interview how confident you were, even speaking to your superiors in China, and it didn't bother you at all.
Tina:	Mm.
Donna:	No.
Tina:	But …yeah, yeah, I think I …I am getting better and better.

(Tina, Interview Three, September 2009:16-17)

Tina appeared to contradict herself with comments about her level of confidence in English, made during the final interview. At first, she said she still felt she was not that confident when speaking English (see excerpt above), although she felt less shy than she had done a year before, and then a bit later she said that she was now confident about engaging in transactional exchanges in English, both in-person and over the telephone (see p161), and that she was becoming "normal", because she could use English to communicate with people as an equal.

Tina:	[…] I think I … I'm becoming normal, cos you know…
Donna:	Ah, in English?
Tina:	Yeah, because, you know… um… I think …last year I …I will feel …feel like ah…I'm a junior person in law(?). Do you know what I mean?
Donna:	Yeah! Like a baby…
Tina:	Yeah.
Donna:	…in language, rather than a fully mature adult.
Tina:	Yeah, yeah so… so I think sometimes I will behave weird …
Donna:	Uhuh.
Tina:	… when I'm speaking English.
Donna:	Oh.
Tina:	But now I think I'm become normal. I can use the English to communicate with people equally.

(Tina, Interview Three, September 2009:19)

Pavlenko (2005) suggests that the reality for many second language learners is one of ambivalence towards the new language – sometimes it is associated with positive emotions and sometimes with negative emotions. While Tina spoke of feeling less shy, socially, by the end of the project, she was still doubtful about whether her English language competence was adequate. Perhaps Tina's feelings of confidence in using English were dependent on the social context, and she felt more or less confident in different situations. Elsewhere in the final interview, Tina spoke of struggling to understand all that was being said during larger group interactions at work and during Law tutorials, as well as during legal presentations by academics. By this stage, her level of English competence was high enough to gain university entrance to a Law course and she was working in a large law firm, both of which were high stakes English language arenas for Tina.

6.2.2   Language identities

Based on my experience as a teacher of English to new migrants, I was interested to inquire into the ways that developing a voice in a new language might lead to the feeling that the speaker was able to express a different self. I was curious to know if a particular language might become a vehicle for a particular self. To this end, I asked interview questions about whether speaking English made the participant feel like a different person (see Appendix C). Some of the women, including Lena, Vesna, Anna and Roxanna indicated that they still felt like the same person, with the same beliefs, but it was just harder to articulate them, as Roxanna indicates in the following excerpt.

Donna:	So, do you notice a different person when… you're a different person when you speak English to when you speak Farsi, or do you not see a difference? Are you still the same person?
Roxanna:	Um… me?
Donna:	Mm.
Roxanna:	Ah…no, no…ah, I'm the same person. My thought, it's the same.
Donna:	It's the same. So, you don't feel a different kind of personality in English, than in Farsi.
Roxanna:	Yes. But maybe I can't express my self very good, about so many things, but I'm not different. My beliefs is the same.

(Roxanna, Interview One, October 2008:19)

This kind of sentiment is in line with the excerpts above (6.2.1) about feelings of

confidence in using English that were indexed to lexico-grammatical competence.

However, as I have also indicated above (see 6.2.1) two of the women, Kumiko and

Michiko, felt themselves either to be a more confident person, or to feel more comfortable

when they used English than when they used their first language, and this was not a

function of lexico-grammatical competence in English, but perhaps instead the kind of

subjectivities the language culture and/or language code afforded them. I would like to

look more closely now at their experiences of using English.

6.2.2.1 Kumiko

During our first interview, I asked Kumiko how she would describe herself, to herself

(Belenky et al, 1986) and she spoke about being a shy person in Japanese but not in

English.

> Donna: […] How would you describe yourself, to yourself? What kind of person
> do you think you are?
> Kumiko: Oh, I'm a… er…this is an interesting question, because when I speak
> Japanese, I'm really shy and I…um, I'm not get along with er new
> person. But when I speak in English, I'm not so shy.
> Donna: Really?! You notice that in yourself?
> Kumiko: Yeah, yeah.
> Donna: So, is that just in the last two months, since you came to Australia?
> Kumiko: Yes.
> (Kumiko, Interview One, June 2008:2)

In fact, one of Kumiko's reasons for joining the research project had been that she was

already aware of these different language-based identities and felt it would be interesting to

talk about them. In an email she sent in response to my thanking her for joining the project,

Kumiko wrote:

> I am very interested in your project because I am feeling that I am very defferent
> when I speak English. Other girls might have same feeling so it'll be fun to share
> the experience. (Kumiko, email communication, May 19, 2008)

166

Outside of the AMEP, Kumiko's social contacts revolved around the people she met in her husband's circle of friends from university, as well as his parents, with whom they lived. While she did not refer explicitly to Japanese friends, Kumiko did write in email that she found it easier to speak with Australians who understood Japanese, and she spoke of friends who were university educated multilingual Asian-Australians. Kumiko's feeling of confidence, expressed in the excerpt above from Interview One, was not related to a sense of language competence, but to the sense of self she experienced when using English; it was an emotional, rather than a linguistic confidence. Clearly, one would expect her competence in Japanese, a language she had used in Japan all her life, to far exceed her competence in English, a language she was studying at intermediate level at the time she made the claim. During the first group discussion session, which was held two months after our initial interview, Kumiko dated the recognition of feeling like a confident person in English to a period before she migrated to Australia, when she was living in Japan and using English infrequently.

> Kumiko: […] I had a friend…an American friend, in Japan. When I …oh, most time…every time I use English it's when I talk to her…just…it's just for her. Yeah, so when I…when I was talking to her, I realised oh, I feel more confident. Not English, but myself.
> Donna: Mm!
> Kumiko: Mm. It's interesting, isn't it?
> (Kumiko, Discussion One, August 2008:15)

In the above excerpt, Kumiko locates the confidence that comes with using English in her emotional state rather than in her competence with the lexico-grammatical structure. During Interview One, I invited Kumiko to expand on the idea that she was not a shy person in English, and she spoke of the influence of using English in the Australian context.

> Kumiko: Mmm. Yeah. I think I'm getting more positive, positive person.
> Donna: How do you see…what's an example of that? Can you think of examples where you've seen that happening?
> Kumiko: Oh, just little things. To talk to new people.
> Donna: So when you meet someone new?

Kumiko:	Mmm, I can talk like …more than when I speak Japanese.
Donna:	So, why do you think that is?
Kumiko:	Mmm, I don't know, I think it's in the culture.
Donna:	Mmm.
Kumiko:	Mmm, it's… er, my husband's always say, it's English culture because they talk to people. It doesn't matter who they are.
Donna:	You don't have to think about whether you have to speak a certain way….
Kumiko:	Mmm.
Donna:	…or not.
Kumiko:	Yeah, when I …when someone talk to me, like on the road or on the park or station, I'm surprised. Someone asked me: "Hi, can you tell me where a good pub is?" I don't know, but…
Donna:	And you were surprised that they would ask?
Kumiko:	Yeah.
Donna:	Total strangers.
Kumiko:	Yeah.
Donna:	Oh, ok, so that sort of casual conversation with strangers, was that not a part of your life before?
Kumiko:	No, not in Japan. It's pretty rare. But here, it's common.
Donna:	So, has that…yeah, I'm… I'm…ok, so it's something to do with English, the English language, and your husband has said to you that in English there's not that formality, or people are casual with each other…
Kumiko:	Yeah. Not just English culture, it's Australia.
Donna:	Oh, ok.
Kumiko:	Yeah, people are friendly to strangers…
Donna:	And, and you feel that that's the reason that you now have more confidence….
Kumiko:	Yes, definitely.
Donna:	….when you speak? But you said, if I speak Japanese….so, if you spoke Japanese in this context, would you still feel that you'd be that Japanese person?
Kumiko:	Ah, I still feel like very Japanese person.
Donna:	Ok.
Kumiko:	Mmm. So, it's not really culture, it's language.
Donna:	It's the language.
Kumiko:	Yeah. Japanese formality. Mmm.
Donna:	So, when you…sorry, sorry to interrupt. So have you met Japanese people when you've …since you've been in Australia?
Kumiko:	Yes.
Donna:	And you feel that difference?
Kumiko:	Yes. I feel like I'm in Japan again (LAUGHS).
Donna:	Mmm. So you have to be Japanese Kumiko?
Kumiko:	Yes. (LAUGHS)

(Kumiko, Interview One, June 2008:3-5)

As the excerpt reveals, Kumiko cannot, finally, decide if it is the culture or the

language that is causing changes in her levels of self-confidence as she moves

between Japanese and English. In reality, the two are inextricable from each other,

168

and it was speaking English in the Australian context that afforded Kumiko the possibility of a language subjectivity that differed markedly from that which she had always assumed as a speaker of Japanese; one that included the possibility of feeling comfortable speaking to strangers. During Interview One, we co-constructed these identities as 'Japanese Kumiko' and 'English Kumiko', and Kumiko made reference to them in subsequent exchanges. At the end of Interview One, which I was recording using a small digital voice recorder, Kumiko made the following observation.

> Kumiko: Oh yeah, just one thing. Japanese Kumiko can't start…can not speak in front of mike…
> Donna: Oh! Japanese Kumiko can't?
> Kumiko: No.
> Donna: But you're speaking English now! (LAUGHS)
> Kumiko: So I'm ok (BOTH LAUGH).
> Donna: Really? You couldn't have done this…
> Kumiko: No, I don't think so. My heart would be like…
> Donna: …and you wouldn't be able to think?
> Kumiko: Yeah.
> Donna: You've done pretty well then.
> Kumiko: Yeah. I think so.
> (Kumiko, Interview One, June 2008:24)

Kumiko's analysis of her language identities reveals an awareness of what Hoffman (1989:121) describes as "This language is beginning to invent another me." In a similar vein, Kumiko commented in an email to me at the beginning of the project: "Once you get used to English world you can't go back to Japanese world" (May 23, 2008), which implies a transformation of the self from being immersed in another languaculture.

6.2.2.2 Michiko

Michiko's social interactions involved friends she made in the AMEP, a number of young Japanese and Korean women who now lived in Australia, and the friends she shared with her Anglo-Australian husband, of which she mentioned Japanese/Australian couples,

German and Swiss migrants, and friends of her husband's from his time growing up in Darwin. Most of these interactions occurred in English, except when Michiko was speaking only to her Japanese friends. During interview, Michiko expressed the idea that using English was in some ways far easier, socially, than using Japanese. Although she did not describe herself as a shy person in Japanese – quite the contrary - she nevertheless found that the interactional pragmatics, and the complex and prescriptive ways they are established in the language surface structure of Japanese, made her lose confidence in her ability to successfully negotiate social interactions in that language. Michiko was aware of feeling more comfortable and relaxed using English, even at a time when her English competence was at intermediate level, while she spoke Japanese as a first language, having been born and raised in Japan. Similar feelings of anxiety when socialising in Japanese are also outlined by Mori (1997), a Japanese-American writer who, after living in US America for some years, writes:

> I don't like to go to Japan because I find it exhausting to speak Japanese all day,
> every day. What I am afraid of is the language, not the place. (Mori, 1997:10)

In her book, *Polite Lies*, Mori describes the difficulties inherent in meeting a new person in Japanese, and how the speakers must quickly determine each other's relative age, rank and social position, so that they can use the correct respect codes in subsequent interactions (1997:11). Michiko had been very interested to read Mori, so she bought a Japanese translation of *Polite Lies* after our first interview. In a subsequent interview, when I referred to what Mori had written about social interactions in Japanese, Michiko responded with the following comments.

Michiko: Yeah, yeah. It's same, cos I always worry about, like: 'Um, did I make mistake?' It's same, really. 'Is it… um, you know, approp… appropriate word I used?' Or, like, things like… … or…everythings… like, if … everythings, really, with Japanese people. I always think, like: 'Is she older than …?' Even now, in the class, I don't know how old they are, but other people is fine, but Japanese … if I found Japanese people: 'Is she older than me, or younger than me, or…' you know.
Donna: How do you figure that out? In Japan, if you don't know, do you just guess that they might be older and be polite to them?

<div style="margin-left: 2em;">

Michiko: If I can't found, I always use respect words for them. […] I have… you know, even if I knew she's very young, or younger than me, but still I use like, the first… when maybe … if…maybe first one month, two month, I use polite way to speak. Yeah.

[…]

Donna: And you have to **think** about that? It doesn't come naturally?

Michiko: … … um, …ah, usually naturally, but now, I don't use much, so I…

Donna: Oh.

Michiko: … I forgot most of word…

Donna: Yeah.

Michiko: …so I …I bought a book.

Donna: Did you?

Michiko: Yeah.

Donna: A Japanese…

Michiko: How to say respect way or polite way.

(Michiko, Interview Two, February 2009:18-19)

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It is interesting to note Michiko's revelation that she bought a book on how to speak respectfully in Japanese. She showed me this book when we met for coffee in October 2009 and she said she had had it for some time, because she lived in Australia for two years before she went back to Japan for a visit, and she worried that she had forgotten all the ways of speaking respectfully in Japanese. Michiko kept this book, I felt, in the same way I might keep a pocket dictionary of English because it is impossible to know the meaning and spelling of all its words. The book was written in Japanese, for Japanese people, and is a reference for how to address people politely in a range of social and work situations.

As had Kumiko, Michiko described a combined effect of language and culture in the creation of different language identities – the interactional pragmatics of Japanese and the relative informality of English leading to her feeling more relaxed using English, and also the contrast between her sense of Japan being a more rule-bound, conforming society, and Australia a more pluralist and tolerant society resulting in her feeling less need to challenge other people's opinions using English in Australia, than she had using Japanese in Japan, where she had felt the need to disrupt widely accepted views.

Michiko: Yeah. But English is …um… I think I get used to Australia …like I'm little bit getting lazy… um and it's good for… good way to lazy, cos always I don't need against every opinion to other people. Used to I…

[…]

Michiko: Little bit relaxing, yeah, and I don't…cos used to my friends, in Japan, said: "Why you always make enemy, all the time?"

Donna: Oh, ok.

Michiko: "You don't need to make enemy", but I used always said: "I can't agree with you; that's like personal opinion, but you are maybe wrong", or something very strongly I said. But here: "Ok that's your idea… mm, it's good! Oh, can use that too", but now: "Oh, maybe this is…ok, I have different idea, maybe …up to you, you can think about it", you know.

[…]

Michiko: "I can understand what you saying, and I can understand what…how you think…because it's different culture, and different things". But in Japan everyone think you are strange …if you against, you…like you are strange or something like that. I have to stand up and: "No, I'm not wrong"… you know, "There is another way to think". You just…you can't follow the law…you know, the rule, or if you have different feeling, but everyone just hide their feeling and follow the rule.

(Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:19-20)

In the same way that Kumiko was aware of an English-mediated self-confidence, Michiko's description of a change in her sense of self, from being a troublemaker in Japanese, to what she describes as "getting lazy" in English, reveals a consciousness of the impact on identity of language learning in a particular social setting. It also reveals the way each woman appropriated aspects of English language culture in becoming a different self, consistent with a Vygotskyan understanding of the transformative nature of the language-mediated internalisation of sociocultural activity, and the dialectical relationship between the self and society (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006:165-6). What is interesting in the case of both Kumiko and Michiko is that such internalisation of sociocultural activity was apparent well before either woman had achieved a high level of lexico-grammatical competency in English.

6.2.3   Cultural affordances

As the data from Kumiko and Michiko suggest, post-migration changes in a woman's performance of self cannot be attributed to language alone, but to the combined influence of linguistic and cultural affordances, and the ways they might vary between the pre- and post-migration societies. In the case of Roxanna, although she did not feel very confident about her ability to communicate well in English, she felt positive about now being in a society where it was permissible to voice her opinions.

Roxanna's social circle in Australia was among middle and upper middle-class Anglo-Australian women, Iranian-Australians, members of her own family, and the friends she made in the AMEP and another Central English program. Her family interactions were all in Farsi, but much of her friendship interaction was in English. As proxy house head, she also used English in a variety of transactional interactions with all the contractors, service workers and agents she negotiated with in the running of an upper middle-class family home, which included the building of a new house, and prolonged interactions with health professionals and school administrators on behalf of her two sons.

Roxanna had felt politically gagged in Farsi, living in Iran, where it could be dangerous to challenge the status quo. Although she said that she did not feel like a different person when she used English ("My beliefs is the same"), she was now in a society where she had the right to voice her beliefs publicly, and what she wanted to speak out about was all that she had felt was repressive about Iran's political system, such as the intertwining of religion with the state, and gender inequality. In interview, she spoke of an experience of speaking her mind to a Muslim classmate during a class discussion.

> Roxanna: Yes. Um… the…um… the main important parts mm… after my coming here…mm… is, I can say whatever …mm… I would like, or I feel …
> Donna: Mhm.

Roxanna: … to say. So, it's very important, because in my country I didn't …mm…get a chance to say about my opinion, about my idea, about everything. Um, especially in religion, because I'm not religious person, er, and as …as I told you, I just believe in God. And … um…the first term… first term, when I came here, and one of the students asked me…um: "What's your religion?" Mm, my feeling… I can express my feeling, because mm, I said: "Er, I just believe in God", and he said… he asked me: "You are not Muslim?" I said…er, I just said: "Ne Muslim. I don't believe er… Islam or Islam rules", and then I look at around myself… I said [to herself]: 'Ooh, is there anybody here? And how could I say that sentence?' It's very important, because we can't say in Iran…

Donna: Mm.

Roxanna: …and …um…I said er… and I could explain **my**self, my beliefs, my idea…um… my…and it was very interesting feeling for me, and I enjoyed.

[…]

Roxanna: He was Muslim, and very religious …mm… person, and he had… he was fast… fasting.

Donna: Fasting for Ramadan?

Roxanna: Yeah, for Ramadan, and he prayed and …he believed. And the other thing in… interesting thing… that I had an argument in our class with him. Very serious argument, because Susan [teacher] gave us a subject, um that … mm… 'Are you… do you believe that men and women are equal?' And he was my partner.

Donna: Oh!

Roxanna: And…yes, and I ask him: "Do you believe that women are … and men are equal?" He said: "Yes, I believe", and I said: "Oh no, you don't believe!" He said: "Why do you say?" I said…mm… I …I asked him: "Do you believe that man can have three wives together?" He said: "Yes, I believe." And I said: "So, you… you don't believe that men and women are equal, because the women can't have …ah, three husbands together. But, the man can, so you don't believe."

[…]

Roxanna: […] And …ah…so it was another experience for me, because it was like an…mm… it…ah… it was like a complex for me, in my country. It was like a problem for me, because I could … in Australia, I could say: "But, oh it's" … sorry… "It's bullshit!" (LAUGHING VOICE) You know, it's… I don't…

Donna: Yeah, yeah. "I don't agree with you".

Roxanna: "You don't believe because you can't believe! [to the Iraqi man], because Koran says that you can have three wives together, and so you say whatever Koran says is right and I do it. So, just be honest and say: "No, I don't believe woman and men are …er… equal"". So, … then, after that, I … I was so scared, because I said: 'Oh maybe he hurts me in the future or…'

[…]

Roxanna: […] but… but it was very … another experience for me that I **could** say what**ev**er I want to say. "Oh no, you don't believe!" But in Iran, I **can't** say.

(Roxanna, Interview Two, February 2009:1-3)

At the end of the excerpt, Roxanna speaks with some pleasure about the experience of being able to say whatever she wanted to, and to challenge in ways she had never felt permitted to in Farsi, as a woman living in Iran. Ironically, although Roxanna was now in a place where she did not suffer from political oppression, she nevertheless felt linguistically oppressed, in the sense that although she could publicly say whatever she wanted to in Australia, this communication must be in English, a language she did not feel able to express herself well in. In a sense, then, Roxanna was still being somewhat silenced, no longer politically by the government, but linguistically by English.

> […]sometimes when i want to express my feeling by english language,That's like a night mare.I was thinking that i can go to uni or my favorite course.but now i see it takes long time for me to speak english. I still think Farsi ,but nobody was like me.they said they think english and got selfconfidence.for me,i don't think so.I try to be a cheeky person,but sometimes i have a big luck [lock] on my lips.
> (Roxanna, email communication, November 2008)

This feeling of struggling to express herself in English continued throughout the study period, as the following excerpt from the final essay, written more than a year later, reveals.

> In first step for achieveing to my goals I need to speak and read and write English fluently..after 2 years that I've been lived in an English speaking country, I still have so many difficulties to express myself.
> (Roxanna, final essay task, February 2010)

6.2.4   Colonised by English

Michiko, Lena and Vesna, all of whom were married to monolingual English-speaking Australians (see 5.2.2.1) and used English on a daily basis, reported experiences of forgetting lexical items in their first language, as did Maria, whose language use was a combination of Portuguese, English and Japanese, and who struggled sometimes to think of Portuguese words during telephone conversations with her sister in Brazil. Vesna, Lena and Anna, all of whom grew up in Eastern European countries, speaking Slavic languages, described how they found English a more expressively polite language, insofar as there

was a greater need to use politeness terms such as 'please', and excuse oneself, during social interactions. All three women expressed a consciousness of trying to remember to do this when using English in Australia, but Lena and Anna also expressed an awareness of how this style of interaction was transferring to their use of first languages and to their expectations of social interactions during return visits to their pre-migration society. For example, Lena spoke of being back in Russia and negotiating transactional exchanges at the butcher with an English-influenced set of expectations regarding surface structure politeness, and Anna was aware of feeling different in Serbia when her speech style sounded unusually indirect and 'polite'.

> It's like… in my country, it's like people are very straight, you know. If they wanna told you something, they just told, you know (LAUGHS). There is no polite! (LAUGHING) So, when I went again to my country, and when I start to talk with people… like: "Please, can you…" or (LAUGHING)… I just thinking: 'oh, this is something different, you know! (LAUGHING)
> (Anna, Interview Two, February 2009:11)

For Anna and Lena, the feeling that aspects of English had become sufficiently internalised to show up in the ways they used their first language was not cause for alarm. However, for Michiko, who also noticed the influence of English on her first language, Japanese, the experience was sometimes akin to feeling colonised, and that she was losing her Japanese self as her use of English advanced. For example, Michiko discovered on a trip back to Japan that she was being too forthright in conversation with people, sometimes offending others when her honesty was received as rudeness. This troubled her, making her feel added anxiety in social interactions in Japan, and also that she was not able to be herself.

> But I always thought, I can't ... I have to be polite […] like, very polite and it wasn't me, anyway, it's not me.
> (Michiko, Interview Three/part 2, November 2009:8)

During 2009, Michiko went through some serious reflection on whether she should remain in Australia or return to Japan. After a two-month visit to Japan, she felt homesick for her family and for Japan, and a sense of having failed to achieve any of her goals for life in Australia. Some of her doubts about being in Australia also involved language, and the

way that English was now dominating as the language of her thoughts. Of the nine women

I interviewed for the project, Michiko was the one who had spent the most time in

Australia, and was the only woman who had reached this level of internalisation of

English, where it was usually the first language of her thoughts, on a daily basis. She gave

an example of this during a conversation we had in June 2009.

Michiko: Um… you know, I received message, because I was selling things. And
             then, usually… or even like between my friends, I usually just do text,
             easy for me. But this is really hard…first time I received it in
             alphabetical order, but alphabetic, but in Japanese.
Donna: Yeah… oh no, I understand that [Romanji].
Michiko: I felt like, how can I read it? Like, at first: 'How can I read this?' And
             then: 'Oh, she wrote in Japanese!' And **then:** 'Ok, …um…I try to
             type…'
[…]
Michiko: […] but, I started to write (HUMOUR IN HER VOICE), but then: 'I
             can't do this'. And I decide to write in… but then at night, when I
             receive the first email [text]… first mail I wrote it, like, I: 'What the
             fuck person… you know, writing at half past one in the morning!'
(Michiko, personal conversation, June 30, 2009:19)

As the excerpt shows, Michiko's first response to being woken by a text in the middle of

the night was an expletive-enhanced expression of annoyance in English. Interestingly, she

said in interview that she did not use, or even know, any Japanese swear words. Thinking

in English was not in itself a cause for concern, except that Michiko found she was even

thinking in English while trying to have conversations in Japanese, which made using

Japanese more problematic, as she was translating into English what her interlocutor was

saying in Japanese, in order to think about it, then replying in Japanese.

Donna: Yeah, so you think in English?
Michiko: Always in English.
Donna: So, you're talking to yourself in English?
Michiko: Yeah, yeah. By myself. That's I found, like.
Donna: Yeah, and so… so why is that… why does that trouble you, that that's
             happening?
Michiko: Ah, no, Japanese is trouble. Like, if someone write those things…
Donna: No, no, I guess what I'm saying is, it sounded from your email, that
             when you think about: 'Oh, my god! I'm thinking in English', you don't
             feel happy about that. It bother… it bothers you somehow. So why does
             it bother you?

      Michiko: It's bother me because when I talk to Japanese people, first I think in
                  English.
      Donna: Ohh.
      Michiko: So, I translate to … like… like, beginning learning of English… like,
                  beginning of English, you know, like.
      Donna: Yeah
      Michiko: Translate Japanese to English in my mind, talk to English.
      Donna: Yeah, yeah. Now it's going the other way.
      Michiko: But now other way.
      Donna: Oh. So do you feel like you're losing your Japanese , or something?
      Michiko: I don't feel losing Japanese, but… but I feel like I'm talking very
                  strange Japanese.
    (Michiko, personal conversation, June 30 2009:19)

As Michiko points out at the end of the excerpt, this process of translating Japanese words

into English thoughts made her feel that her Japanese must sound 'strange'. In our final

interview, Michiko also said that her sister asked her why she was using many idioms in

Japanese, and that this was not only an unusual way of speaking Japanese but also had not

previously been part of Michiko's speaking style. Michiko felt this must have crossed into

her Japanese from English, which features the frequent use of idioms (she gave as

examples 'time is flying' and 'pigs might fly', both of which she was now saying in

Japanese to her sister).

6.2.5   Summary

To conclude, a number of language-based issues emerged as impacting on each

participant's sense of self in social interactions. These included the effect on self-

confidence of an inability to communicate in English what she was thinking, which

affected all participants, at least during the first half of the study, to more idiosyncratic

experiences of language confidence, such as those reported by Kumiko and Michiko, and

their relationship to first-language identities. For some women, there was a sense of a new

English-mediated identity, and for others, a sense of the same identity but with greater

culturally-mediated affordances for expressing that identity. Finally, a number of

participants reported the influence that English was now asserting on their other languages,

from the loss of lexical items, to the transference of English expressions and expectations about interactional pragmatics.

6.3   Race

Race was experienced differentially across the participants, in ways that reflect not only the power differential that underpins the performance of race relations in western societies, but also the racialisation of transnational migration and the divergent positioning of new migrants to Australia. Themes that emerge from the data include the differential experience of race-based social exclusion, through racist abuse or social and linguistic invisibility, the identification of migrants with the dominant culture, and the internalisation of the self as 'other'.

6.3.1   Racism

Given that the dominant culture in Australian society derives from the United Kingdom and Europe, it is not surprising that the European participants did not report race-based social exclusion, whereas four of the five Asian participants, who included a Brazilian woman, shared experiences of racism, both first-hand as well as reported from their immediate circle of family and friends (the fifth was not present at such discussions). For example, three women shared details of experiences of racial discrimination in the following exchange from Discussion One.

> Michiko: […] Just only once when I was travelling six years ago, around Australia, when I went into the shop to buy some groceries, I can't remember what, maybe tea or something. I went there, looking for tea section…and that old lady said: "We don't want any Asians in this shop."
> […]
> Maria: Yes, I …I look the same because when I asking some information about the address… um, not the old lady, very young (LAUGHING) said: "I don't talk with Korean person." (LAUGHING) But I'm not Korean (KUMIKO IS LAUGHING TOO).
> Donna: 'I'm not Korean, talk to me!!' (IN HUMOUR, OTHER WOMEN ARE LAUGHING)… "I don't talk to Korean people??"

Maria:	Yeah.
Michiko:	Yeah.
Kumiko:	Yeah, some people so mean to Asian people.
Michiko:	Yeah, last week when I went to…
Donna:	Yes. Have you experienced that as well? (TO KUMIKO).
Kumiko:	Oh, not me, but my mother-in-law's friend…she is also Chinese-Australian… one day she was walking along the river and someone came from other direction, so she said: "Hi". The person said…what was it?... "Go back to your country!" But this **is** her country!
Michiko:	Yeah. Last week, when I went to the shop and there was a Chinese girl in the shop asking: "Is there a different colour?" or things…in English, and she sounds like…I think she born in here…so the lady shop assistant said: "No, there is another shop…David Jones, you can go and look". Then…then, an Australian person, like, ask: "Do you have any different size?" And then: "Ok, I can call to David Jones if there is", and she called and asked it. What's the difference between… same shop staff, but the Chinese girl just ask a colour, she said: "Go to David Jones", but the person ask a size, and she called to that place…she called to there…!
Donna:	She was actually willing to help them.
Michiko:	Yeah. I thought like…
Donna:	Whereas the other person, she was just, like: "Go away! Do it yourself".
Michiko:	…that's not equal. It's very unfair cos she had to walk to there to ask, but if you could call, if you called from here, she didn't need to go there. I felt like, is this because of Chinese?

(Discussion One, August 2008:11-12)

The person who reported the most acts of racist abuse was Tina, who is Chinese. She

reported passers-by and even other motorists shouting racist abuse at them as she and her

husband were doing ordinary things like filling their car with petrol, or driving in traffic.

Tina:	Um, it happened three times…yes. One time is when I…how to say…give the petrol to my cay…how to say?
Donna:	You filled your car up with petrol…you went to a service station.
Tina:	Yes, when I doing that… um, three boys… um, just [unclear…changed?] by the road and they…they…they call my husband and I 'stupid Chinese pig!' Even if we didn't look at them and we didn't talk with them…we do nothing with them!
[…]	
Tina:	And other two times is when we are riding the bicycle along the road, the passing car…there is a car just passing by us, and they rode [wound] down the window and say something like that to us! Can you imagine that??

(Tina, Interview One, September 2008:16-17)

Tina suggested that this kind of racist behaviour was seen as normal in the experience of

other Chinese-Australians, quoting a friend who has lived in Australia since his teens.

Tina: You know, one of my friends told me… er… one time… one night, he was …er… walking with his dog, and, you know, some of the Australian just …er… shouted… shouted at him and say some…something bad, to him. And I asked: "How do you feel?" and he said: "Oh…normal, because I have a lot of experience…" …because he… he came to Australia since he was in high school, so… in so many years…

Donna: Mmm, so he's suffered a lot of racism.

Tina: … living here, he has **many** experience… same experience. So, he just think that's normal… 'I just don't care'.

(Tina, Interview Two, February 2009:10)

Unlike her friend, Tina did not accept the racism she experienced as normal, and, as I explain further in Chapter Seven, race-based social exclusion had a significant impact on her settlement aspirations. All of the other participants who gave first- or second-hand reports of race-based social exclusion did not link this directly to their Australian settlement aspirations, either expressing their desire to remain in Australia as fixed (Maria), or contingent upon finding satisfactory work (Kumiko), or the success of a relationship (Michiko).

6.3.2   Identifying as local

Related to the differential experience of race-based social exclusion, the data also show that only the women who were from Europe expressed an ability to imagine themselves as part of the mainstream. This was apparent in the way the European women expressed the realisation that most people they met were once migrants, or if not, then the children of migrants to Australia, which allowed them to excuse their own sense of being inadequately competent in English by virtue of the fact that many people before them had also struggled with English in Australia.

Anna: You have to realise… because I, er, talked with my sister-in-law and I …we talking about TAFE and learning and everything, and she said: "Your English is very good!" and I said: "No, it's not!" and she said: "Yes, it is!" and I said: "No, it's not!" (WOMEN LAUGH)… so we just…

Michiko: Is she Australian?

Anna:	Yeah, she is Australian. And I wrote something and she said: "Oh, I didn't know … I didn't know… what's this words mean, you know… she asked me about … I wrote something, and I said: "I met him" … you know, and she said: "You should say 'I meet him'… no! Yeah, she is Australian, and she … she work in the … in the… (SHE IS LAUGHING NOW)
Lena:	Does she live in the bush?
Anna:	No, she lives in the city, and she work…
Donna:	Her parents emigrated from Serbia.
Anna:	Yeah, and she…
Donna:	Or Croatia?
Anna:	Croatia (LAUGHING STILL) And she work in office, you know, and she supposed to know that, you know, and I look at her, you know, and I say: 'Oh, my English [is] really good!' (WOMEN LAUGH). Australian people, they doesn't know some things, you know, and it's not … it's not…
Vesna:	Like everywhere. People… sometime they not very confident with his own grammar.
Anna:	Yeah, yeah! That's true. We have to realize that, you know.
Vesna:	Just gone to school and that's all, and they can make mistake even his own language.
Anna:	Yeah, you can…
Tina:	You know, my husband told a … sometimes he encourage me to study hard for English, and he re…relieve me by saying: "Your English is better than before, and you should be more confident. Think about that. If a foreigner speak Chinese as fluently as yours, you might be surprised, so you must be confident" (WOMEN SAY 'YEAH, YEAH'). But, I still be very shy and when we are outside, I will ask my husband: "You go to order!" and "You to pay!" (SHE IS LAUGHING NOW). Yeah, I'm afraid to communicate with locals.
Michiko:	Oohhh. (SOME OTHER WOMEN SAY 'YEAH').
Lena:	I think I'm also… I wanna try
Vesna:	But locals is sometime being like you, or like…
Lena:	Yes, local people just come from another country.

(Discussion Four, November 2008:6-7)

The European perspective, as articulated above by Anna, Vesna, and Lena, was that locals were all migrants themselves once, and some of them didn't have better English competence than more recent migrants. Continuing the discussion, Michiko countered this position, below, with a different view, based on her own experience of being a new migrant from Asia.

Yeah, because for you, it's might be diff… you know, quite similar appearance, you know… but for us, Australian people or other people think we can't speak English, they try to speak slowly, or something, but I said… when I speak… [they] start to speak: "Oh, you can speak English! You can understand!" "Yes, I can understand. I

can do mostly by myself"… you know? Yeah, but they don't know, so … good advantage!!
(Michiko, Discussion Four, November 2008:7-8)

Here, Michiko establishes the grounds for contrastive experiences of social inclusion, based on appearance, with her distinction between "you" (migrants from Europe) and "us" (migrants from Asia). She also reveals the way more established members of society might make assumptions about English language competence, based on race. The interaction between Lena and Michiko, continued below, shows Michiko insisting on her position, in the face of strong opposition from Lena, who is unwilling to concede that race was implicated. Finally, Michiko demonstrates from her personal experience exactly the kind of mainstream behaviour she is attesting.

Lena: But I think it's you more imagation of yours, because… I don't know so many Chinese, so … I don't know about Japanese, but a lot of Chinese people here, they all speak English and they maybe Australian, so they … they cannot think about every Asian, or … I don't know, Chinese, or maybe Japanese persons, they cannot think: 'Oh, he doesn't speak English… she doesn't speak English' (MICHIKO LAUGHS). She can't, because it's… I don't know, half of population is …
[…]
Michiko: Yes, but if you go to Northbridge, you go to restaurant…
Lena: I just think it's your expectation.…
Michiko: … not many people.
Lena: … 'They think that I don't speak English'
Michiko: But they do, they do… they try to speak…
Lena: No!
Michiko: Yeas, cos when I … I think I told this… when I went to childcare centre to work, they bought a dictionary for me.
Donna: They bought a dictionary?!
Michiko: For **me** and them.
Donna: Oh, because you were working there.
Michiko: Yeah, I was working as… like, work placement, really, but this is first time to have a Japanese student for them, so they bought a Japanese-English dictionary for me, and…(LAUGHS)
Donna: Why didn't they ask you already…if you already have one?
Michiko: But, I don't know: "Just in case", they say… they thought maybe … (WOMEN ARE LAUGHING AND TALKING)
Tina: They really want to show their consideration for you.
Michiko: Maybe, yeah. (Discussion Four, November 2008:8)

The way that language and race intersected in the experience Michiko refers to above was also alluded to in another group discussion, where contrasting expectations regarding social exclusion were voiced by participants.

Tina: Oh, before I come here, I think about it … if I find a job which I can enjoy, I can stay here, but now I find out it's very difficult for me to work as a lawyer or work in a law firm as a clerk… even as a clerk, it's difficult! So, I think I'd better go back to China.
Roxanna: And do you feel hopeless, about your decision… or?
[…]
Tina: Um, you know, just I decide, before I come here, I didn't decide if I **will** stay here forever. I just want to find out if I can fit in this society… fit in the Australia and find a decent job.
Donna: So, you'd give it a try.
Tina: Yeah. If I can't, I just take the two years or three years for studying… for improve my English, and, you know, if my English is good enough, and with my law background, I can … I can be very successful [in China].
Roxanna: Yes, but…
Lena: What I am surprised about it, because I think in Australia, a lot of people… maybe everybody… comes from somewhere. Maybe many years ago, but a lot of them are successful, so…
Tina: Yes.
Lena: …I don't know why you feel so hopeless about your career.
(Discussion Three, October 2008:6)

Towards the end of the excerpt above, Lena once again refers to the idea that most Australians are migrants, giving this as the reason for her surprise that Tina should doubt her ability to succeed in Australia. What does this expression of surprise, alongside Tina's doubts about her chances in Australia, reveal about differences in the two women's post-migration experiences? Elsewhere, Lena was among women urging Tina to feel more positive about her English competency, because it was very good, and here Lena cannot understand why Tina should not feel more confident about her prospects in Australia. Does she see English competence as the main barrier to settlement success?

Tina, on the other hand, includes the likelihood of race as a factor in her chance of success (see 7.6.2) – here expressed as "if I can fit in" - alongside English competence, and her

predictions are not so positive. That both women should use different indices as measures of settlement success is, I believe, evidence of their different settlement experiences. Lena experienced insufficient English competency as a limitation on her ability to progress in Australia, at least in the short-term, but she saw it as something she could address, by taking English classes. She did not experience racism. Tina, on the other hand, became aware of the barriers to settlement success presented by both language and race, only one of which was within her control to address. The issue of race was a problem that was imposed on her by the dominant society, and it was not a problem she could solve. It was also a problem that forced her to think of herself primarily as a Chinese person in Australia, while Lena was able to imagine herself as a member of the mainstream, albeit one whose English needed some development. And even in that, Lena was able to reassure herself with the observation that most people in Australia came from somewhere else, and for many of them, English was not their first language. Her identity as a new migrant, normalised in the history of European migration to Australia, conferred on her a sense of entitlement to social inclusion. In contrast, even the children of Chinese migrants might not achieve this level of social inclusion, and the example that Kumiko gave of her Australian husband, Michael, being taken for a tourist by a transport official is evidence of a far different reality, one that might fit more closely with Tina's expectations.

Kumiko: If something happened… it's … especially Caucasian people – no offence! (SMALL LAUGH) – and when… Michael told me […] … my husband go into Transperth office to buy a Smartrider [train pass] and asked about something on […] and she explained: "You know, when you go home, you can give the card to somebody else and somebody can use it". [Michael said] "What do you mean, 'when you go home'?" … my husband is Chinese Australian, so …

Donna: He's Australian, he **sounds** Australian! He speaks English with an Australian accent.

Others: Mmm/ yeah.

Kumiko: But she just said 'when you go home'. Means when you go home …

Others: … to China!

Kumiko: It was … I think it was pretty rude. (WOMEN LAUGH)

(Kumiko, Discussion Three, October 2008:27)

In spite of having lived in Australia since infancy and speaking with an identifiably Australian accent, Michael was nevertheless assumed to be a visitor, presumably on the basis of race. Despite all evidence to the contrary, the transport official he was speaking to was unwilling to imagine Michael as a local. To add a contrasting personal example, although my father was a migrant from Yugoslavia, as his child, I am never constructed in Australia as anything but Australian.

Although during group discussion Lena had challenged Tina and Michiko's assumption that race was involved in their experience of social exclusion, during a subsequent interview, she expressed an awareness of the way race could confer privilege.

Donna:	[…] Do you feel like you're… um, accepted by Australians? Do you feel comfortable being here?
Lena:	Yes, yes.
Donna:	Yeah? You don't have problems then?
Lena:	No, I don't have. Ah, actually, I did not have it from the start. I don't know why, but I was thinking yesterday… I was playing tennis. I am very good with some woman there… she is Malaysian, but she is living here since she was four… something. And, um, she is very careful woman, because some people maybe just keep distance when you first arrive. Actually, I did not feel it a lot, but she just came to me and start communicate and I think now she is the same with some man… he is Chinese. And I was playing yesterday with them. I just… I just arrived from Russia [from holiday] and I said [thought?]: 'Oh, it could be nice'… I played Sunday, but I wanted improve more and more… ah, I did not play a long time, and I said her: "Oh, what about if we organise something during the week?" and she called me and said: "Let's play tomorrow, just you and me" and then she said: "Oh, Hong is coming", ah… so and I thought, oh, maybe it's … do you remember this conversation when Asian girls said it's …
Donna:	Yeah.
Lena:	They're invisible, and I was thinking yes, because everybody was playing white people (SMALL LAUGH)…white… everybody…yes, and I was thinking, yes, maybe this guy…[…] Yes, so I … I didn't have this problem. I just was thinking yesterday: 'Oh, it's nice to be beautiful white woman, because everybody… when I just started play tennis, they: "Oh, do you… can you play Thursdays, or Tuesdays?"

(Lena, Interview Two, February 2009:24-25)

186

Lena's comments show that, even though she was initially unwilling to concede to other participants the racism inherent in their varied treatment as new migrants to Australia, she was aware of the white privilege she enjoyed.

6.3.3 Being invisible

Perhaps related to the notion of the unindividuated 'other', some participants reported feeling invisible in group social interactions that were controlled by established Australians. For example, Maria talked about being invisible to other, Anglo-Australian, members of the church choir and to people at the local community centre. Invisibility to members of the established community is one of the ways that newcomers experience social exclusion, and language is an important mechanism for performing this. Language-based exclusion and invisibility were reported separately by Tina and Kumiko when they took mainstream Central courses with young, predominantly Australian nationals, who not only ignored them, but spoke English quickly and used a lot of idiomatic expressions that made their speech impenetrable to a linguistic outsider. In addition, Michiko reported feeling invisible when she and her husband went car-shopping. As Michiko explains in the excerpt below, she was clearly the purchaser of the car, so should have been at the centre of negotiations with the car salesman; however, he ignored her and spoke only to her (Anglo-Australian) husband.

> Michiko: Yeah, when I went to shops to buy car… Toyota shop, with my husband… yeah, he talked to my husband, but actually **I** got the money (EVERYONE LAUGHS LOUDLY).
> Lena: He did not know it! He thought… (REST IS MUFFLED BY SHOUTS OF OTHER WOMEN'S LAUGHTER)
> Michiko: You talk to the wrong person! I said to my husband: "I don't wanna buy in here, cos…
> Kumiko: That's good.
> Michiko: … he doesn't talk to me"… you know.
> […]
> Michiko: […] And, ok, I understand because my husband is 183 [cm]… very tall. It suits to other people, maybe Australian…
> […]

Michiko: […] But, yeah, that happened. I felt like…[unclear] not kind of mentally, maybe. But firstly, I thought: 'Ah, maybe physically I am invisible', but actually maybe mentally as well. You know, like, I can see that, cos… always, I thought maybe they think I can't understand English… you know, cos…

Maria: Yes, I think so.

Michiko: Yes, that's I thought so, but I spoken with him… you know, I have spoken with him in… you know: "Nice to meet you, I'm thinking…" cos, you know, my husband can't decide. He can't decide which colour, which type (LAUGHTER), cos **I** got money! (MORE LAUGHTER)

(Discussion Three, October 2008:25-26)

It is interesting that, towards the end of this excerpt, Michiko suggests the possibility that the salesman ignored her because of her height, or his assumptions about her English competence, rather than saying directly that his behaviour could have been the result of racism. I deal with the use of English competence as a blind for racism in more detail in Chapter Seven, in relation to the Australian labour market (see 7.2). In both contexts are examples of Michiko refraining from blaming a situation on racism, but saying instead it could be a question of English competence.

6.3.4   Summary

To sum up, race impacted differentially on the participants' sense of self in negotiating social interactions, with social exclusion being experienced predominantly by the Asian participants, who reported overt behaviours such as race-based verbal abuse and variant customer service treatment, to more subtle forms of exclusion such as being rendered invisible by members of the dominant society through body language and the performance of impenetrable, group-defining English language use. In addition, there was evidence of European participants being able to imagine themselves as part of the Australian sociolinguistic mainstream, through the entitlement conferred by the history of post-war European migrations to Australia, contrasting with an assumption among Asian participants that they might not achieve such insider status.

6.4   Gender

The data set reveals the ways that transnational migration is a gendered process, insofar as it limits or expands gendered subjectivity, bringing into contrast the expectations of women in both the pre- and post-migration societies. The participants' settlement trajectories included the negotiation of sometimes conflicting gender ideologies, and in this section I will explore some of the ways this impacted on each woman's sense of self. Many of the participants expressed the impression that there was gender equality in Australia and some suggested that Australian women were assertive in social interactions. In addition, six of the nine participants made reference, in interviews and emails, as well as during group discussions, to the social pressures they experienced, as women, in their pre-migration society, and the ways, both positive and negative, this had been changed as a result of migrating to Australia. For some women it related primarily to expectations about how they should present themselves through language, as women, in either work or social settings, which I discuss in section 6.4.2. For others, the pressures related to expectations about gendered priorities for both productive and reproductive labour, as well as for their physical presentation, as women in society. I discuss both of these in section 6.4.3.

6.4.1   Linguistic constructions of gender

Three women referred to changes in their performance of self in society that were directly linked to using English in the Australian context. For example, Julie developed an imagined identity as a caring and more openly communicative self that was tied to the performance of Australian standard English, which I deal with in detail in Chapter Five (see 5.2.3.2), and Michiko noticed the development of an English-mediated ability to complain publicly about client service issues, in ways she would never have considered in Japanese.

For her part, Tina noted English-mediated changes in the way she could interact in the

workplace in Australia, compared to the way she felt she had to construct herself in China,

as a woman lawyer at work.

Donna:	Do you feel like a different person?
Tina:	I think I do.
Donna:	Can you articulate that, or is it too hard to explain it? (LAUGHS)
Tina:	Um… you know… maybe I used to work like… not work… I used to speak like …um… very seriously… you know…
Donna:	Oh, did you?! Not lightheartedly?
Tina:	No… some… some… you know, in my daily life, I used to be not serious…
Donna:	Oh, did you?
Tina:	… but in … in the work place I used to very serious. Er, you know… I think, in Australia, it's very …very comfortable when you're working with others. I notice that in the workplace, you guys can talk with each other, and just walk to the other guy's desk and talk to them.
Donna:	We can be very familiar with each other.
Tina:	Yeah.
Donna:	And casual.
Tina:	Yeah, and when we are talking, we can use many… (MAKES A SMALL HIGH SOUND)… I don't know how to express that…
Donna:	Mm, just familiar, easy language, like casual speech, you mean?
Tina:	Yeah, casual speech, and you can use a lot of body language.
Donna:	Oh, ok, yeah.
Tina:	Yes, and…
Donna:	Oh, so you don't have to be blank!
Tina:	Yeah.
Donna:	You don't have to hide your personality.
Tina:	Mhm, yeah, in work, I used to [be] like that.
Donna:	Oh, really?! You left the … (TINA LAUGHS)… everyday Tina at home and you put on the work Tina.
Tina:	Ah yeah… different.
Donna:	Was that because you were working in law, and you felt the pressure to…
Tina:	Mm, maybe, and you know, everybody said that I look younger than I actually is, so sometimes I just …er …to be serious to just let others know that I'm not a younger girl.
Donna:	Yeah.
Tina:	I'm a independent woman (LAUGHS)
Donna:	And does that make a difference… is there some… is there an issue about being a woman there as well? That, as a woman, you need to try harder at that, because…
Tina:	Mmm, I think so.
Donna:	… to get respect.
Tina:	I think so.
Donna:	To be taken seriously.
Tina:	Yeah. It's… I think it's not just in China. It's in Australia too. Yeah.
Donna:	Yeah. In some areas… probably in the law, it's like that with any woman.

Tina: Mhm. Yeah.
Donna: So… and so here, do you feel you don't have to be that kind of person?
Tina: I don't have to.
Donna: No. Ok, so maybe less serious.
Tina: I think that the… the environment… the situation in work place [in Australia] is more comfortable and more relaxed than in my work [in China].
(Tina, Interview Two, February 2009:18-20)

While she saw similarities in the way women in law felt pressure to work harder in order to prove themselves in a male-dominated field, Tina found that there was less of a divide between her language-mediated work and non-work selves in Australia than there had been in China, where she had felt the need to discursively construct herself as a more serious person in order to gain acceptance as a (young-looking) woman in law.

6.4.2   Gender and choice

Michiko, Kumiko, and Maria, all of whom had previously lived in Japan, talked about the pressure Japanese women are under to get married and have children and Michiko described how people assumed something was wrong with her when she was still single at 30. Both she and Kumiko said in their first interview that, as young women, they had not considered becoming a parent because of their negative feelings about the way children are raised in Japan. In our first interview, I asked Michiko what were her impressions of women in Australian society, and she replied that she thought they were very independent, which she liked. She went on to explain why, comparing aspects of the position of women in Japanese and Australian society.

Michiko: Yeah! Cos if you don't get married and you over thirty years old, no-one care! Maybe some people care but no-one said: "You should get married, you should get married" or something. Because when I was in Japan I was…I'm still single, like, no-one notice… so 'de-facto' doesn't make sense in Japan.
Donna: Ok.
Michiko: We don't have the law.
Donna: So you just say: "I'm single".
Michiko: Yeah. So, everyone… "Why you not get married?" or "You are already 33…it's might be too late", or something like that…(BOTH LAUGH)… "Are you crazy?" Or "Cos you're strange, that's why you can't get

married." No-one say…and here, you can continue the job, even like you get married or you have children …. doesn't matter…you can't…cos they [Australians] have equal opportunity…they can't discriminate from that, which is very suit me, I think.

Donna: Mm. ok.

Michiko: Yeah, I really like. So, this country's women is independent and very lucky, I think.

(Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:24)

The fact that it was acceptable for a woman still to be single after 30 in Australia, or to return to paid work after having children, allowed Michiko to feel more relaxed about her life choices. She spoke again of the pressure to marry in Japan, and the anxiety this induced, during our first group discussion, where Kumiko concurred, referring to the masks they must choose from in Japan, for social interactions. I had asked the women whether they felt like they had chosen Australia or whether they felt it was more of an accident that they had come to live here.

Michiko: Accidentally.

Maria: I chose.

Kumiko: I choose.

Donna: Yeah?

Kumiko: I can be more…myself. In Japan, I…we have to…we always have to…

Michiko: Yeah…think too much …

Kumiko: Yeah… to worry.

Michiko: …about life. If I don't get married before 30 years old, everyone…neighbours, friends: "Something wrong with her".

Kumiko: Will judge you.

Michiko: Yeah, cos if things happen or if I don't get job: "What's wrong with her?" You know, everyone's talking, I can hear and then…I shouldn't be worried, but I can't stop worrying about everything.

Kumiko: (LAUGHS) So, we all have…like, you know, in our drawers, we have three or five masks: 'Today, I put this one!'

Michiko: Yeah, yeah.

(Discussion One, August 2008:23)

In the same discussion, the three participants who have lived in Japan talked about the way that some Japanese women were beginning to contest the pressure to marry and have children, because of its association with giving up their independence and their job or, as Kumiko put it: "company says 'die'".

Michiko: […] Like all my friends are single, except two, and they're over 30 years old and they realise they want to get married now, but now when

they look, no…I don't know, can't think…maybe, there, they can earn
more than husband [↗] and if they have a house…

Donna: Oh, they have a good life, as a single woman.

Michiko: Yeah, but if they get married, they will lose, you know, money or time
or everything.

Donna: So, there's still the pressure to quit your job, after you get married?

Michiko: Yeah, yeah.

Kumiko: If you get married, and get…have child, company says 'die'.

Michiko: Yeah, they have to quit. They don't stay.

(Discussion One, August 2008:24-25)

All three women suggested that the move to Australia has been associated with feeling

more relaxed and less anxious about whether they were conforming to societal

constructions of women in relation to marriage, children and also employment, insofar as

women in Australia are not pressured to leave paid employment after having a child.

6.4.2.1 Choosing how to dress

Both Lena and Roxanna spoke of the pressures on women to conform to quite prescriptive

ideas about how they should dress and act in public in their pre-migration society, and

Lena spoke in some detail about how she was changing in this regard, as a result of living

in Australia.

In our first interview, Roxanna talked about her motivation for moving to Australia, which

was to support her sons' school and university education, but what she also revealed was a

complex set of emotions dealing with the ways in which her life as an Iranian woman was

controlled by her husband and the state. She referred to a lack of press freedom and access

to web-based news, and also that she felt women in Iran had no rights, citing divorce and

child custody laws that explicitly favoured men. She expressed the view that while

migration was hard, women would more easily adapt to post-migration settlement, based

on the assumption that their pre-migration lives may have been more difficult.

Roxanna: […] But, I think, going to foreign countries and live there for good, is
very good for young people, like my son. He came here, I think he could

adapt himself with everything. For me, it's very hard, and I know for my husband, it's much harder than me, because I'm with my children, I can live with them, and I can adapt myself with here and I think women can adapt themselves easily…more.

Donna: Yes. So, why do you think that women are better at that?

Roxanna: Because, um… I don't know… for Iranian women…I don't know about other countries, but Iranian woman …the government push them and force them to do what the government wants. And they don't ch…they don't…they can't do anything for themselves.

(Roxanna, Interview One, October 2008:2)

One of the ways that Roxanna felt pushed by the Iranian government was in the restrictions

on how she could dress in public, and she explained the consequences of being judged as

non-compliant in her dress during our first interview.

Roxanna: […] They arrest us for having a party. It's …er, very common. Or when you go outside, for example to shopping centre, if your dress is very short, or it's very tight, they arrest you, in the street (TONE OF INCREDULITY). And they took …take you to the prison and you have to sign a paper and promise that don't do it again. (SMALL LAUGH). And it's very bad…do you know, really I suffer… I suffer so many things.

[…]

Roxanna: […] two times, they arrested me…yes. I took my son to the shopping centre and two Islamic soldier government came and told me: "Your dress is very short and very tight, and it's not good for your age" (LAUGHING VOICE). And I…they …um, took me to the corner of the shopping centre. Everybody looked at me, and my son cried…my younger son cried and I told them: "I'm so sorry, I won't do it…I won't do it again. Please let me go because my son is crying", and I ask…I beg their …do you know: "Please forgive me, I won't do it again" and they let me go. But, about young people, no, there is no mercy. They arrest them, and …I think you heard about it in the news, about the situation. And um, but…but, um…

Donna: So, you had to suffer a lot.

Roxanna: And another time, yes, when I was under…on my car, and I …my friend was sitting next to me, and she was …her scarf was back and her hair was very…yes [showing] … and they stopped me, and asked us, and I said: "Oh, please, let us to go. She will cover yourself [herself] more, and…"

Donna: And they let you go?

Roxanna: Yes, and I think …[…] …Yes, but I can't believe how one person can let put his nose to other's life. I think, when I go to the party, or to the street, maybe somebody says: "Oh, look at her! What's the dress she wears?" But, I think it's none of my business, because dressing is very private things. It's…

(Roxanna, Interview One, October 2008:6-7)

The move to Australia meant that Roxanna could now physically construct herself in public as she wanted to, without fear of disciplinary action by the state.

In some ways, this change worked in reverse for Lena, who found she could no longer construct herself physically in ways that she wanted to, through beauty treatments, clothing and shoes, but was obliged to settle for what the post-migration society offered, and expected of her, as a woman. In personal interviews and during group discussion sessions, Lena spoke of the post-communist societal pressure on Russian women to construct themselves as beautiful and clever objects in the marriage market, and she also lamented the lack of adequate beauty treatments in Australia, of the kind she had been used to getting in Russia, as well as the lack of sophistication of Australian fashions. In Australia, Lena's social contacts, outside of the friends she made in the AMEP, were all formed through her husband, a wealthy semi-retired property developer who had a financial and sporting interest in horse-racing, and who belonged to the local tennis club in their affluent neighbourhood. While she was impressed by their wealth, Lena was somewhat dismayed by the lack of sophistication in fashion and grooming among the affluent women she met, and she worried that it would not be possible to re-establish the standards of grooming and the quality of beauty treatments she had been used to in Russia. This problem of constructing herself socially turned on contrasts in the material affordances of the pre- and post-migration societies; however, it impacted significantly on Lena's sense of self and, over the course of the study period, she was aware of a change in values with regard to her gendered physical identity. Early in the study, Lena had been so concerned about the impact on her sense of self of the lack of acceptable beauty treatments in Australia that she spoke of being in a "panic" about her inability to reconstruct her Russian self in Australia.

> Lena: […] Something change in my life, maybe negative (LAUGHS, AND OTHERS DO TOO). Yes, because I think … I don't know, society in Russia is… er, maybe not in culture, but in society now, ah… it's …you

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>have keep you young, you have keep you moving, you have keep your…for women… beauty. Um…</td></tr>
<tr><td>Donna:</td><td>So, there's pressure from society to keep young?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lena:</td><td>Ahh, yes, maybe. Pressure…</td></tr>
<tr><td>Vesna:</td><td>I don't think it's pressure.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lena:</td><td>Maybe no, it's not pressure, but … er, pressure! (LAUGHTER). Yes, you can feel it… yes, just nice be young, beautiful, and I don't think it's bad… and I think … and every woman take care of herself … in body, face… even if you have not enough money, you still do it… [it's] just in [the] culture. Yeah. Maybe did not come from long way culture, not from the past, but maybe some twenty, thirty years, and…</td></tr>
<tr><td>Vesna:</td><td>And maybe this is in the cities?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lena:</td><td>Yes, in big cities, of course, and er… I am … I lost it here, and I am in panic! (LAUGHS)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Donna:</td><td>You're in a panic??</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lena:</td><td>Yes, I am in panic. I don't look after my body, I don't look how I look in Russia, all the time. Your dress, you have a little makeup… not like any makeup and dress, but for different case, you… … but, you look good and you feel good… different. Here, I am always casual.</td></tr>
</table>

(Discussion Three, October 2008:9)

As a result of both lack of societal expectation and her perception of a lack of availability in Australia, Lena no longer had such beauty treatments, and during the first half of the study her body image was expressed negatively in comparison with her former self in Russia. However, by the end of the study, she began to say that she quite liked the more casual approach to life in Australia, and could see how she was now more comfortable with dressing casually. In our final interview, Lena referred to the fact that she hardly ever wore high heels any more, reasoning: "because I'm nearly Australian now". Later in the conversation, we returned to the changes she could see in herself from living in Australia.

<table>
<tr><td>Donna:</td><td>[…] And does it ... does living in Australia affect you ... change who you are?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lena:</td><td>Yes.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Donna:</td><td>Okay. How? (BOTH LAUGH)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lena:</td><td>Oh I become casual. I don't know, in some ways I like it, in some ways...</td></tr>
<tr><td>Donna:</td><td>Do you? Is it starting ..?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lena:</td><td>... I like it really.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Donna:</td><td>Oh.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lena:</td><td>Yes. When I just put my shorts and top in the morning, just go to the ocean and just relax there and do nothing. I enjoy ... when people are like this, they are enjoy it and everything looks too nice and relax and you have coffee at the ocean. Everything is so nice. This part I do ...</td></tr>
<tr><td>Donna:</td><td>It is starting to affect you cos maybe a year or so ago you were just, like: "Oh I don't like it, I look so casual all the time". (BOTH LAUGH)</td></tr>
</table>

Lena:	No. No. No. Not at the beach. I ... I don't know but no, I like this.
Donna:	So some aspects of the lifestyle you like?
Lena:	Yeah. Yeah.
Donna:	Did you ... did it feel funny being back in Russia for the six weeks or was it just fun to not be doing all that casual stuff and to ..?
Lena:	No. No. It ... you know it ... it affect even my view of Russia because sometimes people there are try and express themself too much. Now I ... I look at this ... is different point ... from different point of view and sometimes it looks just funny.
Donna:	Over the top, sort of thing?
Lena:	Yeah. Over the top and ... I like it here ... I even like it when people don't represent have $300 million in their pocket and don't express themself… it's ok…

(Lena, Interview Three, November 2009:33-34)

While she was initially quite troubled by the physical changes she saw in herself, this excerpt shows how Lena later became aware of internalising a more Australian set of expectations about the physical construction of gender, and even found herself viewing Russian expectations of women through this new schema on a visit back there. For both Lena and Roxanna, the common theme was one of a causal link between transnational migration and changes in the ways they could construct themselves physically; for Lena, this was initially about lack of choice, and for Roxanna, it was about freedom of choice.

6.4.3   Summary

As the data reveal, the experience of transnational migration involving language change impacts a woman's gendered identity because of contrasting expectations of women between the pre- and post-migration societies. In the case of the participants, these included contrasting ideologies about marriage, and both linguistic and physical constructions of gender. Most participants referred to the affordances for women in the post-migration society, with specific examples given about the right to choose, in relation to marital status and how to dress as a woman.

6.5 Case study: Maria

I would now like to explore the self in social life through an analysis of Maria's post-migration social identity constructions. Maria's migration trajectory was somewhat unique among the participants, in that she had undergone a two-step migration, first from Brazil to Japan and then, five years later, from Japan to Australia. It is important, therefore, to consider both Brazil and Japan as pre-migration societies, and her settlement trajectory in Australia as incorporating the impact on her sense of self of her sometimes contrasting experiences in all three locations.

During the project period, Maria was engaged in fairly intensive efforts to establish a social network, based on mutual support, as well as a sense of belonging in her immediate neighbourhood, within the focal loci of the Baptist church and the Community Centre. Having had previous experience of transnational migration, from Brazil to Japan, as well as formative experiences as a member of a visible minority community in Brazil, Maria was able to apply experiential knowledge in the pursuit of her social aspirations, and she demonstrated a high level of agency in addressing barriers related to language and race. For these reasons, I believe Maria's Australian settlement trajectory is revealing as a focal case of negotiating an English-mediated social identity from a minority position.

6.5.1 Language

While she had struggled to develop competency in Japanese, possibly due to factors related to a lack of motivation and sense of investment in and belonging to Japanese society, Maria was highly invested in learning English because she hoped that Australia would be the right place for her family to settle. After her arrival, she fairly rapidly developed communicative fluency in English, even though she told me in our first interview that she had no prior formal English tuition, but had picked up what she knew in Brazil, mostly

from watching English language television and movies and reading books. By the time we met, Maria was in a Certificate III (Intermediate) English class at the AMEP, and was also seeking active engagement with people in the local Baptist church and the nearby Community Centre. Maria was very proactive about establishing social networks, and she targeted English-speaking communities in order to establish the kind of social networks that might enhance her English development as well as provide potential employment connections for her and her husband.

> Maria: Like me, six…five months ago, I like you, I'm not know too many peoples Australian. Now, I know a lot, because I show off (LAUGHS, OTHERS JOIN).
> Donna: Because that's what Australians do??
> Maria: I say: "Hello, my name is Maria, and can I play cards with you?" They say: "Yes, of course, come here." [this was how she got involved with people at the local Community Centre].
> Tina: But do you think that the relationship…the relationship you have built is something superficial?
> Maria: No, you need… yes, every time you need to take a step, one step by step. With me, first I sit down: "Ah hello, good morning, beautiful day, isn't it?" "Oh, yes." And you start…and another day you come in: "Ah, what you doing? I want to play." "You want to play cards with me?" "Yes, of course." I will start play cards, and after you will get…
> […]
> Maria: Yeah, and I think is better I know people and they can introduce me…ah, if I get a job, something …ah, I know some person…it's because I feel like my husband or some people give the resume, don't have any reply, and I think it's better you know people. You need to know people; you need to go in there and show your face and: "Eh, hello!"
> (Discussion Two, September 2008:9-10)

Maria's confident, outgoing personality, as well as her efforts in creating relationships of mutual support within care-focused communities ensured her success at creating an English-mediated social network. Most of her friends were first-generation migrants from the UK, and the friendships were all inter-generational, since, as Maria discovered early on, older people had the time and interest to engage with her.

> The church are good way to improve your English and I made a lot of friends there . They are nice all of my friends are elderly (70 years average) and the good thing are they speak clearly and loudly (almost of them are deaf) and they love making friends. Now I have a plenty of

> Australian friends, It is different in JPN when you have to beg for
> friendship and all the time you have to be carefull what do you say to
> others and no offend them .You have to be polite and put a lot of
> masks all time. It is different in Australia you can be different.
> (Maria, email communication, August 2009)

By the time of our second interview, Maria was performing a number of volunteer

services, including helping some of the arthritic ladies in the church by chopping their

vegetables, volunteering in the church community soup kitchen, teaching ladies how to do

quilting, and singing in the church choir. In return, she was supported by the church

community when she had to have an operation, receiving cooked meals for two weeks as

she convalesced.

> Oohh this week although painfull for me but It was a great time to
> find who is your friend. The ladies at Scarborough comunity knew I was
> ill, then the ladies organized a food schedule. 2 weeks I didn`t cook
> and They send food to me and my family.
> Yumy Ozzie food, I ate lamb with beannetes, basmati rice (my first
> time), lasagna , fish casserola, ...
> Wow, It was good, my first time in Oz I have been spoiled and the
> best is for Australian people.I am blessed for having a such good
> friends and specially Ozzie friends.
> (Maria, email communication, February 2009)

6.5.1.1 Legitimate peripheral participation

 Wenger's (1991) concept of Legitimate Peripheral Participation is relevant to an

understanding of Maria's experience of engagement in the church and community centre

as locations for language learning and social networking. As a practising Christian, Maria

sought membership of the Baptist church, and because it was a community based on

Christian values, its members were disposed to be inclusive of newcomers (see also Han,

2007, for a study specifically devoted to migrant inclusion in a church context). In

addition, the church organised numerous occasions for the gathering of (mostly) women to

collaborate on charitable deeds, such as craft projects to create goods in support of local

and overseas aid projects. Maria's knowledge and experience of crafts such as knitting and

quilting, developed during her time in Japan, meant that she could use this symbolic capital

to become a successful contributor to these groups. This gave her a legitimate means of interacting with other group members, most of which was carried out in English. As a result, and because of her gregarious nature, Maria was able to capitalise on these opportunities for English language practice, some of which was also instructional, in the sense that she was able to establish relations with at least one woman, the pastor's wife, who gave Maria corrective feedback on her grammar and pronunciation.

6.5.1.2 Difficulties with English

I do not wish to suggest that any of this was easy for Maria, who spoke in interview about the difficulties of communicating in English, and understanding the Australian vernacular, as well as her inability to construct herself in English as the competent, authoritative woman she was in Portuguese. The following quote from our first interview perhaps sums up the alienation she sometimes felt as she struggled to find her place in the local community.

> To be a foreigner's very hard…I feel so like the fish not in water.
> (Maria, Interview One, June 2008:40)

During our second interview, Maria referred with some empathy to a recent incident from US America, where a Vietnamese migrant had shot some people at an immigrant support centre, then turned the gun on himself. She linked loneliness and language difficulties as possible causes of his final, violent act.

> Maria: Because he doesn't speak any English and he ...
> […]
> Donna: But why would he kill his fellow students?
> Maria: Because I think he frustrated and now they have the recession, economy like come down and everybody lose their jobs. I think for migrants is more difficult now ...
> Donna: Oh it's much more difficult.
> Maria: ... and we has a lot of background like we ... we miss our country, we miss a lot of things, so I remember and ... I put my in his place, why ... why he's doing this because he's migrant like me, why he did this and he feels so frustrate and he ... he'll ... because Asians people like that, when I be honour: 'I kill myself', and something like that.
> […]

Maria: No. So ... and I put myself in his place …and this Vietnam.
Donna: Yeah, Vietnamese, yeah.
Maria: Yeah. Vietnamese. And why he killed these old peoples, I think because
            he frustrate, he's ... bec ... all migrants very lonely here in the new
            country and sometimes we not be ourselves because we can't express
            and we feel more depressed because this we can't express how ...
            um…how to say… mmm, ours feelings.
(Maria, Interview Two/part 1, April 2009:1-2)

Maria described specific difficulties she had experienced using English for social

interaction, both in the AMEP class and at the local church and community centre. For

example, she discovered that her performance of compassion and empathy in English was

at odds with the expectations of her teacher, as the following excerpt reveals.

Sometimes, I struggling in some expressions...my teacher Kirsty gave us a subject
called: Real life responding sympathetically
 Examples* If your friend is in tears at the end of a sad film. What do you say to
your friend? well, for me ..I will say: Come on Pull yourself together....then Kirsty
horrified with my answer =P well in my mix culture...I will fell strange said Oh,
you must be very sad. I fell I pretende or faking if I said that. hmm...I can`t
understand why I can`t said Come on Pull yourself together ! First of all this is a
film isn`t real and if you cried I will fell embarassing and everybody will look at us
(this kind things have happened when I went to watch a movie with my sister ..she
always cries) and watching a movie? How can be real ?..I believe the soundtrack
..and film effects can causes tears. But is not real.
Well for Oz I can`t said that then I pretend to say ..Ohh What a pitty =P
 Or , when someone cry ..I can`t say ..Calm down ! (Kirsty horrified second time
with my answer =P) I fell so normal saying Calm down to someone but the
intonation of my voice of course is not loud but softly...also How can I say? Don`t
worry? I believe I don`t know How to say sympathetically?
(Maria, email communication, November 2008)

In addition, Maria was conscious of uncertainty about how to greet people and when to

demonstrate physical affection in a multicultural society. After some involvement in the

church and community centre, Maria discovered that there needed to be different

approaches to different people, rather than a single approach to all.

Maria: I only can be myself only part of times.
[…]
Donna: So when can you not be yourself fully?
Maria: When I was at the church when I start talking with people.
Donna: The church, okay.
[…]
Maria: Like I ... I know when I go to the church I can kiss only two ladies, one
            is from British, another one's from Ireland.
(Maria, Interview Two/part 3, April 2009:14-15)

Maria worked to ameliorate some of her troubles with English interactions by being

selective about who she spoke with, favouring speakers of British English over those who

spoke in the Australian vernacular.

Maria:	I have a problem with, ah, suppliers… when I start to talking to them, when I have to delay something, some invoice…
Donna:	Yeah.
Maria:	…like, er, and have… and I choose the people who I want to talk, you know?
Donna:	Mmm.
[…]	
Maria:	…have one… one lady, she's from… I think she's from… I … [don't] know because I never met her, but by phone, I feel she's from somewhere… outside Australia.
Donna:	Ok.
Maria:	She's a foreigner.
[…]	
Maria:	Because she speak slowly, and I can understand her.
Donna:	Mmm. Mmm. That's good (SMALL LAUGH).
Maria:	So, when I… I speak with her, I told: "Ah, I want a two-hundred-fifty business card, or something like that, and, mm, gloss matting, or laminated… I start talk to her, so I can… this is Kate… I can speak very … if Daniella take the phone… haaaahh!! (DRAMATIC, DRAWN-OUT GASP)… I can't understand **any** words! And she can't…she **couldn't** understand me. This is…
[…]	
Maria:	Yeah, like, ah, with… if I call from [unclear]… if I call, I don't… I want to talk with specifically one person, and I feel confident talking with this person, because this person speak… he knows…
Donna:	Yeah, so you say: "Can I speak to Kate, please?"
Maria:	Yeah. "Can I speak with Jerry?" "Ah, can be me?" [I] say: "No, I want to speak with Jerry" (HUMOUR IN VOICE). So… and Jerry, I think he's from England.
Donna:	So, you're being quite strategic, in terms of making sure …
Maria:	Which people have to talk.
Donna:	Yeah.
Maria:	Because if I not make sure if… which people can understand me, I don't want to be…
Donna:	Mm.
Maria:	…make some mistake with another person, you know.

(Maria, Interview Three/part 1, October 2009:1-2)

By the end of the study, Maria was working part-time for a café and catering business in

the city centre, doing general accounting and managing supplies, as well as maintaining

her involvement in the local church, which included teaching small craft groups. She was

mostly happy with her family's settlement trajectory, particularly since her daughter was now in an English-medium school and making friends in the community, and they had bought their own home. While Maria still had unfulfilled aspirations for self-employment in small business, her settlement success thus far was perhaps the realisation of hopes evoked in an earlier blog post, written after a three-week visit to Japan with her daughter.

> I had a good time but it was good to come back Australia. My promise land.
> (Maria, blog entry, March 15, 2009)

6.5.2 Race

Maria learned early in life about being an outsider, because as soon as she began primary school, she was constructed as the 'other', by her teachers and fellow classmates. She described herself as having migrated three times in her life, with the first migration being internal, from a pre-school-age identity as a Chinese person, to a sense of herself as being Brazilian, which grew out of her experience of schooling. When she first attended school, Maria did not speak the official language, Portuguese, which had immediate negative consequences.

> Maria: I went in primary and my teacher is not so nice (LAUGHS LOUDLY). She is very very angry because I can't understand, I can't …
> Donna: And did she treat you differently because you were Chinese as well?
> Maria: Yes, yes, yes, yes…like a foreigner. Everybody want to see me, everybody ask me why my eyes…like this (INDICATES THE SHAPE OF HER EYES, LAUGHING).
> […]
> Maria: Yes, and I think I'm different, I don't know why and sometimes I feel so odd (LAUGHS QUIETLY)
> (Maria, Discussion One, August 2008:2)

Although she successfully 'migrated' into Portuguese, Maria grew up in Brazil socialising almost exclusively within the Asian-Brazilian communities, and she said that none of her friends there were 'Western'. By the time she migrated to Australia, Maria had also experienced being an outsider in Japan, where her migrant status meant that Japanese

people avoided public interaction with her - according to Maria, some people in the town

where she lived even crossed the street to avoid passing directly by her.

Maria: Yeah, because Japanese have a lot of rules…
Kumiko: Yeah, that's right.
Michiko: Yeah.
Maria: …and you can't speak like me and about my…I have friends in
            Japanese school… one friend, and a mother, but if she saw me at the
            school, she doesn't…she say only: "Good morning" but she not talk
            with me. She only talk with me outside school.
Donna: Why is that?
Maria: Because she is shaming with me [ashamed of me] because I am
            foreigners…
(Discussion One, August 2008:15)

Perhaps as a result of her previous experiences of social and linguistic exclusion, Maria

noted that she adapted to each new setting, becoming a different person in each place.

But I'm change my person. I change every time. When I was in Japan, when my
parents…every foreigners when go somewhere place different, you change.
(Maria, Discussion One, August 2008:5)

6.5.2.1 Being invisible

Although Maria was, over time, able to create a social space for herself at the local church

and the community centre, she talked about feeling invisible during some of her early

group encounters with more established members of those groups, and she related this to

her foreigner status.

Maria: Australian people don't want to be your friend. They … you…you like
            invisible to them… you very invisible! If you coming to them and
            speak, they will speak very friendly with you, but if you pass, they look
            at you like [unclear]…
Lena: Speak with you.
Maria: Yeah, yeah… um, I am soprano in Brazil. I enjoy it eight years before
            married in chorus, in … and I want to enjoy a choir again, and this
            church no have choir but have a band, and the band [unclear]
            (LAUGHS) …put me in the band. The band like twenty years people
            [young people], and um eighty percent of the time I don't understand,
            because always say like this slanguage…
Donna: Slang?
Maria: Yeah, slang.
Michiko: Slang… ahh!
Maria: And I don't understand it (LAUGHS) that kind of language, and um I
            learn my phrasal verbs, but not (LAUGHS) not so similar! It's very

different language. I feel they … ah, not speaking Australian (LAUGHS).
Lena: Not right Australian.
Maria: (LAUGHS) and ah, everybody say I sing very well, but I sing…
Vesna: Still they not admit you like the same.
Maria: Yeah, the same group. They speak with each other but not speak with me.
Donna: Yeah, you're an outsider.
Maria: Yeah. If I … my time or the music is flat, they don't say to me. They said with each other and you invisible again. I think as we are foreigners, we are invisible for Australian people. They not… not… knows, or the older one, I don't know… or very scared about us. At this time I want to find out which kind of feelings that Australian people have about us, because I want… I don't want to move out… I move to Brazil to Japan and then to Australia… I want to set down, enjoy life (DRAWS OUT 'DOWN' AND 'LIFE') and ah … know! And know about another people, visit the places,…
Lena: Did you say these people from this band, they are 20 years old?
Maria: Yes.
Lena: Maybe just not your age group, that is why they not interested to you.
Maria: Yes, but I went to another… another! I going to aged people… elderly people, and I notice … happens, the **same** feeling … **same** feeling… they…you are invisible! I going to Centre Civic [Civic Centre/Community Centre] and I going there, I enjoin the choir, but …er, you invisible. They don't want a… **you** need to go find a … but they not…
(Discussion Three, October 2008:24-25)

In interview, Maria had explained that she was the only Asian member of her Church, and that the neighbourhood she chose to live in was predominantly Anglo-Australian. Part of her reason for wanting to remain in this neighbourhood, instead of moving to one where there was a bigger Asian community, was that Maria wanted to learn about those she perceived to be dominant-culture Australians and, as she explains in the excerpt above, how they felt about people like her. This learning was part of Maria's self-directed settlement process, and she undertook it because she had a strong commitment to settling permanently in Australia, and she wanted to achieve a sense of belonging and inclusion, for herself and for her family.

6.5.2.2 Contesting social exclusion

Perhaps as a result of her prior experience of being an outsider to the mainstream, together with a strong motivation to succeed, Maria displayed both an awareness of race-based prejudice, and the determination to contest it in order to assert her right to the social space of her choosing. Rather than allow herself to be constructed as a victim of discriminatory practices, she challenged those practices and looked for ways to proceed in spite of them. For example, when she felt she was being treated badly by administration staff in the AMEP, she formally complained to the program manager, and when she concluded that their tenancy applications were being rejected on the basis of race, Maria took over from her unassertive husband, and went straight to the property agent, invoking her previous identity as a successful businesswoman to negotiate an immediate, satisfactory outcome for her family. Later, when they were looking to buy a house in the same neighbourhood, Maria found that each offer they made on a house was rejected. Interpreting the rejection as race-based, Maria circumvented the local property agent, capitalising on a casual remark of his regarding a potential house listing by going directly to the home owner and making an offer for a private sale. In this way, Maria was able to contest her construction as an outsider, as well as what she perceived to be the discriminatory practices of the property agent, in order to achieve her goal of home ownership in the location of her choosing.

> Maria: Yeah. And another thing is, how I managed to buy a house. This is
>   another trick, too (DONNA LAUGHS)… because we s… we…five
>   house … five house we got the … all the house we have the… how to
>   say…the under offer… we put in the offer.
> Donna: Yeah, yeah.
> Maria: …and all no successful, and…
> Donna: Your offer was not successful? They didn't accept it?
> Maria: No, no, and… but this…
> Donna: Yeah, ok. So, you've given offers on five different houses?
> Maria: Yeah, and this houses like… the sign like twenty thousand.
> Donna: Mm, mm.
> Maria: Good money. Or two hundred sometimes, but no-one want…wants, and
>   my husband say… start to say… it's because we are Asian, and the
>   North of the here is more Caucasians, more from England, from … mm.
> Donna: Oh.
> Maria: And we feel sometimes we discriminated.

[…]

Maria: So, the real reason is Asian…
Donna: So, you **feel** that, when you go out?
Maria: Yeah.
Donna: Oh, interesting.
Maria: And the …the strange thing is, when we come to the real estate agent, they …they feel more comfortable to sell to the people who speak the same language. They feel more comfortable…
Donna: Yeah.
Maria: … to speak about the roof, about the insulation, about everything, about the strata fees. I have to learn by myself, what is this strata fees. What is this law? I have to… I now say … ok, five under offers and no one's successful, and one of them like the… the real estate agent, when he saw our address, he say: "Oh, your neighbour, I think he selling his house". I say: "Yeah". I think, oh…
Donna: So, he [agent] knew it, even though he [home owner] wasn't gonna list it with the agency?
Maria: Yeah. I knew about… about the real estate agent before, and because he have… ah: "I will go to your house because… near your house because I have a interview with some people".
Donna: Oh, to list it, with his agency.
Maria: Yeah, yeah, yeah, and he is…
Donna: Oh, but did the guy decide not to list it with that agency?
Maria: Because I come first!
(Maria, Interview Three/part 3, October 2009:6-7)

Along with her agency in contesting discrimination, it is important to note that Maria's perception of her ultimately successful social inclusion, at least in the church and community centre, was that she worked to create the space for herself, rather than rely on the community to voluntarily include her. During Interview Two, Maria talked about all the charity work she was doing through the church and how this validated her social status.

Maria: I make my placing myself.
Donna: Yeah. That's the sense I have of you and that's what's ... I'm so …
Maria: They not inviting me to go. I ...
Donna: No.
Maria: I invite myself. (LAUGHING)
Donna: Yeah. And how do you think they receive you now?
Maria: They receive me very well because I not teaching only for there, only for me. We teaching for helping another persons. I feel good about this..
(Maria, Interview Two/part 1, April 2009:8)

Maria invited herself, instigating and managing her own social inclusion in the church community, the success of which perhaps derives from both her outgoing personality and her experiential understanding of group dynamics and social exclusion.

6.5.3   Gender

Maria: I feel Maria has to make many face.
Donna: You have many faces?
Maria: Yeah and I can adapt very easily.
Donna: And you're happy with that?
Maria: I don't know. I ... I grew up this way.
(Maria, Interview Two/part 3, April 2009:36)

As the quote suggests, adapting to change was normalised for Maria in her formative experiences as the child of working-class Chinese migrants to Brazil. Although she went on to become an independent and successful businesswoman in Brazil, Maria's subsequent migration from Brazil to Japan brought about a dramatic change in her primary work identity, from that of self-made businesswoman to full-time homemaker and mother, financially dependent on her husband (see 7.5.2.1). While she was afterwards quite critical of the pressures on women in Japanese society, and the narrowly prescriptive ways they are expected to perform the roles of wife and mother, nevertheless, during her five years in Japan, Maria devoted herself to being successful in these roles. This also included dressing in a different manner than she had in Brazil, and being more demure, less effusive, in her interactions with others. She compares her gendered physical constructions in Brazil, Japan and Australia in the excerpt below, highlighting some of the changes she has undergone.

> Definitely yes, I am changing a little bit. In the begin, I have felt strange. Specially my clothes. First, I am strange. I wore cloths like Japanese girl, then I decided to shop and I bought casual cloths (streets cloth) more basic. The same way, when I was in Japan I bought cloths and approns (I am housewife). Every mom, or almost of them in Japan wear approns in outside, they are proud using apron. I am mum and my job is take care my house, my family and kids. I changed my behaviour. When I was in Brazil. When I was in Japan and the same now I am in Australia. Every time, when I speak different languages, my behaviour change accordingly the country and my hair!! In Brazil I used to have a long hair, in Japan short hair and now in Australia I don't know How to do? Short or long? In Japan, I always pretend, I changed my behaviour. I didn't talk loudly. I spoke calm and have pause.

I always bow down my head and I never stare on face to face. I never touched them. In Brazil, you touch, you hug your friends. In Australia is different. You can go everywhere and use informal clothes, and you can hug someone they are not frightened or terrified about your moods.
(Maria, written response to discussion topic, August 2008)

As the excerpt shows, Maria connects physical, behavioural and linguistic changes as combined manifestations of the post-migration identity constructions she has undergone in Japan and Australia. In contrast to her memories of strong and equal Brazilian women, Japanese women were constructed by Maria as submissive and gendered objects, plagued by enormous social pressure to strive towards an impossible and competitively gauged ideal of motherhood and home care. Maria was profoundly affected by her gendered experience of Japan, and in our conversations she sometimes directed me to ask her questions about her time in Japan. She commented on the life of a middle-class Japanese mother from the position of participant observer, but never one who gained the status of an insider, due to being a foreigner in Japan. She also spoke about female suicide in Japan, in relation to the unbearable social pressure on women to be a perfect mother and wife.

Going back to Japan…but the Japanese woman, she's so struggling, her mind…sometimes if you ...if you understand Japanese newspaper, something…every day have one woman commit suicide with children together.
(Maria, Interview One, June 2008:30)

Maria's time in Japan had been focused on becoming a successful wife and mother, roles she had never before fully embraced. It is possible that her time in Japan may have contributed to Maria's desire to continue in that role, even after the move away, to Australia.

Maria: I think I feel like the ... the ... the Japan is like my exodus, you know, the bible. You have one place, you leave it, you have been there.
[…]
Maria: It's like my preparation ...
Donna: So you ...
Maria: ... come before here. Understand?
(Maria, Interview Two/part 3, April 2009:9-10)

Her initial settlement period in Australia also included a lot of work outside the home; however, this was focused on involvement in charity, such as volunteering in her church community, and making quilts and knitting blankets and clothing for people in need. This kind of reproductive labour can be seen as an extension of the gendered constructions of caring which derive from the woman as wife and mother, and in a sense Maria was using the symbolic capital she gained in Japan to establish social status in Australia.

6.6   Summary

To conclude, in this chapter I have looked in some detail at the many factors influencing the participants' post-migration constructions of self in social interactions. These have included the experience of using English as, variously, a diminution of a prior language identity, as in the case of Tina, Maria, and Lena, or a liberating act of selfhood, as in the case of Michiko and Kumiko. I have also explored the ways that race is differentially experienced as either a barrier to social inclusion, or as a means of imagining oneself in the mainstream. In addition, I have shown how language intersects with race as a mechanism for invisibility and social exclusion, and examined the influence of gender constructions in the pre-migration society, discussing how they have been both positively and negatively affected by the move to Australia. Finally, I have discussed in some detail Maria's settlement trajectory, outlining the ways that she was able to utilise her prior symbolic capital, as well as her experiential understanding of otherness, to construct a space for herself within the social networks of the local Baptist church and the Community Centre, and to contest her social exclusion in mainstream society.

CHAPTER SEVEN - THE SELF AT WORK

7.1   Introduction

In this chapter I will examine the issues that impacted on the construction and negotiation of a post-migration employment identity among the project participants. The self at work is my final category of analysis, and, as with the previous two categories, I consider issues related to language, race, and gender that arose in this domain of identity construction and the articulation of the self. In addition to these categories that affected all participants, there are others that cut differentially across participants - namely, age and recognition of qualifications – and I will discuss the impact of these on individual participants. After this thematic analysis of the entire participant group, I will again take a case-based approach, using Tina as a focal case of the major themes. My reason for this is that, of all the participants, Tina spoke the most of her career identity as expressing her defining sense of self. Even in the advanced stages of pregnancy with her first child, Tina was able to say that her career was the most important aspect of her life, as a woman, and one that she had enormous investment in continuing, on her own terms.

7.2   Language

English language competence is a significant factor in the participants' construction of an employment identity in Australia, and it is discussed in relation to self-perception of employability as well as labour market feedback about English language competence and employability, both real and imagined.

While a self-report of poor English oracy in social and transactional exchange is consistent across all participants in the early stages of the study (see 6.2.1), mention is also made by some participants of difficulties with expressing themselves in writing. For example,

Kumiko mentions her English writing competence in relation to work and language goals in the following exchange from Interview Three.

> Donna: What are your goals for the future, in Australia?
> Kumiko: To be independent. Get a full-time job.
> Donna: How important is it for your English to develop, in order to achieve these goals?
> Kumiko: Very important. I'm still not good at writing business letter etc, I do need to improve my English.

(Kumiko, Interview Three, August 2009:2)
Note: this interview was conducted via email

Some of the women's self-perceptions of English language inadequacy related to how they experienced or imagined being judged by members of mainstream Australian society and gatekeepers to the labour market. For example, Lena referred in Interview One to the fact that her English was not yet good enough to look for a job, because she felt it would mark her as inferior, and would be an unpleasant imposition on those around her, while Michiko and Kumiko assumed, all through the study period, that their English was not good enough to get a job with an Australian company. Both women expressed conflicting experiences of developing a voice in English, because while Michiko talked about her greater comfort in using English than Japanese, and Kumiko spoke about feeling like a more confident person in English than in Japanese (see 6.2.2.1), they both still doubted their ability to gain employment, based on their English competence. There are two factors at play here; on the one hand, the feelings of comfort and confidence were expressed as being about the culture associated with use of English, and in particular their experience of Australian culture as being more casual and tolerant than their first language culture, Japanese. Both women had negative feelings about the demands of Japanese in spoken interactions, and the ways that societal norms of politeness and hierarchies of symbolic capital and gender were enshrined in the language surface structure. This made them happy to embrace communicating in English, which they found to be a more egalitarian tool of communication.

On the other hand, the women's sense of personal confidence in using English contrasted

with their confidence at being able to use English well enough to get a job. In this, perhaps

their feelings speak more about how they anticipated their English use being judged by

potential employers than about how adequate they thought it might be in a work context.

The following excerpt from Interview One reveals how Michiko relates English

competence, specifically in relation to grammar, to gaining employment.

> Michiko: Um, yeah. Um, I have been here for 2 years but I never studied grammar[↗].
> Donna: Oh.
> Michiko: Yeah, yeah, it's bit strange. I went to different schools but I never studied grammar and I studied grammar 10 years ago and since then I felt like I don't need grammar any more cos I'm not gonna live in foreign country, I just live in Japan…
> Donna: Yeah.
> Michiko: … but then, it suddenly changed so… and when I come here I thought oh maybe I don't need to study grammar cos its cost a lot and maybe I better to study other things…
> Donna: Mm.
> Michiko: …but then, I studied childcare course a year and I finished, I realized I think I need grammar to find a job or communicate with native people and more writing. Actually writing is my weak point, so I decide to come AMEP to study English and first day, I felt like: 'Oh I'm not sure I can do', or something, but with…working with Susan [teacher], I think I'm improving, even still like three weeks or four weeks, but yeah I can see, like my writing is improving a little by little and speaking… and when I speak, usually I didn't think um grammar…
> Donna: Mm.
> Michiko: … but now, I'm thinking when I speak, like, grammar a little bit, more careful, so yeah it's very good. Yeah, it's very good opportunity. Yeah.
> (Michiko, Interview One, June 2008:1)

Even though she was aware of her English competence improving during her time at the

AMEP and later planned to begin formal English-medium post-secondary study, at the end

of the study period Michiko still doubted her employability in an Australian company.

Michiko's assumptions about English language and employability were based on the

experiences of her Japanese and Korean peers, and her conclusions were similar to

Kumiko's. Her own experience of vocational study towards employment in childcare was

one of meeting the expectations of the labour market gatekeepers – she successfully

completed the childcare course and work placement - but of not meeting her own expectations about English language adequacy and personal suitability to working in the field (she said in Interview One that she thought she was too short to work in childcare, because lifting babies onto the change tables would be a struggle). Both of these factors resulted in her choosing to return to study, this time in the AMEP, rather than pursuing employment in childcare.

Although she completed her AMEP entitlement and then went on to complete Certificate IV in Spoken and Written English, the experiences of her Japanese and Korean expat peers led Michiko to conclude that it would not be easy for her to get a job in Australia, outside of working for a Japanese company. Michiko was not keen to do this, because she was not positive about Japanese work culture, especially in relation to age and gender discrimination. In a conversation we had in June 2009, although she acknowledged that her English might be good enough to get a job, for example in childcare, she expressed a lack of confidence in seeking work, based on the experience of her peers. She had thought that doing the English course at the AMEP would lead to her being able to find work, but she still found, at the end of her time there, that she was not ready to seek work.

Michiko:	Yeah, that's English course. I thought that's helps me to find a job…
Donna:	Yeah.
Michiko:	Even, like, childcare.
Donna:	Yeah.
Michiko:	And childcare actually works… you know, I could get a job in… I could work with there.
Donna:	Yeah, because you could have [unclear].
Michiko:	Yeah, but English… it's good I … maybe… you know, it's maybe enough to get job, where English is…
Donna:	Oh yeah.
Michiko:	**… but still, not confident… not enough confidence to get a job. The reason is, no one has job around me…**
Donna:	Oh.
Michiko:	Only few, but it's belong to Japanese company, so they don't use English. So… and even now, they used to [be] full-time worker, but now they casual, because of the economic crisis, they losing job…
Donna:	Yeah, yeah.
Michiko:	… so I don't think I am able to find job in here, either.

Donna: Oh, so you don't feel confident that you could get a job?
Michiko: No, no. Not at all.
(Michiko, personal conversation, June 30 2009:14-15)

In the excerpt above, while Michiko suggests her English might be good enough for some

jobs, she still does not feel confident that she would be successful in the labour market.

Lines 11 to 12 (in bold) refer, indirectly, to ethnicity and labour market success, which

Michiko refers to again, along with English competence, in the following excerpt from a

later interview.

Michiko: […] before, maybe…um, cos my friend tried to get job and… but, you
           know: 'Your English is not enough to do ...'
Donna: Did they tell her that?
Michiko: No, they didn't, but you know that's their thought, my friend's thought
           but…
Donna: Oh, yeah. You thought like that too!
Michiko: Yeah.
Donna: Before, in June, when I spoke to you, you said: "Oh I don't think my
           English is good enough to get a job".
Michiko: That's ... yeah, my friends told me "cos my English not enough", they
           can't get a job, so… that's I thought, oh, it could be my English too, it's
           not enough to get a job.
Donna: Yeah.
Michiko: But ... and …and I asked my husband, there is …um, Asian girls, …um,
           actually Korean, Japanese …blah, blah, blah… but they've been here
           long time, or they're actually born in here, so it's Korean or Japanese
           but it's different.
Donna: Yeah, yeah. They speak English and use English.
Michiko: Yeah.
Donna: But your English is good, I bet there's lots of jobs you could do with
           your level of English.
Michiko: Yeah, but ... yeah but…ah, my world… yeah, no-one got job with
           Australian company, like ...
Donna: Really?
Michiko: Only one, but she's been here for more than seven years and ...
(Michiko, Interview Three, November 2009:41-42)

That Michiko was not only referring to level of English, but specifically to Asian ethnicity

and English, reveals the implicit connection between these two factors and the barriers she

expected to labour market entry in Australia, especially in the short-term. In addition, the

powerful conclusion – "yeah but my world, no-one got job with Australian company" –

points to a connection between race and her continued uncertainty, over the course of the

study period, about actively seeking work. The term 'my world' refers to the world of

Asian expat women, principally from Korea and Japan, who made up her primary personal social network in Australia.

Rather than actively seeking paid employment, over the course of the study period Michiko instead constructed a series of imagined employment identities, moving from childcare worker, to librarian, to dental hygienist, all of which she might embark on at some indefinite future time. She was confident enough in her English competence to undertake formal or vocational study, but she was not willing to attempt labour market entry, even when her husband suggested employment-networking opportunities through his public service job.

7.2.1 Language and race

In the case of Kumiko, the assumption about her English competence being insufficient for employment was based on the results of her efforts to gain labour market entry by responding to advertised positions and by networking in IT. She actively sought work in late 2008 and early 2009, but after her initial efforts had not yet resulted in a single job interview, in spite of having competitive qualifications and some work experience, and after she was advised by a contact in an IT company to 'brush up' on her English, Kumiko concluded that language was the main barrier to her employability. Like Michiko, it is possible that she also conflated this with race, as the following excerpt from group Discussion Two demonstrates. This excerpt came after an exchange about how accepted the women felt by Australian society, and followed Tina's sharing of an email journal entry about her experience of racism in Australia. Kumiko had been quiet during the exchange, while other women spoke, so I asked her directly for her thoughts on the topic.

> Oh, yeah, but I've never had bad experience in Australia, but maybe because I've been here only six month, but I just realised people are nice and I've always feel…always felt …um… accepted to live here. But, when it's come to finding a job, it's not. I've been feeling rejected. I've got more than ten…I sent more than ten

resumes to companies, but only two replies, but replies which says: "Sorry, we have a better candidate". One company…no, it's not company… college, replied me…said: "Sorry, unfortunately, you are not successful candidate, successful one is this guy Brendan something-something". I thought, it's obvious someone with English background, so I thought oh maybe because my English is not good. (Kumiko, Discussion Two, September 2008:6)

In the group discussion mentioned above, which was about social exclusion, Kumiko's choice of referring to her rejection by the labour market, together with her assumption that a male of apparently Anglo-Celtic origin would have greater employability, would seem to reveal an understanding that more than just language factors were at play in her rejection. Further on in the discussion, Kumiko also mentions that 'Brendan something-something' had less qualifications and experience than she had. So, in a discussion about racism, although she says that, unlike Tina, she has not "had bad experience in Australia", she then immediately talks about her experience of labour market rejection. Is this because Kumiko suspected race was also involved in her rejection?

The possibility that race was involved in Kumiko's experience of labour market rejection in Australia is supported by findings from a discrimination audit of the labour market carried out by Booth, Leigh and Varganova (2009). Their study involved submitting over 5,000 fictitious applications to an online jobs website, under names categorised as Indigenous Australian, Italian, Middle Eastern, Chinese, and Anglo-Saxon. They found that job applicants with Chinese last names, and Kumiko's last name is Chinese, had to apply for twice as many positions as people with Anglo-Saxon names, in order to get an interview call-back. Research by Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007) also points to a correlation between race and labour market success. Their study found that, in spite of the existence of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation in Australia, migrants with visibly marked ethnicity experienced labour market discrimination (2007:77).

While neither Kumiko nor Michiko overtly claim race as an issue in their struggle to construct an employment identity in Australia, they both discuss issues to do with English language competence in the context of labour market entry that also implicate ethnicity, suggesting a conflation of language and race as determiners of successful inclusion. There are several possible explanations for these veiled references to the links between language and race. Both women may be trying to be polite in the presence of an Australian-born interviewer, and certainly there are a number of examples from the data of women hesitating in the face of saying anything they perceived as negative towards Australia and Australians (see Miller, 2011, for a discussion of this research issue). It is also possible that their time studying English in the AMEP, which Michiko alludes to in the excerpt above (see p215), had convinced both women that English language proficiency was the main barrier to labour market entry for new migrants.

Within the AMEP, whose mission is to develop English language competence towards better settlement outcomes, the importance of employment as a measure of settlement success and the importance of English proficiency to achieving this are normalised views (Yates, 2010:17). However, barriers to employment constructed around race are never addressed in this context, in spite of findings from studies of the Australian labour market that point to systemic discrimination against migrants and visible minorities (Booth et al, 2009, Colic-Peisker and Tilbury, 2006/2007, Evans and Kelly, 1991). The significance of the connection between language and race in such discrimination is further explored in Piller (in press), which concludes that English language competence "is not only a factor in the social exclusion of transnational migrants but also a pretext for their exclusion", and linguistic proficiency is "a substitute for racial and ethnic discrimination". If we accept Piller's conclusion that racial discrimination in the labour market is, in the context of Australia's antidiscrimination laws, obscured behind judgments about English language

competence, it is possible to see why both Kumiko and Michiko speak primarily of the relevance of English to their future employment success. In so doing, they unconsciously evince a situation that Piller elsewhere describes, in relation to the deskilling of migrants, as "racism without racists" (Piller, 2010). A similar situation is reported for Canada in Creese and Wiebe (2009), which finds judgments about English accent mask racial discrimination towards African migrants in the labour market (2009:14).

The experiences of Michiko and Kumiko, when considered together, indicate that language intersects with race as a barrier to labour market entry, and that questions of English language competence may actually be a blind for discriminatory labour practices. Therefore, in assessing the significance of English language competence in the construction of an employment identity, we must also consider the ethnicity of the speaker. Among study participants, it was only the women of Asian appearance who referred to their ethnicity in relation to language and acceptability in the labour market.

7.2.2 The monolingual bias

How significant is the well-attested 'monolingual mindset' (Clyne, 2005) of Australian society as a barrier to constructing a post-migration employment identity? In discussing how Australia's enormous language potential – there were as many as 240 languages spoken in Australia at the time of the 2001 Census – is not realised, Clyne says: "The greatest impediment to recognising, valuing and utilising our language potential is a persistent monolingual mindset" (2005:xi). Some of the women in the study who were actively seeking work anticipated and/or encountered barriers they attributed to inadequate English language competence, but as Kumiko's experience demonstrates, in contexts where the monolingual bias is removed, the employment outcomes for bilingual job seekers may be quite different.

Although Kumiko had concluded that English language competence was a probable reason for her lack of employment success, she was also aware of the way such competence could be variously considered, in either an English monolingual labour market like Australia's or for a company that operated in a bi- or multilingual context. In the following data excerpts, where Kumiko mentions a lack of experience, as well as English language competence, as the reason for not being successful in getting a job, she also touches on the relevance of location to perceptions of language competence.

> Maybe system administrator, system engineer, since I got ... already got a ... IT qualification, yeah it should be ... shouldn't be so hard. But in my case I have a English problem, I still have English problem so I don't know.
> (Kumiko, Interview Two, April 2009:4)

> And I was bit pissed off, because keep rejecting … rejected, so I registered this Japanese recruiting company online and ten minutes later I already got a message from this company. So, maybe I should go back to Japan, because in Japan, I can use both Japanese and English. They want bilingual engineers.
> (Kumiko, Discussion Two, September 2008:8)

> I'm looking for IT jobs. But here having experience is more important than qualifications. Every job I look at on SEEK says "Minimum 2 - 3 years experience". Unfortunately I have just a little experience...
> In Japan, demand for bilingual engineer is very high. In Australia I am just a Japanese with a little English but in Japan I am a fantastic bilingual ;)
> (Kumiko, email communication, September 2008)

All through the study period, Kumiko held out the possibility of going offshore for work, where she knew her language skills had more currency than they seemed to have in Australia, where she was considered as "just a Japanese with a little English". It's worth noting that in 2008, when Kumiko moved to Australia on a spouse visa, Computing professionals, including data entry personnel, were listed on the Department of Immigration and Citizenship Skilled Occupations List, gaining the maximum fifty points for a Skilled visa applicant in this profession. This would suggest that Kumiko was actively seeking work in an occupation with a recognised labour shortage, yet she was

unable to get a single interview call-back, in spite of holding a desirable Microsoft systems qualification and experience in data entry.

In 2010, after her husband terminated his country teaching post and they returned to the city with their baby, Kumiko made good on her ultimatum to leave if she could not get work in Australia. She applied for a job with a Swiss company operating out of Singapore and, after a series of telephone interviews, was offered the position as IT support worker in Singapore, dealing mainly with clients in Japan, in a company where English was the workplace language. The company hired Kumiko for her English/Japanese bilingualism, in the context of which, her English was deemed competent.

7.2.3   Summary

To sum up, the issue of language competence, both in self-report and in the anticipation or experience of negative labour market feedback, impacted the participants' construction of an identity in paid employment during the course of the study. For some participants, language competence was conflated with the expectation that race would also be involved in their ability to gain labour market entry. In addition, the experiences of both Kumiko, discussed above, and Tina, whose employment trajectory I discuss in 7.6, show evidence of a monolingual mindset in the Australian labour market, which affects new migrant job-seekers who are English-plus bilinguals. What the data suggest is that the economic value of English competence varies in such an environment, and where job seekers are competing for positions based on their use of English alone, their level of English may be considered inadequate, as Kumiko found, yet when they are hired for their bilingual competence, as Tina was, a similar level of English competence may be considered good enough to get the job.

7.3   Age

While it is possible to find references to concerns about age across the participants, in relation to health, beauty and motherhood, three women expressed specific doubts about their age in relation to achieving employment goals. These were expressed as concerns about the combined effects of age and English language proficiency as barriers to the pursuit of post-secondary academic study towards an imagined employment identity. I will draw on data from two of these women to highlight the ways that age can impact on the post-migration employment trajectories of transnational migrants.

7.3.1   Vesna

Vesna's struggles to gain satisfactory employment in her field of expertise were complicated by her concerns over her age, and how this might impede her ability to transition to a new field of work or to undertake extended study towards a professional qualification. She referred to her age, with some consternation, a number of times throughout the data collection period, and it was referenced to health and memory, and the ability to undertake formal learning. The following excerpt from Interview Two links age to an ability to develop her accuracy in English.

Donna:	So we were talking about the difficulties of learning English, and just talking about, um …
Vesna:	It's … it's … it's… maybe it's not difficult…maybe I'm not … you know, not… have some person where are very quick catch the languages[↗], I don't think I am from this.
Donna:	Mmm. You manage to communicate very well, very quickly, but it's the grammar, isn't it?
Vesna:	I communicate, but yeah, my grammar is… it's not good! (SMALL LAUGH), and ah…
Donna:	But it's only part of it.
Vesna:	And ah… and ah,…
Donna:	So, that's a bit of a problem for you that you want to work on, is it?
Vesna:	Yeah, yeah. And sometime I think even in this age, like it's memory's not the same like if you're young. I'm not too old, but it's not exactly like…

(Vesna, Interview Two, February 2009:1)

Vesna describes herself as a person who does not learn languages easily. This is a revealing comment, one that epitomises the privileging of structural knowledge over communicative competence. At the time that Vesna disparaged her ability to learn English, she was already communicatively competent, a competence which was not only evident in her ability to negotiate a marriage conducted entirely in English, and perform friendships in English, but also in her eight years of working successfully as a midwife in Abu Dhabi, most of it in a large English-language hospital. It is possible that Vesna's English confidence was affected by the professional downgrading she experienced on coming to Australia, which was linked to language, insofar as she would have to undertake formal nursing study, in English, in order to continue practising in her field. It is also possible that her period of study in the AMEP, which at Certificate III level involved a lot of formal writing and grammar content, was a reminder of the aspects of language learning she found difficult. Although she was frustrated about having to complete a Nursing qualification if she wanted to practise as a midwife in Australia, Vesna ultimately accepted what she saw as the right of a country to set its own gatekeeping rules, and negotiated a compromise career in a medical-related field. In relation to formal study in English, she considered age an immutable barrier, so transnational migration involving language change necessitated a reimagining of her long-held career identity, and downward labour market mobility.

7.3.2   Roxanna

At the beginning of the study, Roxanna aspired to moving beyond the limitations of her homemaker role by pursuing a second career in Psychology, as the following excerpt shows.

> Roxanna: Yes, yes, because I think I have dream. I have two sons, yes, I love them very much and because of them I came here, and yes, I **love** them, but I think for myself, because really, I seek… I get at… that I can be better in my life. Not just housewife woman, does cooking.
> Donna: Mmm. So what's your dream? Tell me about your dream.

> Roxanna: Maybe studying, er, in psychology, because I like studying in psychology. And I can do it here and um maybe get a job to satisfy me, because I **never** liked accounting.
>
> (Roxanna, Interview One, October 2008:13)

However, by the end of the study period Roxanna no longer felt confident enough in her English competence to be able to succeed in English-medium academic study. The following excerpt, which speaks to this point, is from the final essay task.

> In different times everyone has different dreams. When you are young your dreams is very simple and achievable. When you become older your wish changes to make wish for members of your Family and it continues until you become really old. When I came here I was thinking that I am very talented to improve my abilities. I was thinking that I am able to get a solution for all the problems myself. But now my look seems a bit different. When you want to be idealist it seems different with real. In first step for acheiveing to my goals I need to speak and read and write English fluently..after 2 years that I've been lived in an English speaking country, I still have so many difficulties to express myself. So all me dreams returns to my English language. Before improving it, it probably seems so hard to say about future and plans for the next years. If my English language was good enough, it would be much easier to say about future.
>
> (Roxanna, final essay task, February 2010)

When Roxanna wrote this essay, she was enrolled part-time in a Certificate IV English course; however, she could not perceive her English improving, and her motivation to continue studying English had fallen. In addition, parenting and family demands meant that she had let go of her personal aspirations for fulfilment through study and work, and concentrated instead on her primary role as homemaker, house head and mother. In an email she sent me in August 2010, some eight months after our final interview, she linked her lack of progress to age, declaring:

> I think if somebody is going to become migrant in another country .it would be happen before age 30.after that it's so difficult.
>
> (Roxanna, email communication, August 2010)

7.3.3   Summary

The women who reference age to employment aspirations do not speak of age as a factor in developing competence to broad functional ability in social interaction, but specifically

in relation to employment aspirations that involve further English-medium post-secondary study. By the end of the study period, each of these women was able to demonstrate an ability to function well in day-to-day social and transactional interactions in English required for successful settlement in Australia, but felt disadvantaged by the combination of age and language in relation to undertaking post-secondary English-medium studies. For Vesna and Roxanna, both of whom initially imagined a post-migration identity in paid employment, age presented an immutable barrier to success in formal English-medium study, resulting in an eventual downgrading of expectations and the need to re-imagine a compromise career. Age was not, in itself, a barrier to labour market entry, but intersected with language as a barrier to the development of advanced English language competence and success in English-medium post-secondary study required for gaining meaningful employment.

7.4   Qualifications

In his examination of symbolic power, Bourdieu (1990, 1991) describes how cultural capital, derived from, among other things, educational qualifications, confers symbolic capital on the individual only if that cultural capital is deemed legitimate. One of the ways that transnational migrants routinely experience a loss of symbolic capital is through the process by which their prior education and qualifications are assessed for legitimacy in Australian society, often resulting in their downgrading or disqualification. According to Jupp (2002): "The control of professional associations or State government over qualifications has been a major obstacle in gaining recognition for those issued outside the English-speaking world" (2002:145). In discussing the current 'human capital' approach to Australian immigration policy, and its inherent forms of discrimination, Jupp goes on to state that: "The most serious form of discrimination has been the difficulty in recognising non-British overseas qualifications, first raised in 1950 and still a matter for concern fifty

years later" (Jupp, 2002:147). I will explore the significance of the qualifications assessment process to the post-migration employment trajectory of Vesna, with additional anecdotal evidence from my own experience of qualifications assessment in Australia.

Soon after arriving in Australia, Vesna applied to have her Midwifery qualifications assessed for Australian equivalence by the Overseas Qualifications Unit (OQU) in Western Australia. This is a process that must be undertaken by any person who has gained an educational qualification outside Australia and who wishes to use this qualification for further study, or to secure employment in a relevant field of work in Australia. With few exceptions, such as for people holding qualifications from some British post-secondary institutions, this process applies to qualifications undertaken in any language, so it is not a barrier based on language alone. Thus, for example, when I returned to live in Australia after an extended period in Canada, I could not secure a teaching contract with my Australian employer until I had had my Canadian TESOL qualification assessed for its Australian equivalence by the OQU. Until this was done, and the result deemed acceptable, my employer's attitude was that I was not considered to even have such a qualification, a point I found somewhat arrogant and ethnocentric, especially in light of the fact that the OQU subsequently mistakenly downgraded my qualification and, when this was pointed out, admitted they could not actually assess the qualification and so referred me to the national body, the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR), to have it assessed again, at further expense to me. The second process took some three months to complete, and when I enquired into the length of time it was taking, I was told that this was not an easy process, as they first had to establish a precedent for the relevant Canadian educational context (one of a national network of large, publicly-funded post-secondary institutions), as it compared to Australian expectations for such kinds of study. It is worth noting that all documents submitted were in English, so no translations were necessary,

which is not the case for many applicants, who must have their original documents first translated into English before they are considered for qualifications assessment. In all, my experience of this rather lengthy assessment process did not inspire confidence in the organisations tasked with acting as final arbiter of the value and legitimacy of qualifications gained outside Australia.

7.4.1 Vesna

In Vesna's experience with the OQU, her Bulgarian certification as a hospital-trained midwife, together with thirty years of experience, were rejected as being insufficient for registration with the WA Nursing Federation, the professional body that oversees midwifery in Western Australia. She was told she would need to complete an entire Nursing degree before being eligible, as all Hospital Midwives in WA must be Registered Nurses. This was a big setback for Vesna, who contested the Australian approach, in light of her successful workplace training and experience in a range of different nursing contexts.

> Vesna: […] I just think, some time, because I see in the newspaper, they searching for nurses and midwife in psycho hospital and many different places, and sometime I am wrong. I never live here for long time, I never have experience in Australian hospital… maybe I'm wrong, but sometime I think why they not do like in Abu Dhabi? You start work in this hospital, they tell you what's the policy in the hospital, what's the working place, and they give you a few booklet with all the medicine where you use in the hospital and ah, what's the rule in the work, where you start a job. They have a computer classes if you never do before like… you never work in a computer system and for few months you start a job and you learn this things. Generally, they…everywhere the medicine they the same, but some time they have a different name because of the company where produce and like that, and you have like a … I can't say it's exam, you not like 'oooh, scared' but, you should learn this things and just exam from …you just have some, like, exam, to see you have…you know all this things and they have also some drug policy in the… if you administrate the drugs, like for operation people, like morphine, how you can do while you sign, what…how many people take this things, you should learn also this things and you just start to work… and I think here, maybe will be nice if they just take you like a volunteer for some time in the hospital and after, like, your future job or you can receive the job to be depend of the people where are observing

you in the hospital… they don't really have time to sit and observing you but if you work with somebody they can say you are able to do this job or no … will be more easy…

Donna: Mm, they can assess you.

Vesna: … because they want some…for me, I'm not …I'm not sure if I'm right or not, this is just in my mind is like that.

Donna: It's your opinion.

Vesna: Yeah… because they want [you] to go in some English exam where I think will be really difficult… because my English is… I can talk, I can read, but it's not on the level where I can write a big essay or comment some… I think is… English exam where is for a nur… nursing and midwife board is little bit difficult, and this where we do here.

(Vesna, Interview One, October 2008:23-24)

As the excerpt shows, Vesna expressed an inability and an unwillingness to embark on post-secondary studies in English-medium education, because she felt her English competence was not high enough. This lack of confidence about undertaking formal study in English was also referenced to age (see 7.3.1).

Although she was not prepared to be judged according to her written English, Vesna did not express doubts about her English competence in a work context, but this was perhaps because, prior to migrating to Australia, she had worked as an English-speaking hospital midwife for eight years in Abu Dhabi, where she was a midwife in a British-run hospital. She had little reason to doubt her professional ability, and her detailed accounts during interview of working in Abu Dhabi and Bulgaria reveal the roots of her broad experiential knowledge in midwifery. In terms of her English competence in an employment context, Vesna demonstrates the genesis of her confidence in the following excerpt.

Vesna: […] And anyway, my English is not academical level. If you go to study, maybe will be difficult for me. I don't know… I think I can work with this English, but…

Donna: Well, you **have** worked with this English… in Abu Dhabi.

Vesna: Yeah, yeah. Sometime they say: "If your English is not really good, you not understand the patient." I think I can understand every patient…what he complain, and we have like… if [when] we…they recruit us in Abu Dhabi, I first start in one private hospital if [when] I went there. This really stupid hospital, I don't really like, but after I … one lady say for me: "Why you not apply in the maternity hospital here?" I say: "I worry for my English… there is English administration, English matron, and if I start to talk, maybe I can feel really confuse,

and how they can admit my English." She say: "Just try!" and she push me and I book myself for interview, and I feel… you know, if you went to somewhere and you see the person and you feel really comfortable… and there's one lady who is in charge in the hospital, and I really like her… even now, I like her, and I feel really comfortable and I just forget about my grammar and my bad English… she ask me few questions, I answer and she say: "Ok, just prepare this and this paper and our way to recruit the people is this and this and this… we receive all the paper, they send to his government. If they say ok, and if they have vacancy they just will call you." She call me, from the government, they receive my paper, everything is ok: "If we have a vacancy, we can call you."
(Vesna, Interview One, October 2008:17)

Vesna went on to work in this British-run hospital for a number of years, before she and her new husband left Abu Dhabi for Azerbaijan, and later Australia, where her plan was to continue in Midwifery for a few more years, before retiring. This plan was, however, overturned by Vesna's experience with the OQU.

Donna: What do you think … so, how do you think of yourself, then?
Vesna: I just…I never think I can have a problem to work here in the hospital, because this is my place, I work thirty-something years, but it's really difficult to register yourself here in Nursing and Midwife Board…
(Vesna, Interview One, October 2008:16-17)

In the excerpt above, which follows a discussion about dancing and how self-conscious she felt doing certain things around younger people, Vesna's immediate response to a general question about how she thought of herself was to talk about her troubles being accepted as a midwife in Australia. That is, she referenced her self-image to her work identity. She went on to claim ownership of an employment identity as a hospital midwife with the words: "this is my place, I work thirty-something years". However, as a result of migrating to Australia, Vesna was forced to imagine a new employment identity, based on a compromise between her desire to continue as a midwife and her unwillingness to undertake a nursing degree in English, at this stage in her life. Although she did not agree with the exclusionary stance of the Nursing Board, Vesna was ultimately sanguine in her response:

Vesna: I feel really upset if [when] I go there with all my paper and they say: "Ok, your system is different (IMITATING A WEARY OFFICIAL),

this is… this is… you can't do this." I feel really upset in this time, but you know with the age, you learn how to say: 'Doesn't matter. I'm not going to…'

Donna: Really? So you can be accepting?

Vesna: … I'm not going to die for this.

(Vesna, Interview One, October 2008:25)

After considering the OQU advice that she was eligible for work in childcare, Vesna decided she would prefer to explore other medical-related work roles. After completing a short course as a pharmacy assistant, she was accepted into a short Phlebotomy course. On completion of this course, Vesna soon found work in a hospital-based blood collection unit, which she was happy about, as it placed her back in a familiar work environment, albeit in a lower-status, lower-paid role that engaged only a fraction of her employment capacity. Vesna's post-migration employment trajectory was thus one of downward mobility resulting from the rejection by the Western Australian nursing professional body of her Midwifery qualifications and extensive prior experience (see Ho and Alcorso, 2004, and also Lan, 2008, for a discussion of downward mobility for migrants in the Australian labour market). This led to a period of low self-esteem and doubts about her professional competence. Language and age were also factors in Vesna's downward employment mobility, because a lack of confidence in her structural accuracy in English, combined with a feeling that she was too old to develop this aspect of English sufficiently to complete an Australian degree in Nursing, forced her to negotiate a compromise employment identity.

7.5   Gender

A number of gender-related issues are apparent in the women's negotiation of a post-migration work identity in Australia. These stem from shifts in the women's primary work identity, and include dealing with conflicting locations for the performance of gender roles, and the impact on the desire for paid work of a woman's prior socialisation to work. To demonstrate the points I wish to make, I will draw on the experiences of Maria and Kumiko in relation to locating primary work identities, then move on to explore issues

related to socialisation to work in the data from Vesna and Roxanna. It is worth noting, however, that the idea that transnational migration brings about significant changes in a woman's sense of self and her relation to both paid and unpaid work roles was a theme that ran through the post-migration trajectories of all the participants.

7.5.1   Primary work identity

Examining the participants' migration trajectories, it is apparent that all involve shifts in the performance of gendered subjectivity between the pre- and post-migration societies. Here, I am considering the unpaid roles of wife, homemaker and mother, alongside that of paid work and the construction of a career identity. The distinction between paid and unpaid work is highlighted by Piller and Pavlenko (2007) in their discussion of gender and multilingualism under globalization. They suggest that paid and unpaid work roles represent "a difference that has long been a gender default line, with paid work being more easily accessible to men, and unpaid work – such as subsistence farming, household work, child-rearing and other forms of care work – being women's work" (2007:3-4).

The following table captures the shifts in the participants' primary work roles.

Name	Country	Pre-migration work role	Post-migration work role
Anna	Serbia	engineer/tutor	homemaker/mother
Julie	Singapore	homemaker/bookkeeper	small business - food services
Kumiko	Japan	data entry	homemaker/mother*
Lena	Russia	tennis club manager	homemaker
Maria	Brazil/Japan	businesswoman	homemaker/mother*
Michiko	Japan	librarian	homemaker
Roxanna	Iran	homemaker	homemaker/ house head
Tina	China	corporate lawyer	homemaker/mother*
Vesna	Bulgaria	hospital midwife	homemaker*

Note: * denotes women who, during the study period, actively sought a post-migration paid work role, commensurate with prior work/career experience

As the table shows, for seven of the women, this shift was one of moving from a primary or significant identity as a woman in paid employment/career before migration, to that of

an unpaid homemaker/wife and, for some, also that of mother, after migration. For the remaining two, one trajectory involved the shift from being a woman with a primary role as wife/mother, to an additional identity as full-time employee outside the home, and the other a shift from being a wife and homemaker with unequal status to her husband, to primary parent and house-head. As it was the act of migrating that brought about these shifts in the participants' primary work identity, we can say there was a causal link between the two. For some women, this shift was problematic, while for others it was embraced with equanimity or pleasure. In all cases, though, the act of migration caused changes in the women's sense of self; changes mediated through language and, for those pursuing paid work, the nature of the post-migration labour market.

7.5.2 Locating gender roles

The distinction between paid and unpaid work was also apparent in the ways that some participants experienced the pre- and post-migration societal norms and opportunities for combining motherhood and career, with unpaid reproductive work and paid career employment advanced in different locations.

7.5.2.1 Maria

When Maria migrated from Brazil to Japan, her primary work identity shifted overnight from that of successful businesswoman to wife and mother. She had been a wife and mother in Brazil, but these roles were not her primary focus in work. The defining aspect of her identity as a woman who worked, in the years leading up to the move to Japan, had been constructed through developing a suite of import and wholesale supply businesses. She had been successful enough in these to be able to hire paid reproductive workers to fulfil the bulk of her parenting and homemaker responsibilities, allowing her to devote herself almost seven days a week to her businesses.

Donna:	So, did your marriage improve in Japan?
Maria:	Yes. I know my husband more… better than I was before. Ah, we … because when we was married… um, my sister is like ten years and I married like six year and six year in Japan, we married total is twelve years, but in six years in Brazil, I never notice him. (WOMEN LAUGH)
Donna:	You didn't have time?
Maria:	No… no, I don't have time. I working all day. Specially in Sunday… Sunday is…
Donna:	Specially on Sunday! (LAUGHING IN DISBELIEF)
Maria:	Sunday is a Monday in China. (MICHIKO LAUGHS LOUDLY).
Tina:	Sunday is Monday?!
Maria:	Yeah, when China… because I need a [to] work in Sunday because China is working… it's Monday.

(Discussion Three, October 2008:23)

When her husband was offered a job transfer to Japan, Maria did not initially follow him, choosing to stay in Brazil with their infant daughter and continue her life as a businesswoman. However, after two years apart, and a degree of soul-searching, Maria made the decision to join her husband in Japan, and she migrated there with their daughter. Her decision to migrate was presented by Maria as resulting from a need to choose between two conflicting locations for the performance of gender - her marriage now located in Japan, and her business career located in Brazil.

Vesna:	Why did you give up your career?
Maria:	Because I want stay with my husband… I don't want a divorce… was very difficult time (TWO OR THREE WOMEN BEGIN SPEAKING AT ONCE, BUT WHAT THEY SAY IS UNINTELLIGIBLE)…
Vesna:	Sorry, what did you work in?
Maria:	I am businesswoman. I do commerce in China and Brazil. I bought some products from Brazil… ah, from China, and I sell in Brazil. I bought… I got some products from Brazil and send to China and Taiwan, and sometimes I have seven companies around Brazil. And I manager seven companies and I have 65 employees, ten years ago and when I close … I close six years ago before I go to Japan, and it's very difficult time because I close seven companies.
Donna:	Did your husband find… was he a bit resentful of the amount of time…
Maria:	Yeah, because my husband said I am very successful woman and he is not. I buy my own house and when I give up my career and my …my parents too, and I give money to my parents (SMALL LAUGH) because my parents want to get money from you… Chinese people, because they give something like that… and I say: "Ok, I give you money" and I don't have any responsibilities and any ties with my family… and I left Brazil…

(Discussion Three, October 2008:16)

234

As Maria explains, her husband was critical of her continued prioritising of her career over her reproductive work in their marriage, and he urged her to step back from her intense involvement in her businesses in order to focus more on family. This pressure, together with a number of realisations about the importance of family and personal safety (see 4.6.3), pushed Maria eventually to let go of her seven businesses and more than sixty employees in order to move to Japan. Overnight, she went from being a businesswoman with domestic employees, who did not know how to cook or even operate a washing machine, to a woman at home with a small child, in a society that placed a high value on the successful performance of the roles of wife and mother.

> Tina: So, in Japan, you are a housewife?
> Maria: Yes, in Japan I housewife for 5 years. That's a very good time, because I [had] never used a laundry machine (LAUGHING VOICE). I never washing my dish (LAUGH)… I [had] never cooked, because of this I go to a cooking school.
> Donna: You went to a cooking school in Japan?
> Maria: (LAUGHING) Yeah, because I never cook in my life! I always have …
> Vesna: Takeaway.
> Maria: I always have um… how to say … I always have employees and […]
> Donna: Housemaids.
> Maria: Yeah, housemaids. I have two housemaids, one is …three housemaids… one is a cook, one is a keep my clothes, and another one is keeping my house.
> (Discussion Three, October 2008:19)

After spending five years in Japan performing the roles of wife and mother, Maria spoke of her successful paid and unpaid work identities as performed in mutually exclusive locations. Following the move to Japan, Maria worked hard to achieve success in the roles of wife and mother, while her success at paid work, as a self-made businesswoman, became referenced to a time in the past, in Brazil. Now living in Australia, after a second transnational migration, Maria still spoke with obvious pride in her identity as a businesswoman, yet because of the disruption caused by her migration to Japan, this remained essentially an imagined identity, located so firmly as it was in another time and place.

7.5.2.2 Kumiko

The conflict between locations for constructing paid work and motherhood roles was also

experienced by Kumiko, whose parenting aspirations centred around living in Australia,

but whose desire to construct an employment identity ultimately centred around needing to

leave Australia, due to labour market barriers constructed around language and race (see

7.2). As the following excerpt shows, though, even this division was problematic. We were

discussing the difficulties of being a woman, when it came to juggling motherhood and

career.

Kumiko:	So, for women it's hard. Baby or career….
Donna:	Do you… is it… do you see any difference between that in living in Japan or living here?
Kumiko:	I had …ah…in Japan it's very hard.
Donna:	Is it? Why is that?
Kumiko:	Yeah, like I said, everyone expect you to be housewife, not work, just stay home, have baby. It's easy, but mm, what if you want to have a job? You can't just stay home for whole your life.
Donna:	Mm. Mm. So there's still a strong expectation of that…
Kumiko:	Yeah.
Donna:	Is that sort of across all classes in Japan? Doesn't matter what kind of woman you are, there's still a fairly strong…
Kumiko:	Yeah, and also companies don't want you have a…. maternity leave so they, they just say goodbye
Donna:	Oh, so there's no government law that says they have to…provide for maternity leave?
Kumiko:	Well, ah, I think actually there is but oh, most people just leave their work because it's easier.
Donna:	Mm. oh, ok, so here do you see that the possibilities are different for you, in that sense?
Kumiko:	Yeah…mm…I haven't um had baby [unclear…sounds like 'was night' – a woman's name perhaps??] just I know was having longs maternity leave when she was pregnant. So, I thought it's good, it's much better than in Japan.

(Kumiko, Interview One, June 2008:14-15)

Then, a little later in the same interview, Kumiko talked about going back to Japan for

work.

Donna:	[…] Um, ok, thinking about the future…what do you imagine your life in Australia will be like in 10 years time?
Kumiko:	Mm. Well, actually, we are thinking of going back to Japan when… because my husband…uh…. friend is doing recruiting company and he told me if I had get job in Tokyo, I could make a lot of money.

236

Donna: Your husband could, or you could?
Kumiko: Mm. Yeah, because I have a IT qualification…
Donna: Oh, as well as your Ancient History? You've studied communic…or IT?
Kumiko: Yes.
Donna: So what kind of…did you do that in Japan…
Kumiko: Yeah.
Donna: …or here? Ok.
Kumiko: Oh, it's a Microsoft certified(?) system engineer.
Donna: Oh!
Kumiko: I studied by myself and got a qualification.
Donna: Oh. You did it by distance education did you, in Japan?
Kumiko: Oh just learned from textbooks.
Donna: Really?! You taught yourself?
Kumiko: Mm.
Donna: Oh, that's very impressive!
Kumiko: Yes, and this qualification is very big in IT industry, so…
Donna: …so you could command a decent wage.
Kumiko: Yeah, so maybe and plus I can speak English and Japanese, so bilingual
           is very strong in Japan, so maybe…
(Kumiko, Interview One, June 2008:16-17)

In spite of not being positive about the Japanese work culture in relation to women,

Kumiko held out the possibility, all through the study period, of returning to Japan to get

meaningful work in IT, while at the same time maintaining that she had not wanted to

become a parent before living in Australia, and she did not wish to raise her children in

Japan.

7.5.3   Socialisation to work

In the first round of interviews, each woman was asked to talk about her experiences

growing up as a woman and her aspirations, as well as to comment on her perceptions of

Australian women and their position in society. Six of the nine responses to the question

about Australian women focused on perceptions of the good legal rights of women, their

ability to choose between paid and unpaid work roles, and their independence, both in

choosing whether to marry and in being able to continue in paid work after marriage.

Interestingly, two women expressed contrasting views about the expectations of women

and paid work in Australia, views that were relative to their own socialisation to work.

Tina had the impression that many Australian women chose to be full-time homemakers,

rather than engage in paid work, a situation she contrasted with that of women in China.

> […] in China, the wife …ah, the wife should go to work, but I heard that in
> Australia some of adult women don't have to go to work because they enjoy to be a
> housewife, because their husband can earn money and they can get the welfare…
> (Tina, Interview One, September 2008:21)

In group discussion, Tina referred to the cultural basis for prioritising career in China:

> Tina: Yeah, they did it because the culture… because, in China, just I worked
>   out … maybe even you can see that in China, we usually judge when
>   people, if she is successful or not, according to what he can get from the
>   career.
> Others: mm/ yes/ oh.
> Donna: So then you measure people's success by their career.
> Lena: Even for…
> Donna: Even women?
> Tina: Yes.
> (Discussion Three, October 2008:2)

As Tina notes here, in China it is normal to privilege career identities, "even for women".

Tina's view of Australian women in work was markedly different to that held by Roxanna,

who stated in interview that she felt it was necessary to work, as a woman in Australia.

> I think if I want to live in Australia, I have to work, because every woman works
> here, and every woman…when you don't work, um, others look at you very…do
> you know…you look strange to others. (Roxanna, Interview One, October 2008:4)

Roxanna also expressed the view that women in Iran were financially dependent on men,

revealing what was for her a normalised view of women's relation to paid work.

> […] because the Iranian woman is very dependent to their husband. Most of Iranian
> woman don't work. (Roxanna, Interview One, October 2008:4)

In a later interview, Roxanna described her dissatisfaction with life in Iran as a financially

dependent woman, calling herself a "user":

> […] I think my life there couldn't satisfy me, and as I said I was just user, and I
> didn't have self-confidence, but now I see… no, my self-confidence is high,
> because I have to… do you know[↗]. (Roxanna, Interview Two, February 2009:7)

238

It is possible that living in Australia, where she perceives it is important for a woman to work, coincided with a desire in Roxanna to contest her gender construction in Iran and to pursue different life goals. During the initial post-migration period, this desire centred on the possibility of further post-secondary study in Australia towards constructing a work identity in paid employment.

Similar to Roxanna's sense of being a "user" in Iran, Vesna talked of feeling like a "parasite" in Australia, when she could not contribute to the family income through paid work during the early post-migration period:

Donna: […] and the other thing is … for you, that you talked about before is the distance that is difficult… is the distance, isn't it, from your daughters, and from Europe?

Vesna: You know, I never think much for this before I meet Paul… Paul is a great person, I can say… I feel enjoy with him and I think I can live everywhere with him, and now sometime I thinking: 'Ohpph! It's too far.' You not really quick, flexible, and … quick, flexible is just, I think is problem for money, because is … is not… is not very easy if you want to go somewhere, is just…

Donna: No, it's a long way and a lot of money.

Vesna: It's a long way and a lot of money… yeah. It's not because he's not good, but he's not a … bank (LAUGHS)… and in this way I feel really like a parasite, because I'm not working, not helping him in, like, things where we should do together, and I'm still… I think in this age I still can work and help him in some way, because if [when] he buy a house, he buy with … on credit, and now he should pay back this mortgage, and ah… and the things… everyday things, they also cost money and it's not good to stay at home and just only spending and not earning any.

(Vesna, Interview Two, February, 2009:3)

Vesna went on to explain that, in Bulgaria, most women were engaged in paid work, so it made her feel bad to be a woman who did not.

Donna: Mm, yeah, so you don't feel like you're able to contribute.

Vesna: Yeah, and because, generally in Bulgaria all the women working.

Donna: Yeah.

Vesna: There's nobody stay at home, just look the kids or do some like… because in some nation, this is just normal… the woman to stay at home, and in my country…

Donna: It's not normal.

Vesna: … if you not go out working, you can't survive, really. And, in my brain, I should work (SMALL LAUGH).

Donna: Mmm, so it feels strange to you, does it, to stay at home?

Vesna: Yeah, I didn't feel ok to stay at home to read only book, look television,
           or do something on the computer. I feel like, really terrible.
(Vesna, Interview Two, February 2009:4)

Vesna's assertion "in my brain, I should work", linked to the fact that women can't survive in Bulgaria without paid work, reveals her socialisation to work, and the importance to her sense of self of engagement in paid employment.

7.5.4   Summary

In this section I have shown how transnational migration involving language change brought about significant shifts in the participants' primary work identity, with most women moving from paid to unpaid work roles. Related to this, I have also shown how a number of participants perceived their identities in paid productive and unpaid reproductive work as being advanced in mutually exclusive pre- and post-migration locations. For some, this gave the sense of having to choose between these identities, since they could not both be advanced in the same location. In addition, I have discussed the ways that participants' socialisation to work was at odds with their experience of societal norms or labour market possibilities in Australia.

7.6   Case study: Tina

I would now like to explore further the issues already raised in relation to language, race, and gender in a case analysis that focuses on Tina's post-migration employment trajectory.

7.6.1   Language

Tina's language learning trajectory was one of steady progress in developing her English proficiency during the post-migration period, to a level where she could successfully complete Certificate III in the AMEP, followed by a VET sector Legal Studies course. Unlike Kumiko, whose English was deemed inadequate in the English-dominant

Australian labour market, Tina was subsequently hired to the first job she applied for, as a paralegal in a large law firm. However, this success does not suggest a market tolerance or acceptance of ESL speakers, because Tina was hired for her Chinese-English bilingualism, rather than her English language competence. The law firm she had approached was specifically looking for a speaker of Chinese and English who could demonstrate an understanding of how to negotiate in the business community in China, in order to expand its client base there. My involvement with Tina's hiring process was such that I was able to draw conclusions about the role of language in her selection. As I had agreed to be a character referee for Tina, I was called by the human resources person in the law firm after Tina had already been interviewed twice for a position as casual Law Clerk. After the phone call, I recorded a field note of my experience of the encounter, in which I described my surprise that no reference had been made to Tina's English language competence.

> I expected that R would want to ask me about Tina's English level, because I assumed that someone looking to employ her here would be anxious about how she would cope functioning in English in the workplace. However, to my surprise, she did not! Instead, she asked me how I knew Tina and I spoke about Tina's successes at Central and her involvement in my research project. She wanted to know how I thought Tina would work in a team, and she told me that both she and the law partner had been very impressed with Tina, but there was just one thing they were unsure of and that was whether she had the confidence to communicate with people who were her superiors, in China. Her job would involve liaising with people in Chinese companies that the company was targeting to establish representation in Australia, and they were keen to make use of Tina's knowledge of the Chinese language, as well as the business and legal systems in China. They also, it turns out, need someone to help them through the cross-cultural communication minefield, where the wrong social move could result in losing the business client. I reassured R as best I could, based on my knowledge of Tina at Central, coupled with what she had revealed of herself in the Chinese context, during my research project. I felt that I had been able to provide a good reference for Tina, and I felt that I had been very honest, since my feelings about Tina are that she is a very high and principled achiever, a woman who can articulate clear and realistic career goals and then work hard to achieve them. However, the strong feeling I left the conversation with, and which has given me pause for thought on a few occasions since, is that the woman did not once ask me about Tina's level of English and/or whether I felt it was up to the task.
> (Fieldnote, September 3, 2009)

What Tina's experience demonstrates is that language can work both as a barrier to, and facilitator of, labour market entry in Australia, and the economic value of an ability to speak a language is context-specific. In Tina's case, the employer was looking for a speaker of Chinese and English, and it seemed more important to them how Tina was able to communicate in Chinese, both socially and linguistically, than in English.

Tina's experience is evidence that, beyond a certain level of competence, language is not the real barrier to economic and social inclusion, merely a blind for the racial and cultural barriers established by the dominant society (Piller, in press). If the law firm had any doubts about employing Tina, would they have disguised them as an English language deficiency? How often is language given by potential employers as the excuse for what is really racial and cultural discrimination? It is difficult to know, but in the case of Tina, language and race were features of her hiring, as it was her proficiency as a speaker of Chinese, along with her Chinese corporate and legal expertise, that the company was primarily interested in. It is perhaps because of this that they did not question closely her English language competence. Indeed, according to Tina, the people who interviewed her did not ask her about her English at all.

7.6.2   Race

When we met in 2008, Tina had been in Australia for almost four months, and she was quite candid about her experience of overt racism in Australia and the expectations she had about the impact of race on her employment prospects. Her experiences, together with those of some of her Chinese-Australian peers, led Tina to conclude that she would always struggle for equal recognition in the labour market, because of her Chinese ethnicity.

> Tina: Mm, if I can successfully got a job offer from a paralegal or
>   whatever…just in the legal field… but, um, I'm not sure about that,
>   because even I can find a decent job here, I can't obtain the respect…
> Donna: You don't think?

Tina:	I think so.
Donna:	Can you explain why you feel that way?
Tina:	Oh, because to tell the truth, I think, although Australian…Australians respect us in the superficial…(LAUGHS)…how to say…
Donna:	Superficial.
Tina:	Yes…they looks like they are very friendly to you, but… ah, I think in their heart, they don't respect us.
Donna:	Because you're from another country?
Tina:	**Yes, and we… we can't speak very fluent English and they think sometimes…in the back they call us 'stupid pig'… 'stupid Chinese pig'** (LOUDER VOICE).

(Tina, Interview One, September 2008:15-16)

In the excerpt above, Tina mentions English language competence and race in the same sentence (lines 13-15, in bold), drawing a link between the two as barriers to obtaining respect in the labour market. In other exchanges, she described how she and her husband both believe that, because they are Chinese, they may not ever be able to reach a level of seniority with an Australian employer that is commensurate with their abilities.

Tina:	As I said before, um, maybe two or three years I will go back to China and I see myself as a very successful lawyer.
Donna:	And will your husband be happy to move back to China too?
Tina:	Ah, yes. You know, although he can got a permanent employment offer in Australia, it doesn't mean that he enjoyed working here. He love the lifestyle here, but, um, in terms of work, he think he can't gain…obtain manager or executive position in Australia, but he can…
Donna:	Is that because he's a migrant, do you think? Does he feel that?
Tina:	Yes.
Donna:	Yes. Is it because he's Chinese, or because he…
Tina:	Because he is not local.
[…]	
Tina:	Mhm. So, because his background…because he's a migrant, so he also think it's better to go back to China for a bright career…future. Yeah, you know with his education background and work experience, if he come back to China, he can be a manager or executive, but here, he can't…. yes.

(Tina, Interview One, September 2008:22)

When Tina first came to Australia, she knew that she could not immediately practise law, even though she already had undergraduate and Masters degrees in Law from China. So she decided that she would stay for two years, using the time to develop her English language competence and have some new experiences, then return to China and continue her law career. She felt that, in China, her improved English competence would

immediately confer enhanced symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) in the labour market, giving her a competitive edge as a corporate lawyer working with foreign multinational clients. As the excerpt suggests, however, Tina did not believe that improved English competence would have the same results in Australia, in terms of symbolic capital and the labour market, due to barriers constructed around race.

7.6.3   Gender

Migration from China to Australia disrupted Tina's primary identity as a career lawyer, with the understanding that this disruption might be permanent if she remained in Australia, due to the combined impact of language, race and age on her access to meaningful engagement in the labour market. During the immediate post-migration period, when this study was conducted, Tina went through a process of examining her aspirations as a set of conflicting desires in relation to family life and career, around the central realisation that living in Australia might enhance her identity as a mother, but returning to China would enhance her identity as a career lawyer. In a sense, Tina constructed this discursively as a choice between mutually exclusive identities, based on location – that of the successful career lawyer or the good mother. This issue is raised by Khoo and Mak (2003) in a study of migration to Australia of people from a number of Asian countries. Comparing priorities, such as their own career or their children's future, as motivation for permanent Australian settlement, the authors find that:

> Although skilled and business migrants are selected for migration on their occupational and business skills, the results show that employment status, job satisfaction, or use of qualification are not as important [as their children's future] in influencing the permanent settlement intention of most skilled migrants from Asia. (Khoo and Mak, 2003:199, my brackets)

Many of the respondents in Khoo and Mak had not been able to realise their previous business or career status in Australia, but they felt it was the best place for their children, so they were prepared to settle permanently for this reason. In contrast, Tina indicated she

would return to China because she was not hopeful about continuing her career as a lawyer

in Australia, a stance that provoked the following exchange during a group discussion.

Lena: What I am surprised about it, because I think in Australia, a lot of people…maybe everybody… comes from somewhere. Maybe many years ago, but a lot of them are successful, so…

Tina: Yes.

Lena: …I don't know why you feel so hopeless about your career.

Roxanna: But, I think if she had children, she would stay here, (TINA LAUGHS), because really, if your child goes to school, and she … she or he um…do you know… likes here and she wants to have … wanted to have her friends, or his friends and you shouldn't… couldn't think about coming back to your country, and the career wasn't important. And you did your best to stay here… I think.

Lena: Yes, maybe you…

Roxanna: But you have choice, to come back.

Lena: …maybe you are too focused on your career plans. I don't mean career in general, I just mean you want to be a lawyer, you want to be a companion in some company… maybe you have to try another opportunities here… other opportunities here

Roxanna: Yes.

Lena: …… and maybe you can settle down.

Roxanna: Do you know what we mean? Maybe if you had children, you couldn't think about coming back. You had to …

Michiko: Yeah, yeah. You now thinking of Tina yourself maybe, but when she has child, she thinks like, how…you know… I can make them happy. If they happy to be here, maybe she will stay here… like that [she is explaining what she thinks Roxanna and Lena meant].

Rox/Lena: Yes, yes.

Michiko: Yeah.

Tina: Having a child is a very serious problem for Chinese people. You know, before we give birth to a child, we should think about how I can afford all the expensive tuition for their education. I have to think about it first, before I give birth to a child. Yes, maybe, just like you say, if I have…

Vesna: But you think…

Tina: If I … Sorry[↗], if I have a child, I will…maybe I will change my mind.

Roxanna: Yes.

Tina: …for **their** good, not for myself.

(Discussion Three, October 2008:6-7)

As the last line reveals, the decision to stay in Australia would be good for her child but

not the best for her. This was not an easy choice for Tina, because she had always

considered her career as a lawyer of primary significance to her defining sense of self,

while Australia was viewed by both Tina and her husband as a good place to raise children,

on the basis of its natural environment, more relaxed lifestyle, and good levels of state-

funded family services infrastructure.

Tina: Ah… um… you know, if… ah… you know, I… I …just, as I said, I like the feeling of independence, so if I can find a … a suitable job here, maybe I will live here, because, you know, the … the welfare is… is much better than China, and I … and you know, we… we have to think about our offspring, and our parents… you know, so living here is better than living in China. I … I mean, ah, in terms of the… the welfare, the…

Donna: The… the government infrastructure, you mean?

Tina: Yeah, various…

Donna: … the services and the… you know, you get support from the state?

Tina: Yes, you know, the matral [I think she means 'maternity'] support, or the … you know, mm… the support we …we can get when we have children. And, you know, when we getting older. I mean, our parents… if we just live here, we maybe …er… bring them here… they will come here.

(Tina, Interview Two, February 2009:11)

By the end of the study period, Tina remained undecided as to whether she would continue to live in Australia, for its family and lifestyle benefits, or return to China for the sake of her career. The importance of her career as a factor in making life decisions was evident in Tina's assertion that, although her husband planned to take out Australian citizenship, she would not, because of the negative impact a change in citizenship would have on her ability to practise law in China.

Tina's positioning of the roles of paid worker and mother as mutually exclusive identities, based on location, is reminiscent of the pressure on generations of Australian women to forsake their careers in order to be a full-time mother; an expectation contested by the feminist movement. Here, as Tina's trajectory shows, a similar construction of conflicting subjectivities of women is played out as a consequence of transnational migration involving language change.

7.6.3.1 Socialisation to new norms

The influence of Australian society on a migrant woman's aspirations can be found in the ways that some of the women negotiated a work identity beyond the initial post-migration period. I have discussed how barriers to work involving language, race, age, and

246

qualifications variously impacted the work aspirations of individual participants, and now I would like to consider the ways that new expectations about balancing work and family life affected Tina's aspirations. Early in the study, Tina outlined her previous aspirations for life in China, which had focused on her continued career as a lawyer, with minor breaks for childbirth.

Donna: […] and what were your plans and dreams…when you were growing up, what did you imagine your life would be like as an adult?
Tina: I imagine myself to be a successful lawyer (LAUGHS SHYLY), and ah, I hope that I will have a happy family, with my husband and my child.
Donna: Mhm…so you did plan to be a mother and to have children?
Tina: Yes.
Donna: And did you …did you think…how did you plan to do the parenting and the work thing at the same time?
Tina: Mm, if…if I'm in China, I will choose to hire a babysitter for my child, or I leave my child to my parents or my parents-in-law…yes, and at the same time, I developed my career, yes.
Donna: Oh, ok, so is it quite normal for women to not take too much time away from their career in order to have a family?
Tina: Um…I don't mean that I will spend all my time on my career, I just said I… I won't give up my career when I have the child, but I still will have seek some time for my family, for my child.
Donna: Mhm…is it difficult to do that, as a lawyer, in China? In some countries I know… just things I've heard from people I knew…women who were lawyers…they felt tremendous pressure to…um…quit their job because their employer was not interested in them working part-time, because they had a child. So it was like they felt they had to make a choice between the child or the job.
Tina: Ah, I think I don't have to make that difficult choice because my parents and my parents-in-law are very healthy…they can take care of my child and… ah… you know, in China, I can afford a babysitter, so I can handle that…yes. I can balance that…yes.

(Tina, Interview One, September 2008:14-15)

In the exchange above, Tina does not suggest a need to choose between work and family, even in the face of my obvious probing, but a sense that she could realistically expect to manage both, without sacrificing her highly valued law career (see Ryan (2002:98-99) for discussion of a similar expectation among earlier Chinese women migrants to Australia). By Interview Two, however, Tina spoke of how her priorities were changing as a result of her time in Australia.

> Donna: Are your attitudes and beliefs changing, from living here? Any of your beliefs or attitudes, are they… do you feel any difference after living here for a few months?
> Tina: Mm, yes… er…
> Donna: What kind of things?
> Tina: You know, I used to put my work in the first place, and my… maybe my family is the second, but …er… now, I think family is the first.
> (Tina, Interview Two, February 2009:21-22)

In spite of this apparent shift in values, by the end of the study, when I asked Tina to talk about what was now important in her life, she initially hesitated before the honesty of her confession that her job in law was the most important thing in her life. This was at a time when she was pregnant with her first child, and her reason for hesitating was perhaps connected to previous conversations we had had, where she had expressed some sense of shame at the fact that, unlike other people she met in the AMEP class, her career was more important to her than her aspirations for family life. All of this understanding was between us in the humorous exchange we had at the start of the interview, as the following excerpt reveals.

> Donna: Perhaps, can we start by you telling me about your life now… what you're doing and what's important now.
> Tina: Um… I think the most important thing for me …um… (LAUGHS) I don't want to say the first is the work, but (LAUGHS)…
> Donna: Why? Because you said that before and you felt ashamed about it?? (LAUGHING VOICE, TINA IS LAUGHING) [reference here is to Discussion Three, when Tina expressed her sense of shame at putting career before motherhood]
> Tina: Maybe (LAUGHS).
> Donna: No! If it's honestly the first thing you think of, you should say it! Don't pretend! (LAUGHING VOICE/FAMILIAR, TEASING TONE).
> Tina: Yeah, yeah, so (LAUGHING VOICE) honestly, the first priority is work… yeah. Um, that's why if … if I've already got pregnant, I still want to grab the opportunity to work in the law firm, cos I think that's a … that's really a good opportunity to get my foot in a law firm…
> (Tina, Interview Three, September 2009:1)

Tina's plan, at that point in the pregnancy, was to have her baby and then soon go back to work part-time, while undertaking an Australian law degree at a local university. She expressed all of this with a sense of how such aspiration, with its implications for gender identity, might appear in the Australian context: "…um… I don't want to say the first is

the work, but…." Her hesitancy is apparent in this line, as though she realises she may be expressing an identity that challenges accepted norms. An awareness of these norms was expressed in an earlier journal entry, in which Tina described an incident in English class, where the students were asked to map out their ten-year plan. Tina's focused only on her law career, which caused her shame when she compared her plan to those of classmates who also included plans for family and parenting.

> Comparing with such plans, I felt ashamed for myself. I used to put career in the first place and ignore many other aspects of life.
>
> Before I came here, as far as I am concerned, career forever goes first. It is what I achieve in my work that can prove and fulfill myself. In china we used to judge a person successful or not according to what he has achieved from work. Consequently, we used to study hard and work hard to prove how capable and successful we are. Unfortunately, in most cases, with the development of our career, we will finally find out that the more we dedicate to our career, the more possible that we lose ourselves.
>
> My husband ever told me that he really appreciated the experiences he got when he was studying in Adelaide. The leisure lifestyle and how Australians cherish life changed him a lot. He has learned to slow down to enjoy what life gives us and to value what we currently have. He has learned that career is not the whole world. Furthermore, he hopes I could also feel the same as he after living here for a while.
>
> I know it is a great opportunity, which I should appreciate all my life, that I can live in Australia for a couple of years before I am getting old. I hope I can take this period to think about the essence of life, to explore and enrich myself, to learn to enjoy presence.
>
> Since I came here I have seen some changes on me. I begin to pay my attention to other things besides career. For instance, I begin to study cooking, which was ever the last thing I wanted to do because I think spending too much time and energy on cooking is not worthwhile. Now I even begin to try to improve my skills in cooking to make my husband happy. However, when I looked at what I have written in my essay, I realized that it is still a long way to make some positive changes and I will try my best to find a renewed Tina.
> (Tina, email journal entry, October 16, 2008)

For Tina, this was an important and revelatory moment, because it showed up a divide between how she had previously constructed herself as a woman, and how she perceived others might construct a sense of a meaningful life. In a later group discussion session (Discussion Three), Tina made reference to this incident again, suggesting that maybe she

was too selfish. It is interesting that the differences she perceived between herself and those around her made Tina feel a sense of shame, as though she instinctively judged her own choices to be inferior, based as they were on personal career aspirations, rather than on lifestyle or family and a sense of shared goals. The journal entry also shows that Tina was by now prepared to embrace an alternative vision of herself, as wife and kitchen goddess who works to please her husband through culinary endeavours, perhaps in line with what she perceived as normalised expectations of Australian women. Does this suggest an early, English-mediated socialisation to the norms of the post-migration society?

While Tina felt the influence of views she heard expressed in Australia, it is also true that she was encouraged by her husband in the need to put family ahead of career. She made reference on a number of occasions throughout the study period, including in the journal entry above, to the fact that his previous experience of living in Australia, when he had done his Masters degree, had brought about a shift in priorities, such that he now placed lifestyle decisions on the same level of importance as career. He also believed that Tina should learn to prioritise family ahead of career aspirations, a point she makes reference to in the following excerpt from our final interview.

> Tina: Um…and I think sometimes, like my husband said, I'm… I'm too
>   focused on… on my career…
> Donna: Mhm.
> Tina: … sometimes, so I will …I will give up some…(LAUGHS)… some
>   stuff…ah, which might be more important in… in our lives.
> (Tina, Interview Three, September 2009:20)

While Tina was prepared to consider this point of view, her own position on the importance of a career included the following.

> I think, you know, I spend… ah… many years on my education, so I think I should
> get some reward from that (LAUGHS)…
> (Tina, Interview Three, September 2009:20)

Ultimately, Tina's migration experience, in terms of negotiating a work identity, was defined by the impact of considering the importance of other subjectivities, including those of wife and homemaker, and by having to make a difficult choice, between her identity as a mother and her identity as a lawyer. Although she outlined the role of her husband in encouraging her to consider the importance of other subjectivities, Tina was also affected by migrating to Australia, where the barriers to employment presented by language, race and age resulted in an assumption of permanent downward mobility in the labour market. Added to this was the influence of what Tina perceived to be normalised gender subjectivities in Australian society, which placed unpaid work roles for women on an equal or superior footing to career identities. The combined effect of all these considerations was to cast doubt on Tina's previous sense of the unquestioned primacy of her career aspirations and her sense of self as a woman.

7.7   Summary

In summary, I hope to have demonstrated how significant barriers constructed around language, race, and qualifications can result in the exclusion or downward mobility of migrant women in the Australian labour market. In addition, how age can be experienced by women as an immutable barrier to the achievement of English language competence necessary for success in English-medium study in support of career aspirations. And finally, how the experience and perception of a disconnect between pre-migration norms for combining work and family goals and post-migration expectations and opportunities can compromise a woman's sense of self and career aspirations. This may be experienced as a choosing between mutually exclusive locations for the construction of career and family identities, or a changing sense of life-work priorities resulting from the perception and influence of post-migration societal norms.

CHAPTER EIGHT - CONCLUSION

8.1   Introduction

I have now provided an overview of the participants' migration and settlement trajectories and analysed the ways that learning and using English in the Australian context impacted their identity constructions and sense of self in three broad interactional domains, related to the family, society, and work. Within these three domains, I have discussed issues involving language, race and gender that affected, sometimes intersectionally, the participants' sense of self and settlement trajectories in Australia. In this concluding chapter I will revisit my original research questions, drawing together the main findings and discussing their implications for understanding the impact of transnational migration, specifically on women, and for settlement language learning and provision in Australia. I will also revisit my earlier discussion of the way identity is theorised, drawing on my research findings to elaborate a more nuanced articulation of identity and selfhood.

8.2   Research Question 1: How does developing a voice in English impact on a woman's sense of self and aspirations, and her negotiation of key family relationships?

My analysis reveals that learning English impacted on the participants' identity performances and sense of self in a number of profound ways. One key set of findings relates to whether or not using English was associated with feeling like a different person, and related to this, the connection between learning the language and learning the culture in which it dominates.

The responses to a question about whether they felt like a different person when they spoke English are not consistent across the participants. While three participants associated speaking English with being a different person, even at the beginning of the data collection

period, the remaining six participants insisted that they were still the same person, and in early interviews this was articulated as a sense of having the same beliefs, in any language. However, over the course of the study many of the participants did begin to feel changes in their attitudes and beliefs from living in Australia and using English. I will discuss both types of responses and then draw them together into a combined statement about the impact of English on a woman's sense of self.

8.2.1 Selfhood and English language

The awareness of a definable English language identity was referred to specifically by Kumiko and Michiko, the two women who spoke Japanese as a first language and who had both originally traveled to Australia to learn English as part of a broader desire for adventure in the west, or 'akogare' (Takahashi, 2006). They both experienced a definable split between the self they expressed in English – more socially relaxed and/or confident - and the self they expressed in Japanese – shyer and/or more insecure during social exchanges - and this was seen in part as a function of the expectations of social interaction in the two languages. The literature on identity and bilingualism, which includes both individual memoirs (for example, Hoffman, 1989, Mori, 1997, Wierzbicka, 2004, Ye, 2003) and wider studies (for example, Pavlenko, 2001, 2006, Piller, 2002, Besemeres, 2006), links both lexicogrammatical constraints and social expectations to the expression of identity in different languages, in the case of late bilinguals. In addition, Koven (1998), which documents the experience of French-Portuguese bilinguals who have spoken both languages since infancy, finds the participants hold the sense of different selves in the performance of each language.

> Different ways of speaking, within and across languages, create socially and psychologically real effects for people, producing for the same speaker multiple expressions and experiences of socially recognizable selves. (Koven, 1998)

While both Michiko and Kumiko felt constrained by the lexicogrammatical requirements

253

of politeness and respect in Japanese, their sense of different language identities was also indexed to the constructions of gender in each language, and how they felt a greater sense of choice, as women, in English languaculture. Many women in Japan see normative gendered subjectivity as particularly limiting and burdensome (as documented, for example, by Kelsky, 2008). By contrast, western cultures, and in particular English languaculture, may shape aspirational subjectivities for such women (see, for example, Takahashi, 2006, and Piller and Takahashi, 2006). Taking this into account, the experiences of the two Japanese women in my study can be seen as embodying language learning as a liberating experience of gendered selfhood, insofar as they viewed positively the impact on their sense of self of communicating in English.

While both Michiko and Kumiko realized separate language identities reflexively, another participant, Julie, developed an imagined identity, communicated in Australian English, that she projected as a settlement aspiration. Julie believed that using Australian English would have a positive impact on her identity as a mother and would elevate the relationships she had with her children, currently performed in Singapore English, to a higher level of intimacy and caring. Her desire for this code of English came about during her time at the AMEP, and Julie referred to specific triggers, such as her teacher showing her polite ways of asking for things in Australian English, and her perception of the relationship between mother and child characters in an Australian book she studied in class. Such experiences fostered in Julie a belief that the relationship she had with her children was unsatisfactory and would be improved if she used Australian English. Of interest to me is not whether this would prove to be true in practice, or even how Julie would manage such practice – indeed, when I checked back with her later in the study, she said that she was so busy working that she had not had time to focus on using a new language code with her children - but that Julie imagined a better relationship could be

achieved by imposing a different language code. Julie's 'language desire' (Piller and Takahashi, 2006) amounted to a Whorfian belief that the different surface level articulations of emotional closeness in Singapore and Australian Englishes implied different ways of being, and that, by speaking Australian English, Julie would automatically become the kind of person who could have a better relationship with her children. Her beliefs about the importance of language use to identity construction inspired an aspiration for language-mediated self-transformation that Julie associated not only with successful settlement in Australia but also personal growth.

8.2.2 Selfhood and English languaculture

The other six participants did not report being or becoming a different person when they spoke English, but over time some were still able to discern the impact of interacting within the English languaculture domain. While this was initially expressed as being the same person but not being able to articulate that person very well, Maria, for example, was also able to compare her experiences of living in Brazil, Japan, and Australia and conclude that she had 'many faces' (see 6.5.3) and that each culture required her to perform a different identity. She did, however, express the sense of a single core self underlying these identities, and this was indicated in her revelations about when and with whom she felt she could 'be herself' (6.5.1.2). As with the other women who said they did not feel like a different person when they spoke English, Maria was articulating a self that existed beyond the performance requirements of social interaction in a specific language, a point I will return to in section 8.5 below, when I revisit the question of identity and the core self.

The majority of participants experienced changes in their gendered subjectivity, over the course of the project, and these changes involved changing attitudes and beliefs about, for example, priorities for family and work goals, for the physical construction of gender,

about the negotiation of power in relationships, and about the pragmatics of social interaction. For these women, it was not developing a voice in English that specifically impacted their sense of self, but their experience of Australian society that they attributed the changes to. By the end of the data collection period, of the eight participants who completed the final interview, only Michiko reported that English was now the language of her thoughts on a daily basis, yet a number of other women reported that their attitudes and beliefs were changing as a result of living in Australia, in spite of not having internalized English to such a degree. Furthermore, the point at which both Michiko and Kumiko reported feeling like a different person in English was well before either had developed English competency or use to the point where it was the language of their thoughts (indeed, Kumiko never achieved this internalization of English). Both women were unable to decide whether it was the English language, or the culture in which it was spoken, that made them feel like a more confident and/or socially at ease person when they spoke English. Over the course of the study, they both articulated a combined effect of language and culture, with the lack of formality in English address contrasting with the need to remember more complex and socially fraught honorifics in Japanese, alongside the social constructions of gender in both cultures. As I stated above, other women did not locate the differences they perceived in themselves as deriving specifically from using English language, but spoke more generally about the influence of the society and culture in which English dominated. At times, during the data collection period, it seemed that the culture they were learning was of greater significance to the participants, as an instigator of change, than English itself, which in turn made me question the assumptions we make about teaching and learning in settlement language programs and the way that language is treated as a bounded system. I will discuss the implications of this research for settlement English in section 8.6.2 below.

Perhaps the problem with assimilating such disparate short and long-term language learning outcomes lies with viewing emergent multilingualism, through a monolingual framework, as the acquisition of discrete language capabilities, instead of an idiosyncratic language socialisation. My research suggests that the form and process this socialisation takes is in part a function of the way a woman experiences subjectivity beyond that language, so that the language learning experience might come to be invested and associated with an aspirational subjectivity, as was the case for Michiko, Kumiko, and Julie. All three women expressed a sense of becoming that was for them enabled by using English, and all three expressed negative sentiments about the interactional pragmatics of their prior languages and the way this impacted their gendered subjectivity. For Julie, this was specifically about her subjectivity as a mother, and for Kumiko and Michiko it was a more general expression of gendered selfhood; all three seemed to see English as providing a means of moving beyond that. In contrast, none of the other participants expressed the sense of being limited by their other languages and perhaps this was why they did not associate the use of English with an aspirational subjectivity. Instead, they were aware over time of the impact of Australian society and its normalised behaviours, rather than English specifically, on their identity constructions and sense of self. I will take up this discussion again in section 8.5 below, which deals with identity and the core self, but before doing so I would like to discuss the findings relevant to my other main research questions, after first beginning with a discussion of the impact of learning English on a woman's key family relationships.

8.2.3   Using English in key family relationships

English impacts on family relationships in a number of specific ways that relate to language investment and language choice in relationship communication, and issues of

power and dependency within marriage relationships. I will recap these separately then draw conclusions from the combined evidence.

8.2.3.1 Language investment and language choice

Language choice in key family relationships was seen to be affected by levels of investment in English in two parent-child relationships and at least one marriage relationship. In Maria's case, her investment in becoming a speaker of English, tied to her family's successful settlement in Australia, was initially at odds with her daughter's language investment in Japanese, and her continued desire to return to Japan. This set them on divergent aspirational paths and contributed to their continued communication problems, which had initially arisen some time after their move to Japan, when Maria's daughter began communicating only in Japanese. In Julie's case, her desire for a different kind of relationship with her children motivated a strong investment in using Australian English, which was seen as the vehicle for expressing a context-specific "Ideal L2 Self" (Dornyei, 2009) and therefore critical to achieving this outcome. In Kumiko's case, her continued investment in using Japanese in her marriage relationship, even after her husband began speaking English to her, was tied to maintaining the historical basis of their intimacy, established in Japanese, as well as her own language-mediated identity in that relationship.

All of these relationships were affected by the introduction of English and by the participants' differing levels of investment in the importance of English to the performance and maintenance of that relationship. In each case, the participant showed agency in working to establish an interactional framework for the relationship by selectively using language in accordance with emotional or aspirational investment in a particular languaculture. To explain this by example, because Maria was invested in a successful

settlement in Australia, she made rapid progress with developing her English competency. However, although she aspired to her daughter becoming a fluent speaker of English, even after her daughter finally accepted this and expressed a desire to attend English-medium schooling and learn English, Maria resisted making this the language of communication between them because her aspiration was for her daughter to achieve the symbolic capital associated with the accent and register of the dominant society. She worried that if she spoke English with her daughter, her daughter would learn to speak her English, which she viewed as conferring reduced symbolic capital in the Australian context.

8.2.3.2 Language, power and dependency

A number of participants experienced the use of English in their relationships as impacting the dynamics of power and dependency, both of which ultimately affected their identity construction in this domain. For participants in relationships with English monolingual partners, there was evidence of them being emotionally coerced to use English in mixed language company, in order not to exclude English monolinguals. This created conflicting loyalties when it affected L1 communication with other important family members, as Vesna found when her Bulgarian daughters were visiting with her and her English-monolingual second husband. It also meant that these women's identity construction in social interaction was coercively being defined by an English voice. In the case of participants with mutually bilingual partners, there was evidence from one participant, Tina, of manipulating the language choice in order to maintain the balance of power in her favour during arguments, moving from English back into Chinese in order to regain control. This also meant Tina was able to manipulate her identity construction in this interactional domain, since she saw herself to be a powerful adversary in Chinese, but a weak one in English, so by managing the language choice, she was ensuring her construction as an intelligent and articulate interlocutor.

Language dependency within key family relationships was an issue for all participants, particularly in the early stages of the project, and this was mostly experienced as a frustrating weakness or inadequacy. Many participants made reference to the desire to be independent, and some used expressions such as 'parasite' or 'user' to describe the state of being financially dependent on their male partner; however, one participant, Anna, was also able to see this state as a kind of gender affirmation, being a woman dependent on a man. Financial dependency and language dependency were linked, for some women, as their English competence initially precluded them from seeking paid work in Australia. Relative competence in the dominant language also conferred inequalities of power, and most women experienced a change in status within their relationship, from a state of employment-based financial independence to unwaged financial dependence on their male partner, as a result of transnational migration and language inequality. The case of Tina shows how developing English competency and returning to meaningful paid work helped to realign the balance of power in her relationship, but as with Maria's migration from Brazil to Japan, transnational migration was initially seen to advance a more traditional gendered power differential, with the man as financial head of the family (see also 8.4.1 on migration as a gendered process).

8.3   Research Question 2: How does the way a woman is constructed in Australian society impact on her sense of self and her settlement aspirations?

In this section I will discuss factors, resulting from how the participants were constructed, as new migrants in Australian society, which mediated their sense of self and achievement of aspirations during the initial settlement period. These related to language competence, qualifications, and race.

8.3.1 Language and qualifications

Language and qualifications were connected, insofar as the lack of acceptance by the Australian labour market gatekeepers of their prior qualifications meant that some women faced having to completely retrain in an English-medium education setting before they would be eligible to practise in Australia in their professional field. Private and public perceptions of their English competence were critical to undertaking such an arduous course of study, and ultimately determined whether it happened or not. For example, Vesna, who did not feel like she was a different person in English or Bulgarian, nevertheless felt her formal English competence was never going to be high enough to succeed at post-secondary English-medium study, so her identity as a worker, and her relationship subjectivity were deeply impacted by the downgrading of her symbolic capital in the post-migration society. Vesna went through a period of low self-esteem, during the data collection period, which saw her describe feeling like a parasite on her husband because she was not able to contribute financially to the household income. In the short-term, this was also the case for Tina, although she ultimately decided that her English competence would be high enough to embark on a law degree, so she imagined eventually reclaiming her pre-migration professional status. As I explained in Chapter Seven, though, this projection was importantly mediated by Tina's understanding of the way race would impact her ability to translate this into success in the labour market (see 7.6.2).

8.3.2 Race

When I initiated this project as an inquiry into the effects of English on a woman's sense of self, I did not specifically imagine I was inquiring into the ways that race influenced a woman's settlement trajectory; however, one of the things that really struck me, from listening to the women in group discussions and in personal interviews, was the way their settlement experiences differed so markedly, on the basis of race. There was a clear divide

between the European and Asian women over how they experienced Australian society, and how they were able to imagine their place in it, and it was very interesting for me to witness their group exchanges, and how their personal experiences informed the sometimes conflicting positions they took up.

The European participants all expressed a sense of legitimacy in, and also identification with, the dominant post-migration society. This sense of identification was expressed as an awareness that most Australians they met were themselves migrants, and many had not learned English as a first language. I believe this allowed them to see themselves as being on an inbound trajectory of participation (Wenger, 1998), both culturally and linguistically, towards full participation in Australian society. Such a perspective was reified in the history of post-war European migration to Australia, which is now an accepted part of the storying of modern Australian society.

In contrast to this, the Asian women spoke of experiencing racial abuse and exclusion and did not express a sense of belonging in the imagined nation state. The three women who had lived in Japan prior to migration were able to express an affinity with, or desire for, aspects of the gendered subjectivity of Australian women, which they saw as associated with the expression of free will and a greater degree of self-determination than they had known in Japan. In addition, Tina, who had worked as a lawyer in China, enjoyed the Australian lifestyle as well as the absence of a divide between her discursive constructions of identity in work and non-work domains. However, in spite of such personal attractions of living in Australia, none of these women expressed a sense of identification of their own position - as a recent migrant who is learning English – with the normalised history of migration to Australia, as the three European women did. I believe the reason for this difference lies in the way that race impacts discourses of acceptance and belonging in

Australian society in ways that construct Asian people as the racial and linguistic 'other' and European migrants as on track to being part of the mainstream. As I point out, in Chapter Six, this situation may continue even for the children of migrants from Asia, for whom linguistic insider status should, on the surface at least, have been achieved by the performance of a local English code. In the experience of Kumiko's husband, who was raised in Australia, speaking English like an 'Aussie' did not remove the possibility that he would still be treated as a foreign visitor by some Australians (see 6.3.2).

Related to their sense of exclusion, two of the Asian women discussed the expectation that race would significantly impact their employment (Tina) or social advancement (Maria), and two (Kumiko and Michiko) appeared to conflate language with race when they spoke of their ideas about, or experience of, trying to enter the Australian labour market. This conflation took the form of discussing what was perhaps evidence of exclusion based on race as a question of exclusion due to English language proficiency. As I discuss in Chapter Seven, the conclusion that denied labour entry was a result of inadequate English language proficiency perhaps derives in part from the way that this relationship is framed in the context of Australian settlement English programs, where the focus of assistance towards labour market readiness centres on the assumption of an English language 'deficit'. This includes a minor focus on the pragmatics of English workplace interactions, as well as job preparation skills such as writing a resume and participating in an interview; however, these activities all position the migrant learner as English-deficient rather than an emergent bilingual, and nowhere address key issues of labour market discrimination that are well-attested in the literature. In this context, I would argue, it is not surprising that migrant English learners might then discuss difficulties with finding meaningful work in relation to English language competence. They have, after all, been led to believe that this is the main barrier to successful settlement. I will return to the implications of this for the

In a way, the existence of barriers implicating language and race meant that some of the women in the project were denied the benefits of living in a society where they felt women enjoyed greater gender equality than that of women in their pre-migration society. For example, although Michiko, Kumiko, and also Maria, had spoken about the ways that Australian women could exercise greater choice than women in Japan in relation to pursuing a career after marriage and having children, their ability to realize this choice in their own lives was limited by the anticipation or experience of labour market discrimination. By the time the project ended, Kumiko was about to leave her husband and child in Australia while she went to work in Singapore, Maria had not even got as far as an interview for any of the advertised positions she applied for, no matter how menial, and Michiko was a full-time, financially dependent homemaker. Furthermore, although Tina was working in Australia, she was so unhappy with the quality of institutional childcare that she sent her infant son back to China to be cared for by her mother.

What this study suggests in relation to race is that their experiences of racism in the community encouraged the Asian women to forefront race, alongside language, as a factor that would determine their level of social and economic inclusion. As I state in Chapter Six, this was a problem created by the sociocultural environment they had moved into, so it was not one they could easily resolve. For the European women, as well as the Iranian woman, social and economic inclusion centred on developing English language competency, although in this, age was a limiting factor for two women. Nevertheless, within their identity as new Australians it was not difficult for these women to imagine an inward trajectory of participation and social inclusion, beginning with the settlement English program. For the Asian women, even after they had achieved higher than

functional competency in English (as defined in the AMEP), they still had to consider the way race might limit their social inclusion, and this meant they remained on what Wenger (1998) describes as 'peripheral' trajectories, where full participation might never occur, but their identity (sense of self) was still influenced by the community of practice (1998:154). It is worth noting that, in two cases, this peripheral trajectory was ameliorated by specific factors – in the case of Maria, her involvement in the local church community was a means of legitimating her symbolic capital within a more openly tolerant and broadly accepting sub-section of the dominant society, and in the case of Tina, her symbolic capital as a bilingual, bicultural legal professional enabled her to establish social legitimacy within the legal profession in Australia, although only in a reduced professional capacity and only in a situation where her specific bilingualism was desired for business reasons.

8.4 Research Question 3: How does the way a woman is constructed in the pre-migration language and society impact on her sense of self?

In asking this question, I was primarily interested in the ways that a woman's prior subjectivity might be affected by transnational migration involving language change and also by the nature of the post-migration society. In examining the ways that the participants spoke of their lives before and after migration, it was apparent that the process of migration was in significant ways a gendered process, insofar as it dramatically altered gendered subjectivity, at least in the initial post-migration settlement period. This can be argued on the basis of the migration status of the participants and, more significantly, in the way that undertaking transnational migration brought about fundamental changes in the participants' primary work identity and social positioning.

8.4.1 Migration as a gendered process

In general, the women in the project revealed positive impressions of the rights and social positioning of women in Australia, and the ways that living here might be beneficial to them, in terms of their gendered subjectivity. However, although Australia is a developed country where women have equal rights in law and good employment opportunities, this does not necessarily mean that migrant women can make full use of the opportunities available in a modern, egalitarian state. On the contrary, my research shows that migration to Australia can result in a return to traditional gendered subjectivities of wife and mother. This is in part due to the framing of migration applications, and the way they arbitrate individual status. In the case of the four participants who migrated with their families in the Skilled visa category, their migration status defined them as secondary, in relation to a male primary applicant, thus forefronting their identity as a wife within a legitimising framework of transglobal mobility. In the case of the five participants who migrated because of marriage to an Australian national, the migration process, and arguably the entire motivation to migrate, automatically defined them as someone's wife. In all cases, then, migration was a gendered process that primarily defined the participants by their relationship to a man.

In addition, on arriving in Australia, the participants also confronted labour market barriers based on race, language and/or qualifications. This contributed to six of the nine participants moving from pre-migration identities in paid employment to post-migration identities in unpaid reproductive labour as wife and/or mother (a seventh, Maria, had already undergone this transformation when she migrated from Brazil to Japan). While this shift was in part connected to English language proficiency, its impact was felt beyond the question of language proficiency in a largely monolingual labour market, because for some it persisted even after functional competence in English had been achieved. Eight of the

nine participants experienced progress in their English language proficiency over the course of the study, in terms of achieving measurable competencies in the AMEP and other ESL programs beyond that (the ninth woman withdrew from the AMEP early in the study). Some women even completed English-medium mainstream post-secondary training courses; however, this success did not necessarily mean they were able or willing to return to paid employment. The reasons for this were multifarious, so I would like to discuss separately the outcomes for women who eventually returned to paid work, those who did not, as well as the two women for whom migration brought about an expanded work identity.

Of the women who did return to paid work during the course of the study, the role of English language competence in gaining employment was difficult to isolate, because all but one of these women were employed as a result of their other language capital. One woman could not find work in Australia so took a job in Singapore in an English-bilingual workplace, while another found part-time work in a bilingual workplace, by exploiting a Chinese-Australian contact, and a third was employed, through a networking introduction, specifically because of her Chinese-English bilingual- and biculturalism. In all of these cases, language capital was a factor in their success or failure in the Australian labour market, but the value of a specific language competence depended on its niche-market significance in a predominantly English monolingual society. A fourth woman, Vesna, was the only participant who returned to paid work after successfully applying for an advertised position, but this was not in her previous profession, as her qualifications and extensive experience had not been recognised in Australia and, post-AMEP, she had undergone retraining in a lower-status role within the broad field of her previous career.

Three women who had been in paid work before migration chose not to seek paid employment after studying English, and this decision was related to either insecurities about English competence or a priorisation of unpaid reproductive work. Two of these women, Lena and Anna, felt satisfied with their English development by the end of the study and, while they were happy to continue in a reproductive primary work role, also expressed the possibility of returning to paid work at some future time. The third woman, Michiko, felt satisfied with her English competence for her role as a wife and homemaker, but was somewhat conflicted about whether to seek a paid work role, and this involved factors related to English competence for paid employment, race, and pre-migration gendered subjectivity. As I have suggested in Chapter Five, it is possible that Michiko's gendered socialisation in Japan had encouraged an approach to matrimony that normalised her position as a full-time homemaker, which, alongside her anxieties about English language competence and racial discrimination, may have contributed to her hesitation about seeking paid work (see 5.4.3.1).

Finally, two women, Roxanna and Julie, went from supportive roles as wife and mother before migration to more expanded work roles after migration. This represented a transformational shift in primary work identity, one that caused a significant impact on each woman's sense of self. In the case of Roxanna, migration transformed her from a state of marital cohabitation with traditional role-division and paid domestic support in Iran, to being sole parent and house head with primary responsibility and no paid domestic support in Australia. In the initial settlement period, this transformation also included an aspiration for further study and the possibility of a career identity; however, this had all but disappeared by the end of the project, when Roxanna could no longer imagine her own future. Julie, on the other hand, moved from a pre-migration life in unpaid reproductive work to working full-time supporting her husband in the business they bought into as

Business visa applicants. This shift in her primary work identity was one that Julie had not anticipated or desired in her aspirations for a post-migration self and, along with Roxanna, she at times expressed serious misgivings about the decision to migrate.

To try to draw all of these individual findings together into a linked statement about the impact on the self of transnational migration involving language change, I would suggest that all of the participants in my study experienced changes in their gendered sense of self as articulated in relation to primary work identity. These transformations had a significant impact on the participants' aspirations during the initial settlement period, and the effect ranged from a sense of diminution and low self-esteem (Vesna) or despair (Tina) about their future career prospects, to one of initially broadening horizons for either education and future career (Roxanna) or the realisation of personal fulfilment through matrimony and motherhood (Anna). The common impact lay in migration's transformative effect on the expression of self through work, and a shift in the balance between reproductive and productive labour identities. During the initial settlement period, this study finds that migration works in the majority of cases to promote the construction of identities in the devotional roles of wife and/or mother, and to hinder or deny identities in meaningful paid employment.

Another aspect of transformation experienced by some participants, from a pre-migration socialisation to a post-migration self, involved changes in the physical construction of identity. The experience of this kind of transformation was separately expressed by Lena, Roxanna, Tina, and Maria, all of whom found they needed to, or were able to, change the way they presented themselves, following migration. For Roxanna, Tina and Maria, this was expressed as a liberating effect that freed them from the need to dress in ways that

conformed to the expectations of others in key public domains, and for Lena this was expressed as a lack of choice in the means of presenting herself.

8.4.2   Location and gendered subjectivity

As I discussed in my analysis of gender in all three identity domains, for a number of the participants there was an articulation of the awareness that choosing to remain in Australia and commit to the migration necessitated choosing between conflicting locations for the performance of key identities of the gendered self. Over the course of the study, many participants in my study expressed anxiety about the conflict of interests inherent in this kind of choice, with migration to Australia seen as variously impacting their ability to perform being a good mother, a good wife, a good career professional, a good daughter, or even a beautiful woman. For example, Tina experienced migration as enhancing her identity as a mother, but detrimental to her identity as a career professional, while Roxanna saw it as enhancing her identity as a mother but detrimental to her identity as a daughter, and Lena found that her construction as a beautiful woman in Russia was not relevant or even possible in the Australian context. To extend this beyond the question of migration to Australia, the problem of conflicting locations for the performance of gendered subjectivity had already been experienced by Maria, who spoke of her initial migration from Brazil to Japan as enhancing her identity as a wife but detrimental to her identity as a businesswoman.

Related to the issue of conflicting locations for gender roles, I noted that, by the end of the study period, a number of participants expressed their continued commitment to the migration in terms that forefronted the importance of their identity as a mother or wife. Thus, although she had begun the project talking about the possibilities for self-fulfilment that Australia presented, by the end of the project, Roxanna said that she could no longer

imagine a future for herself, but Australia was the best place for her sons so she was prepared to remain, for that reason. She also spent most of her time engaged in activities that supported her sons' lives, putting her own ideas about further study and career on hold. In a similar vein, although during the first half of the project Lena discussed various schemes for a return to paid employment in the business sector, by the end of the project she spoke of her presence in Australia in relation to how much her husband needed her, which she contrasted with her desire to be in Russia, and her plans for paid employment were in flux. At the same time, Tina said that if she did choose to remain in Australia it would be for her child, in the long term, but not for her career, and Maria revealed that, even though she was deeply unhappy living in Japan, she would have been prepared to stay there if it had been good for her husband. She also said that it had been her husband's desire to migrate on to Australia. In such examples, the reification of migration as a gendered process is complete, since the migrant is framing the act, and even justifying her commitment to it, on the basis of its enhancement of a devotional gendered subjectivity.

8.5   Identity and the self revisited

In Chapter Two, I suggested that my working approach to the question of identity and the self was to differentiate between the roles we play (identities) and the subject who plays them (the self). This was arrived at as a way of reconciling how identity is theorised in poststructuralism with the way it is experienced and articulated in popular understanding. My motivation for wanting to do this derived from the fact that the way identity is used in some sociolinguistic research is problematic (see 2.7), together with a desire to represent as closely as possible in my research practice the way a participant might also see herself (see 2.2).

While initially only three participants felt like they became a different person when they spoke English, over the data collection period, which spanned some eighteen months, other participants did report changes in their attitudes and beliefs from living in Australian society. For example, Michiko had a sense of herself changing, in her forthrightness of manner during social interactions and in the way she expressed her opinions. This was not just felt when she was using English in Australia but also when using Japanese in both Australia and Japan. Michiko gave examples of this, in our final interview, including 'mistakes' she had made on a recent extended visit to Japan, where she had got into trouble for speaking her mind in Japanese. She also talked about developing a stronger interest in politics and society, as a result of living in Australia, and expressing this in relation to Japan as well, via her Japanese blog. In our final interview, Michiko described this change as "growing":

> So, now I'm ... I think I'm growing really, cos now… before I was in a small world, like my world, like library, book, book, book. I want to read a book and I still I like to read books. But that's only a few, you know, were small ... I don't read politic books or, you know, just stories but now I know lots of things, and I …yeah …change. (Michiko, Interview Three, November 2009:21)

Other examples of changes in attitudes and values came from Tina, who was influenced by the different moral landscape regarding gendered subjectivity in Australia. This caused her to question her previous conviction that career was the number one priority, in light of an assumption that she should instead prioritise family over career aspirations. Changes in attitude were also felt by Lena, who by the end of the study period could discern the adoption of what she saw as Australian social constructions of beauty and attitudes to the physical representation of the gendered self.

Although Kumiko described herself as changed by English, she was always able to separate two language personas – English Kumiko and Japanese Kumiko, and she said that at times she made conscious choices about which to adopt. In the final interview, she gave

the following response to a question about whether speaking English made her feel like a different person.

> Still shy but I feel I have to be very confident/strong when I speak English. In Japanese culture modesty is very important but not in English culture. I think this influences a lot. (Kumiko, Interview Three, August 2009:2)

The sense, expressed here, that she was 'performing' being confident was corroborated further on in the same interview when she responded to a question about how living in Australia had changed her by saying: "Made me to have the idea of being very strong and confident" (Interview Three, August 2009:2). In addition, Kumiko did not report changes in the way she used Japanese, as a result of living in Australia, and she did talk about the importance of preserving Japanese as the language of communication with her husband, even after he began using English with her. Does all of this indicate that Kumiko experienced less change, over the course of the study, in her sense of an underlying self than, for example, Michiko had, or perhaps that her performance of different language selves was more akin to what I have termed *identities*, because she did not have the sense of being the same person in both languages?

My summary, above, of the ways that the women responded to questions about how using English impacted their sense of self and whether or not they felt like a different person when speaking English, is consistent with the way Taylor (1989) defines identity:

> My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand. (Taylor, 1989:27)

In approaching my research, I have referred to this conception of identity as the *self*, in order to distinguish it from the roles, or *identities*, we perform. The evidence suggests that one can perform an identity in a new language, as Maria describes, without feeling that the self has been changed, or one can feel like a different person when speaking a new

273

language, as Michiko and Kumiko describe, and as Julie imagines, even before that language has become the language of one's thoughts. Over the longer term, one may become aware of changes in one's attitudes and beliefs, as a result of functioning within a particular languaculture, and although these are language-mediated, they are not language specific, but are felt across all languages spoken.

Three participants made reference to being able to 'be myself', associated with interacting in specific sociocultural domains. For example, Kumiko, who experienced herself as being a shy person when she spoke Japanese and a more confident person when she spoke English, connected being herself with living in Australia. She also claimed that Japanese women had to choose each day between the many "masks" they kept in their drawer. Furthermore, as I indicated in 8.2.2 above, Maria referred both to having 'many faces' and also to people with whom she could 'be myself', which suggests a distinction between identities performed and a core self.

The participants who were aware of changes in themselves over the study period, but who did not associate those changes with speaking English specifically, as Kumiko, Michiko, and Julie did, but from living in Australian society, experienced the change across all their language domains. This would explain why, on their return visits to pre-migration countries, Lena and Anna were aware of expressing themselves in prior languages in ways that reflected the self they had become from living in Australia (see 6.2.4). Similarly, Roxanna noted changes in the way she communicated with her husband that reflected how her gendered subjectivity had been impacted by living in Australia (see 5.3.3.3). I would argue that such changes were located in the women's attitudes or values, which, according to Taylor, define the self. In addition, one of the women who early on recognised she could be a different person in English than she was in Japanese, Michiko, was also aware over time of a change in her attitudes that applied to both her language domains. Where earlier

Michiko had felt like she was a more worried person when she used Japanese, because she was conscious of the expectations of interaction in Japanese and her difficulty in living up to them, by the end of the project, she described herself as becoming more "selfish" in setting the terms of social interactions and not worrying so much about what other people might think. Michiko was the participant who had spent the most time in Australia and who by the end of the project reported that English was her primary means of communication and the language of her thoughts on a daily basis. She also reported feeling by then that she was not being herself when she performed in Japanese according to what the languaculture expected of her.

> […] so I had to be very polite and every time like: "Hello, hello, hello" and then I said: "Oh yes that was very nice, thank you very much", you know, like very polite and it wasn't me, anyway, it's not me.
> (Michiko, Interview Three, November 2009:8)

Michiko also said, after a three-month visit to Japan: "I found like I … not really suit to Japanese culture, again … and here is more comfortable" (Michiko, Interview Three, November 2009:2).

What I have outlined, then, is a difference between short- and longer-term changes, change that was not always experienced as resulting from using a particular language, and a difference between performing a different identity in a different language and the awareness of becoming a different person across all languaculture domains. I would suggest that, in the short term, the changes that Michiko and Kumiko reported were akin to the performance of different language identities. In the longer term, a number of participants experienced changes in their attitudes and beliefs, or sense of self, which were experienced across all language domains. This was felt to result from time spent in Australian society, rather than in using English specifically, and was not associated with English being the language of thought. In addition, the one woman for whom English did

become the language of her thoughts on a daily basis, Michiko, eventually saw a merging of her English and Japanese selves.

As these examples reveal, the study shows differences in the ways that women experienced the impact of language learning on selfhood, and I believe these are usefully explained by distinguishing between their effect on identity performance, understood through an awareness of playing roles, and on a core self, understood through an awareness of changes in one's attitudes and beliefs. I am not trying to suggest that the sense of a core self pre-exists early childhood language-mediated socialisation, since the terms under which this occurs predate the individual. I am trying to explain what my research suggests about the impact of language learning in adulthood on these two different articulations of selfhood and in so doing, suggesting a means of addressing what is held by some to be the inadequate theorisation of identity in sociolinguistics. Pavlenko (2006) suggests there is a "framing of bi/multilingualism as an expanded version of monolingualism", where in reality they may be experienced quite differently, especially in the case of late bilingualism, "when speakers are socialized into their respective languages at distinct points in their lives, childhood versus adulthood, and in distinct sociocultural environments" (Pavlenko, 2006:1-2). I believe this is a useful way of approaching the language learning experiences of the participants in my study, whose reporting of the impact of English on their sense of self reveals "sources of bi/multilingual experience that are not directly observable in the study of identity performance" (Pavlenko, 2006:1), including the awareness of an underlying core self that is variously affected by language learning and/or acculturation.

It is also worth noting evidence that changes in the core self were experienced as negotiated change, in the sense that participants were responding to what they perceived of

the impact of living in Australian society and mediating the change based on their prior sense of self and their desire for change. For example, Tina was aware of differences between pre- and post-migration societal definitions of a meaningful life, but she made conscious decisions about how she would incorporate these contrasts in her own life, and although she felt under some degree of pressure, she also saw herself as choosing. Moreover, Kumiko was aware of being able to be a different person in English than in Japanese, and the English persona became a model for a desired self that would be achieved through personal growth.

8.6   Implications

8.6.1   Implications for migrant women

My study demonstrates that migration involves significant changes in a woman's sense of self, and these revolve around aspects of selfhood related to primary work identity; the need to choose between locations for the performance of different identities, specifically those engaging career or family roles; and the forefronting of race in a woman's sense of self – for example, when race is a barrier to social inclusion, then one's race becomes a defining aspect of the expression of selfhood, albeit an imposed one.

Asian participants in my project experienced being rendered invisible during group or individual interactions with English-speaking Australians, and by this process became a non-person in that interactive domain. In addition, the experience of racist attacks, reported as first-hand by Tina, Michiko, and Maria, and reported by Kumiko in regard to her mother-in-law, are examples of the individual being constructed as an unindividuated 'other', and denied the right to selfhood in that social context. However, the self who is 'othered' in this way also retains constructions of imagined or remembered selves, from prior cultural and linguistic settings, and these work to resist imposed subjectivities. In this

way, Maria drew on her past, Portuguese-mediated construction as a persuasive and successful businesswoman, as well as prior experiences of social exclusion, to negotiate the legitimation of selfhood in her primary post-migration social contexts, specifically within the church and local community centre.

The denial of selfhood that is implicit in the consideration of new migrants not as individuals, but cultural group stereotypes is a good justification for using first person narrative data in exploring migration trajectories, insofar as this method of inquiry allows the subject a voice in which to communicate the self as individual. An awareness of this was important to the formulation of my research design, and I can only hope that I have done justice to the participants' voices in my analysis.

8.6.2 Implications for the AMEP

The AMEP sees itself as providing a settlement language service that is aimed not only at providing language tuition but also helping migrants decide on future study and employment goals. As part of this intent, it is now necessary for all AMEP students, on entering the program, to meet with a vocational guidance officer to plan and articulate future study and work goals. These are recorded in an Individual Learning Plan, which is updated by teachers and vocational guidance officers over the course of the student's time in the AMEP. Each student meets with a vocational guidance officer before leaving the program, and in this meeting, advice is given about the best course of action towards achieving study and/or work goals. In all of this process, and including the teaching of English, I would suggest that English is seen as a commodity or tool that the migrant must attain, in order to successfully achieve their settlement goals. What seems to be missing from the plan is the impact of factors related to gender, age and race, which my study shows have a significant influence on post-migration settlement aspirations. This would

278

suggest that Ehrlich's (1997) claim still applies; namely, that "theories of second language acquisition have often assumed an idealized, abstract learner devoid of social positioning and, thus, removed from the social environment in which learning takes place" (1997:440).

The experience of the Asian participants in my study indicates that race and language are sometimes conflated in moderating and controlling the entry of migrants to the Australian labour market, which is further evidence that discourses of power still exert a negative impact on migrant settlement aspirations, particularly in relation to one of the key settlement policy goals - getting migrants into long-term employment. However, in spite of the likelihood of new migrants from a number of countries encountering labour market discrimination, in my extensive experience in both management and delivery of the AMEP, this issue is never addressed in the framing of employment-focused AMEP curricula and vocational advice. All preparation of migrant English learners for entry to the labour market assumes the learner to be variably deficient in a number of key areas – language, qualifications, work experience, intelligibility, physical grooming, and knowledge of workplace interactional pragmatics. What are never discussed are the deficiencies of the Australian labour market – racial discrimination, a monolingual mindset, and unwillingness to recognise qualifications and relevant experience attained outside Australia, all of which were problems encountered in my study. Since they are not discussed as such, this also means that strategies for addressing these labour market deficiencies are not offered, and the migrant English learner is left to assume that, with English language competency will come social inclusion and labour market success.

Systemic racism towards non-European migrants has a long history in Australia. Indeed, one of the first pieces of legislation passed after Federation was the 1901 Migration Act, which made official the discouragement of non-European migration to Australia (Jupp,

2002). Although this Act, which came to be associated with the White Australia Policy, was eventually overturned in 1958, its legacy persisted in the practices of immigration officials until 1973, when the Whitlam Labor government moved to legislate for a multicultural Australia (Jupp, 2002). In spite of such policy advances, my study shows that racism towards Asian migrants still persists in the community and English is still being used as a blind for racial discrimination in the labour market, so unless we address these facts overtly, within Australian society as a whole, and within settlement English programs like the AMEP, our attempts to facilitate positive settlement outcomes for new migrants will partly be missing the point.

My findings demonstrate that the impact of attitudes to race, and gendered subjectivity in Australia, and the ways that migration is a gendered process, are deeply involved in the impact that learning English has on identity performance and selfhood in the settlement trajectories of migrant women. The social context of language learning was in some ways more important to the participants than the language itself, in terms of identity construction, which is at odds with the assumption, inherent in settlement English course design, that language learning involves the development of a bounded lexicogrammatical system. For example, both Michiko and Kumiko spoke of feeling like a more confident person using English socially than using Japanese, at a time when their lexicogrammatical competency in English was at best low-intermediate level. On the other hand, even when Kumiko, Michiko, and Tina had achieved high levels of lexicogrammatical fluency, they still doubted their ability to succeed in key employment related domains of English-mediated interaction, because of the way race impacted outcomes. Furthermore, English language competence was differently assessed as symbolic capital in monolingual and bilingual workplaces. More generally, the experience of significant changes in their gendered subjectivity was felt by the majority of participants to derive from living and

functioning in Australian society, rather than from developing a voice in English. All of these sociocultural influences had an enormous impact on the participants' sense of self and settlement aspirations, and yet the explicit consideration of such aspects of new language socialisation continue to be absent from the framing and delivery of the AMEP.

8.7   Limitations and recommendations

In presenting my analysis I am conscious that in some sections, particularly those that refer to the participants' experiences in constructing identities in work and in social interactions, I draw more heavily on some participants than on others. There are two reasons for this; one relates to the fact that although all participants recorded interviews and all but one participated in group discussions, the amount of reflective data supplied via email communications and journal writing varied enormously among participants. This meant that there were variations in my ability to provide a nuanced analysis of different issues, and a tendency to forefront the issues that were discussed in most detail by some participants. The second reason reflects the critical approach I have taken to analysing the impact of transnational migration involving language change on gendered selfhood, which engages a commitment to the role of research in the pursuit of social justice. Such a perspective inevitably results in a need to focus more attention on aspects of settlement that are problematic, and less on aspects that are not. Therefore, in the interests of social justice, my research analysis gives more time and voice to participants who experienced social and/or economic exclusion than on participants who reported their settlement experiences in largely positive terms.

This research makes a contribution to further understanding the lived experience of transnational migration involving language change, in particular as it affects gendered subjectivity. It also contributes to the growing understanding that language learning is not

simply the development of a bounded lexicogrammatical system, but also the development and understanding of inherent cultural attitudes and beliefs, and that these can influence change in identity and selfhood in ways that are felt to be separate to the process of language internalisation. The data on imagined identity, and the realisation of an aspirational gendered subjectivity through language learning, is an area that would benefit from further research. In addition, a focus on migrant women from pre- or low-literacy and beginner level settlement language classes is also required, in order to more fully understand the impact on selfhood of developing a voice in English.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Transcription conventions

[lower case]	transcriber correction or explanatory information
(UPPER CASE)	transcriber's insertion detailing style or tone of speech, affect, and presence of background speech or sounds
[↗]	pronounced rising tone
text	speaker's emphatic word stress
text	speaker's emphatic syllable stress
(lower case)	participant's inserted comments
[…]	text omitted from data excerpt
[unclear]	word or words not identifiable by transcriber
text(?)	transcriber unsure about word
…	speaker's pause, or break in the flow of idea
… …	speaker's longer pause
'text'	reported thinking
"text"	reported direct speech
A: text… B: text A: …text	interlocutor B interrupting A, both speaking at the same time

Appendix B: Personal information questionnaire

Questionnaire given to each participant as she joined the project:

Please answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. What is your name? _____

2. Where do you come from? _____

3. What languages do you speak? _____

4. How old are you? _____

5. Are you married or single? _____

- If married: What language(s) does your husband speak?_____

6. Do you have any children? _____

- If yes, how many children do you have?

- Girls: _____   Boys: _____

- What are their ages?

   Girls: _____   Boys: _____

- What language(s) do your children speak? _____

- What language(s) do you speak to them? _____

7. Did you go to school in your country?

   _____

- If yes, how many years of school did you complete?_____

8. Did you study English in your country?   _____

- If yes, how long did you study English?

      Months: _____   Years: _____

9. Did you have a paid job in your country?   _____

- If yes, what was your job?_____

10. Why did you come to live in Australia?

   _____

   When did you arrive in Australia?

   _____

11. Is there anything else you would like to write about yourself?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

Thank you for answering these questions!

Appendix C: Interview questions

First interview questions

STAGE ONE - questions for establishing rapport

- What English class are you in right now?
- Describe your class and how you feel about learning English.

STAGE TWO – questions about present life in Australia

- Please tell me about your life in Australia. I'd like to know about the things that you do, as a woman, and what is important in your life.
- Describe the way you communicate with your family. What languages do you speak with your husband/children and how do you feel about this?
- What is the language of your thoughts? When is it English?
- Can you describe yourself, the kind of person that you are?

STAGE THREE – questions about previous life

- Please tell me about your life in _____. I'd like to know about the things that you did, as a woman, and what was important in your life.
- Can you tell me about your experiences growing up in _____, as a woman?
- Can you describe how you remember yourself?

STAGE FOUR – questions about future life in Australia

- What do you imagine your life in Australia will be like in 10 years time?
- What will you be doing? What will your family be doing?
- How will you be using English?

CLOSING QUESTION – Is there anything else you would like to say?

Second Interview Questions

- What do you enjoy about learning/using English?

- What do you enjoy about living in Australia?

- What do you find difficult about learning English?

- What is difficult about living in Australia?

- Can you think of times when you have had strange or unsuccessful communication with people in Australia? Tell me about what happened and what was said. Tell me about how you felt.

- How are you treated by people in Australia?

  - Do you feel accepted by Australians?

  - Do you feel included by the society?

  - Are there any barriers to social inclusion, for you? What are they?

- Do you feel any changes in yourself from always speaking English, or from living in Australia?

- Are you a different person when you speak your other languages and when you speak English?

- Are your attitudes and beliefs changing from living in Australia? Can you think of ways that your beliefs have changed, since coming to live here? Examples?

- What are your hopes for the future?

- What are your fears?

Final interview questions

- Please tell me about your life in Australia. I'd like to know about the things that you do, as a woman, and what is important in your life.

- How would you describe yourself? What kind of person are you?

- Can you describe for me where and to whom you speak English? Draw a language use pie graph, including all languages spoken in daily life and social contexts.

- How do you feel about your use of English with these people?

- What do you read, or listen to in English? Other uses?

- What is the language of your thoughts? Explain, with examples if/when you think in English.

- How do you feel about your use of English? Has it improved? If so, in what ways?

- What can you do now that you could not do when you arrived in Australia?

- Are there still things you can't do in English but would like to do?

- Are there any things that you feel excluded from doing, by the society, because of English?

- Can you describe yourself, the kind of person that you are?

- Does speaking English make you feel like a different person? How?

- In what ways do you feel you have changed, as a result of speaking English?

- How has living in Australia changed you?

- Can we talk about Australian society? How would you describe Australia and its people? What is important for women in Australia?

- Do you feel accepted in Australian society? In what ways are you involved in social or employment networks here?

- In what ways has your relationship with your husband/partner/child changed as your English ability develops? What about with your partner's family?

- What are your goals for the future, in Australia?

- How important is it for your English to develop, in order to achieve these goals?

- How will you be using English in the future?

- What will you be doing?

- Do you feel optimistic or pessimistic about the future? Why?

- Is there anything else you would like to say?

Appendix D: Discussion group topics

List of topics, distributed to participants at their first discussion group session:

1. Being a woman

• What is it like to be a woman moving between cultures?

• Do you find your sense of who you are in conflict with what you think you should be, or need to be, here in Australia?

2. Society

• How are you treated by more established members of Australian society? Describe example encounters.

• Do you feel accepted in Australia? Rejected? Ignored? Discriminated against?

• What does this society expect of you?

• Is there a difference between the role of women in your society, and in Australian society?

3. Learning

• What has been the effect on you of learning English in the AMEP?

• Do you enjoy learning in this environment?

• What is good and what is bad about learning English in the AMEP?

• How does learning change your sense of self?

4. Self

• Are you changing because of living in Australia and learning English?

• Are you different when you speak your first language and when you speak English? How?

• Are there limitations on you from having to communicate in English?

• Are there new possibilities?

• Can you be yourself when you speak English?

5. Relationships

• Are your important relationships different because of English? How?

• Do you act differently when you use English in your important relationships?

• Do your kids and/or partner use English with you? Does it change your relationship? How?

6. Other topics?? Is there anything else you want to write/talk about?

Appendix E: Essay task

Essay writing task assigned when the participants entered the project, in 2008, and again at the time of final interviews, conducted between late 2009 and early 2010.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer the following question. Write as much as you want to, but please try to explain yourself well.

ESSAY QUESTION: What are your plans and dreams for your future life in Australia?

YOUR NAME: _____   **DATE:** _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Appendix F: Email journal

Notice sent to all participants in October 2008:

Email Journal

This is part of the Identity and Language Learning research being conducted by Donna Butorac (AMEP), through Macquarie University.

Goal:
To share with me (Donna) your thoughts on learning and using English in Australia, what is happening in your life, and how you feel about yourself, as a woman.

When:
Try to write at least once a week through Term 4 (2008). I don't mind how often you write, but once a week as a minimum would be great.

What to write about:
Write about any experiences you have with using English, either inside or outside the home. The experiences can be positive or negative, and they could be with family, friends or strangers.
Write about any changes you see in yourself, as a result of learning English.
Write about things that bother you, or excite you, about living in Australia and learning to use another language.
Write about your plans and dreams for the future.

Email address:
Please write your emails to me at donnabee@iinet.net.au

A great big THANK YOU, in advance!!

Donna B

Appendix G: Participant information and consent form

MACQUARIE
UNIVERSITY~SYDNEY

You are invited to participate in a study of identity and language learning. The purpose of the study is to find out how a woman's identity is affected by learning English.

The study, which will take one year to complete, is being conducted by Donna Butorac, at Central TAFE (tel: 9427 1377; email: donna.butorac@central.wa.edu.au) as part of her Doctor of Philosophy from Macquarie University, NSW.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in the following tasks:

- Complete a 15 minute questionnaire (once, at home)
- Write an essay (twice: approximate time = 1 hour each time, at home)
- Have an interview about your experiences as a woman who is learning English (twice: approximate time = 1 hour each time, on campus)
- Write in a journal (time = 30 minutes once a week, for six months, at home)
- Join a discussion group with other participants to discuss your experiences speaking English (time = 2 hours, once a month for six months, either on or off campus)

In return for your involvement, you will be able to practise written and spoken English regularly with a group of women and a qualified, experienced English instructor.

All interviews and group discussions will be recorded on a digital voice recorder, but your name will be not be used in the research, in order to protect your privacy. There should be no physical risk or discomfort to you from participating in this project, and the information that you give will be all about your life as a migrant woman learning English in Australia and how it compares to your life before you came to Australia. If you are asked questions about things that you feel uncomfortable discussing, you can refuse to answer, without consequence. If you feel distress as a result of being in this project, you can contact the AMEP Office on (08) 9427 1377 to arrange an appointment with one of the AMEP counsellors.

dbutorac/consent_form/2008   1

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301

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the researcher, Donna Butorac, and her Supervisor, Dr Stephen Moore of Macquarie University, Tel: (02) 9850 8742; Email: stephen.moore@ling.mq.edu.au will see the data. You will receive a one-page summary of the final report. 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, _____ have read and understand the information above and 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 have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:
(block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____Date:

Investigator's Name:
(block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date:
Investigator's contact details: tel (08) 92996068 email: donnabutorac@hotmail.com

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Ethics Review Committee through its Secretary (telephone 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

29 April 2008

Ms Donna Butorac
21 Allestree Road
Darlington   WA   6070

Reference: HE28MAR2008-D05694 ✓

Dear Ms Butorac

FINAL APPROVAL

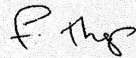Title of project: *Reconstructing the self: the effect of learning English on a woman's identity*

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. Dr Stephen Moore

303